

# Action Ideas for World Breastfeeding Week 2009 Breastfeeding: A Vital Emergency Response: Are You Ready?

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Each year, over 120 countries celebrate World Breastfeeding Week. The United States celebrates from August 1 to August 7.



This year's theme focuses on Breastfeeding as a Vital Emergency Response. This is a new idea regarding the importance of breastfeeding during an emergency.

We are accustomed to uninterrupted water, gas, and electricity supplies and seldom consider the consequences when these services are not available. During a disaster or an emergency when these services are interrupted for extended periods of time, breastfeeding becomes the most convenient and safe way to feed the baby. The theme, this year, is another opportunity for us to bring breastfeeding to the forefront for our communities and our participants.

The following are World Breastfeeding Week activity ideas that may be helpful as you develop plans to celebrate this special week.

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## Emergency Preparedness

Organize a meeting with your local emergency preparedness team to convey the importance of breastfeeding during emergencies and develop a plan in support of breastfeeding mothers and infants.

Choose one day during World Breastfeeding Week to present information to community partners on how to initiate breastfeeding and how to support lactation during an emergency as a first response.

Prepare information for community partners to encourage breastfeeding during an emergency as a proactive measure.

Work with local hospitals to raise awareness among new mothers of the benefits of breastfeeding during an emergency, especially if they cannot get to a hospital.

Prepare examples of home emergency preparedness plans for families. [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

Develop talking points, posters and information for local, state and/or national legislators to encourage and support lactation in emergency situations.

Prepare a bulletin board of success stories about breastfeeding in an emergency.

Hold meetings and discussion groups on ways to support lactation during an emergency.

## WIC Clinics

Prepare bulletin boards for each clinic, emphasizing the importance of breastfeeding in emergencies.

Give dads a certificate to recognize their support of breastfeeding mothers and infants.

Develop a proclamation for your governor or local mayor to sign, emphasize the importance of Breastfeeding during an emergency.

Honor long time breastfeeding mothers, over 1 and 2 years.

Invite a photographer to take pictures of breastfeeding mothers and babies. Give them to the mothers and display copies in WIC clinics.

## Health Care Providers

Offer to provide breastfeeding in-services to local physicians and their staff on the importance of breastfeeding.

Promote the AAP Recommendations on Infant Nutrition during a Disaster - Breastfeeding and Other Options (2007) which can be found at: <http://aap.org/breastfeeding/PDR/InfantnutritionDisaster.pdf>

Distribute the IFE Core Group's Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies: Operational Guidance for Emergency Relief Staff and Program Managers (2007): [www.enonline.net/ife/view.aspx?reside=6](http://www.enonline.net/ife/view.aspx?reside=6)

Hold meetings and discussion groups on ways to support lactation during an emergency.

Promote the AAP's breastfeeding resources <http://www.aap.org/breastfeeding/new%20resources.cfm>

## Community

Set up a "rock and relax" booth at the state fair with three areas: a changing area with diapers and wipes, an area for breastfeeding education materials and someone to answer questions, and another area with rocking chairs for mothers to breastfeed their babies.

Plan a meeting to present information on nearby Milk Bank services which may be available to your community.

Have a speaker include information of donated human milk during an emergency.

Collaborate with a local La Leche League group or other organization on an event or activity during World Breastfeeding Week.

Recognize businesses that accommodate breastfeeding employees or patrons. Give a certificate or send a thank-you note.

Look for companies or communities which may provide low cost banners on World Breastfeeding Week to display in a shopping center or downtown areas.

## Media

Write and send an article to local daily and weekly newspapers about breastfeeding during an emergency and include breastfeeding facts and local resources. Include information on difficulty of infant feeding when resources, such as water and heat, are not available.

Volunteer to appear on a local television or radio station to be interviewed about World Breastfeeding Week.

## Resources

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action website has materials on the 2009 theme. The address is <http://worldbreastfeedingweek.org/downloads.htm>.

A kit to help plan for World Breastfeeding Week is available from the International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA): <http://www.ilca.org/worldbreastfeedingweek.html>

