

Health Unit Media Release

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Health Unit completes infant feeding survey

84.6% of new mothers breastfeed their newborns according to the early results from an infant feeding survey conducted with new mothers in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark. The survey of 500 new mothers was conducted between October 2006 and April 2007. The survey also looked at what factors influence a mother's choices of what she feeds her baby, including when solid foods are started.

"We need to know how and when people make their decisions around feeding their babies in order to reach them with evidence based information in a timely manner" states Erin McLean, Child Health Program Leader. "Parents want to make good decisions for their children, we want them to have accurate information so they are making an informed choice."

What an infant is fed has an influence on a person's future health. Breast milk is the normal food for infants, introducing other liquids or solids before six months of age can lead to increased risk of short-term and long-term illnesses. Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants - Statement of the Joint Working Group: Canadian Paediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada and Health Canada advises health professionals that babies should receive breastmilk for the first six months, and then iron containing foods such as infant cereal or meat should be introduced.

Public Health Nurses and Registered Dietitians provide information to parents and parents-to-be about feeding choices for infants at prenatal classes, home visits, Good Food for a Healthy Baby groups and over the phone.

Parents and caregivers who are looking for information to make informed decisions about what they feed their babies are encouraged to visit the Health Unit website www.healthunit.org in the Babies and Children section or to call the Health Unit at 800-660-5853 and speak with a Public Health Nurse or a Registered Dietitian.

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