
Central Health partners with community in global breastfeeding challenge

Central Health is collaborating with healthy baby clubs and family resource centres in the region to celebrating World Breastfeeding Week in Canada. As part of the celebrations on Saturday, October 3, 2009, mothers and babies in central Newfoundland will join the rest of the world to compete in setting the record for the most babies breastfeeding at one time. At precisely 11:00 a.m. mothers and babies throughout the region will breastfeed together.

"We are delighted to collaborate with the healthy baby clubs and family resource centres in the region to offer an opportunity for mothers and babies to participate in the breastfeeding challenge this year," said Joanne Saunders, Lactation Consultant with Central Health. "While we support breastfeeding moms and families year-round, this year's event is a demonstration of the support for breastfeeding that is within our communities."

The theme of World Breastfeeding Week, *Breastfeeding saves lives: Protecting infant health every day and in emergencies*, promotes the idea that a mother needs active support to continue or re-establish breastfeeding during emergencies. Ongoing support of breastfeeding in non-emergency settings will strengthen a mothers' capacity to cope in an emergency.

"Mothers need support, not only from the health sector, but also within families, communities and the workplace," said Ms. Saunders.

Across Canada, about 85 per cent of new mothers initiate breastfeeding. This compares with only 63 per cent in Newfoundland and Labrador. The majority of breastfeeding mothers stop breastfeeding earlier than recommended. The World Health Organization calls for increased support for mothers to achieve exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding for up to two years and beyond, as well as giving other nutritious foods.

Breastfeeding events are being held in a number of communities within the region. For more info on how to participate, contact your local Public Health Nurse or Lactation Consultant at 651-6480 or 292-1208.