

For Immediate Release
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83% of Coachella Valley Children Ages 0 to 5 Were Breastfed as Infants

August observes National Breastfeeding Month. This month is dedicated to raising awareness about the health benefits of breastfeeding for both infants and mothers. In this Press Release, we provide Coachella Valley level statistics, health benefits, and resources regarding breastfeeding.

Palm Desert, CA (August 5, 2020) — Breastfeeding is a great source of food perfect for a newborn and provides infants with all the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development.¹ The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life, meaning no other foods or liquids. From the age of 6 months, infants should begin eating complementary foods while continuing to be breastfed for up to 2 years and beyond.² The health benefits of breastfeeding for mothers and babies are unmatched. The chief benefits include protection against infections such as gastrointestinal infections and reducing the likelihood of newborn mortality.³ However, it is important to note not all mothers are able to breastfeed and they may supplement their child's nutrition with formula.

Coachella Valley Data

In the Coachella Valley, 82.9% of local children (27,322 children) were breastfed for at least a short while. This means, 5 out of 6 Coachella Valley children ages 0 to 5 were breastfed some time during their infancy. The remaining 17.1% of children age five and younger (5,650) were never breastfed.

Health Benefits

Studies show there are a plethora of health benefits for mothers and infants attributed to breastfeeding. Infants who are breastfed have reduced risks of: asthma, obesity, type 1 diabetes, severe lower respiratory disease, acute otitis media (ear infections), sudden infant deaths (SIDS), gastrointestinal infections (diarrhea/vomiting), and necrotizing

¹ Breastfeeding. (n.d.). World Health Organization. Available online at: <https://www.who.int/topics/breastfeeding/en/>

² Ibid.

³ Infant and young child feeding (2020). World Health Organization. Available online at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/infant-and-young-child-feeding>

enterocolitis (NEC) – the death of tissue in the intestine.⁴ Breastfeeding can help lower a mother’s risk of: high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, ovarian cancer, and breast cancer.⁵ It is important to reiterate that despite the overwhelming health benefits of breastfeeding, not all mothers are able to do so and formula serves as a good alternative.

The CDC reports 60% of mothers stop breastfeeding sooner than they planned.⁶ Certain factors may influence whether and how long babies are breastfed. These include hospital practices, education and encouragement, policies or supports in the workplace, and access to community supports.⁷

To see more statistics regarding health information in the Coachella Valley, please see our latest 2019 Executive Report at: www.HARCdata.org

To see more information and resources regarding breastfeeding, please visit the following links:

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/index.htm>

https://www.who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding#tab=tab_1

<https://www.lovingupport.org/>

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/>

To schedule an interview with Dr. Jenna LeComte-Hinely call 760.404.1945 or email jlecomte-hinely@HARCdata.org.

About HARC

HARC, Inc. (Health Assessment and Research for Communities) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization providing research and evaluation services related to health and wellness. HARC is funded in part by grants, donations, and the consulting services they offer. More information can be obtained by calling HARC at 760.404.1945, or visiting the organization’s website at www.HARCdata.org

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⁴ Why it matters (2019). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available online at: <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/about-breastfeeding/why-it-matters.html>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ CDC’s work to support and promote breastfeeding (2019). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available online at: <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/breastfeeding-cdcs-work-508.pdf>

⁷ Ibid.