

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for August 7, 2023
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about why breastfeeding is important, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

A few months ago, my husband introduced me to the work of Simon Sinek. He is author of "Start With Why" and has one of the top 3 TED Talks with over 62 million views. His theory is that the most successful leaders and businesses have one very important thing in common. They know why they exist are why what they are doing is important and needed. Then they inspire others to action by communicating the why before focusing on the how and the what.

Therefore, I thought it was incredibly fitting that the 2023 National Breastfeeding Month Theme is "This is Our Why." There are so many reasons that breastfeeding is the best choice for mothers and their babies. Breastmilk is the optimal source of nutrition and is tailor-made for babies, providing all the vitamins, proteins, and fats that they need for the first six months. Breastmilk helps babies build a strong immune system and protects against illness and disease. Breastfeeding keeps babies healthy by reducing the risk of obesity, diabetes, asthma, leukemia, and infant mortality.

The benefits also extend to mothers. Women who breastfeed have a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and breast and ovarian cancers. But breastfeeding is not easy for all families, especially those facing crises and emergencies. While 83.2% of infants start out breastfeeding, only 24.9% of babies are exclusively breastfed at 6 months of age.

Investing in breastfeeding programs and policies is a beneficial investment for any country. According to the US Breastfeeding Committee, every \$1 invested in enabling a mother to breastfeed generates \$35 in economic benefits. Low rates of breastfeeding add more than \$3 billion a year to medical costs for the mother and child in the US.

The Proving Urgent Maternal Protections (PUMP) for Nursing Mothers Act was signed into law at the end of 2022. It expands the legal right to receive pumping breaks and private space to nearly 9 million more workers. Nearly all workers are now covered by the federal lactation break time and space requirements for breastfeeding employees to pump at work.

Though it has been well over a decade now, I still feel like breastfeeding my children was one of the best decisions and greatest blessings in my life. I stayed home with each baby for 12 weeks and then went back to work, which is very common for working moms. I never considered feeding infant formula- even though I worked for Abbott Nutrition creating Similac and other formulas. Abbott's stance was always clear that breastmilk is best. I was thankful that Abbott provided a special lactation room for pumping so I could continue to breastfeed.

There are many scientific and economic reasons to support breastfeeding. I'm sure these were a small part of my decision. But my biggest why was that my mom was a strong proponent of breastfeeding. For me, being able to connect with my babies through breastfeeding was a tremendous gift that I will always cherish.

To celebrate Breastfeeding Awareness Month, Coshocton County Women Infant Children (WIC) is hosting the annual Baby Expo. It will be held on Thursday, August 10 from 12-2 pm in the new Community Room located at 637 Chestnut Street, Coshocton. This event offers an opportunity to expectant and new parents or caregivers of children up to 1-year-old to learn about the services in the community that promote the overall health and well-being of their newest additions. I will be there along with many other agencies and organizations. Please encourage any new or expecting mothers to attend this Thursday.

And now let's look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

OSU Extension's new "Ohio Person in Charge: Know and Show" course will be offered next Wednesday, August 16 from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. in the Coshocton County Services Building. The newly released training meets Ohio Department of Health Person-In-Charge (PIC) Certification in Food Protection requirements by providing safe food handling education for food service employees as well as those opening an establishment for the first time. Registration can be found at coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!