

**For Immediate Release**  
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The steps to successful breastfeeding are the focus of this year's Missouri Breastfeeding Month, observed annually in August.

Putnam County Health Department's breastfeeding expert, Jeanie Johnson promotes the following steps recommended by DHSS that nursing mothers can take to establish consistent feeding and ensure a good milk supply:

- **Breastfeed within the first hour.** Ask for the baby to be put skin-to-skin right after birth.
- **Room in with your baby.** Keep the baby in your room all day and night so you can get to know your baby's early signs of hunger.
- **Breastfeed on demand.** When a newborn roots, makes sucking sounds, puts fist to mouth, or is starting to wake, this is a signal to feed your baby.
- **No bottles or pacifiers.** Bottles and pacifiers often interfere with breastfeeding and cause babies not to nurse frequently enough.
- **Breastfeed exclusively.** Providing only breast milk protects your milk supply and gives you and your newborn time to learn how to breastfeed.

Babies benefit from breastfeeding in a number of ways. Breastfed babies:

- Have fewer health problems such as diarrhea, ear infections, respiratory infections and urinary tract infections
- Have fewer problems with allergies and asthma
- Are less likely to become obese as they grow older

Mothers benefit as well. Breastfeeding boosts a woman's immune system, reduces bleeding after childbirth and helps a mother return sooner to her pre-pregnancy weight. Mothers who breastfeed also are at lower risk of developing breast, uterine and ovarian cancer.

More information about breastfeeding can be found at [www.dhss.mo.gov/breastfeeding](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/breastfeeding) or by calling the Putnam County Health Department at 660-947-2429.

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