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Office of Public Affairs

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## World Breastfeeding Week observed in North Carolina Aug. 1-7

RALEIGH – State public health leaders are encouraging North Carolinians to join in support of World Breastfeeding Week 2009, Aug. 1-7. This year's worldwide theme is "Breastfeeding - A Vital Emergency Response."

Feeding infants and young children in emergencies has become an area of focus for disaster response teams around the world. North Carolina is no exception.

"Mothers' milk is very easy for babies to digest and provides the best food for babies to grow on. Breastfed babies do not get sick as often and have fewer allergies than non-breastfed infants, so public health and medical experts recommend breastfeeding for infants and young children," said Dr. Jeffrey Engel, State Health Director.

"There is another advantage as well. During emergency situations – including the hurricanes and other natural disasters we experience in North Carolina or large communicable disease outbreaks like pandemic flu – there may not be sufficient supplies of formula at hand, or clean water for making formula. But breast milk can be readily available and provides the best source of nutrition for babies, even during an emergency," Engel said.

North Carolinians and their organizations, government and businesses are encouraged to recognize breastfeeding's benefits to mothers and babies in each community by promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding in North Carolina.

Recommendations and action steps to help assure that women in North Carolina can get their children off to a healthier start by breastfeeding are in the document, "Promoting, Protecting and Supporting Breastfeeding: A North Carolina Blueprint for Action" at: [www.nutritionnc.com](http://www.nutritionnc.com).

Other resources specific to this year's world breastfeeding theme can be found at the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action website, [www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org](http://www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org), and the American Academy of Pediatrics website ([www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)), which includes a handout for pediatricians entitled, *Infant Nutrition During a Disaster* ([www.aap.org/breastfeeding/files/pdf/InfantNutritionDisaster.pdf](http://www.aap.org/breastfeeding/files/pdf/InfantNutritionDisaster.pdf)).

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