

BREASTFEEDING EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

What is the purpose of the program?

To provide breastfeeding information, education, and support to pregnant and breastfeeding women

What does the program do?

Every pregnant woman receives education on infant feeding choices, why breastfeeding is the preferred method, and information about overcoming barriers to breastfeeding. Assistance includes counseling, telephone support, and referrals for breastfeeding women, and may also include providing breast pumps. The program includes working with the community, hospitals, and medical practices through coalitions and direct communication. The program provides training to staff as well as other interested professionals and community members. In some areas there are hot-lines and Peer Counselor programs. Community education is provided through health fairs, news articles, and other media-related events. These activities are carried out primarily by the Georgia Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program.

How many people are helped by the program?

The Georgia WIC Program served a total of 398,405 pregnant women and 236,211 breastfeeding women during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2009.

Why is the program important?

Breastfeeding has been shown, through numerous studies, to improve the health and development of infants and children. Breastfeeding might also help prevent obesity later in life. Breastfeeding infants have fewer sick visits to the doctor, which results in substantial savings of health care dollars. In addition, there are significant savings for families who breastfeed due to the cost of infant formulas, equipment and supplies necessary to formula-feed.

Who is eligible?

Pregnant and breastfeeding women who meet residence, income, and nutrition-risk standards are eligible for breastfeeding services through the Georgia WIC program. In addition, all Georgia citizens are eligible to receive information and support regarding breastfeeding through community outreach efforts.

Where are services located?

Statewide. To locate services by county visit

Outcome measures

- The percentage of mothers who breastfeed their infants at hospital discharge
- The percentage of WIC-enrolled women in Georgia who initiate breastfeeding
- The percentage of WIC-enrolled women in Georgia who continue breastfeeding for at least 6 months

Legislative authority:

WIC Legislative requirements are contained in Section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966

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