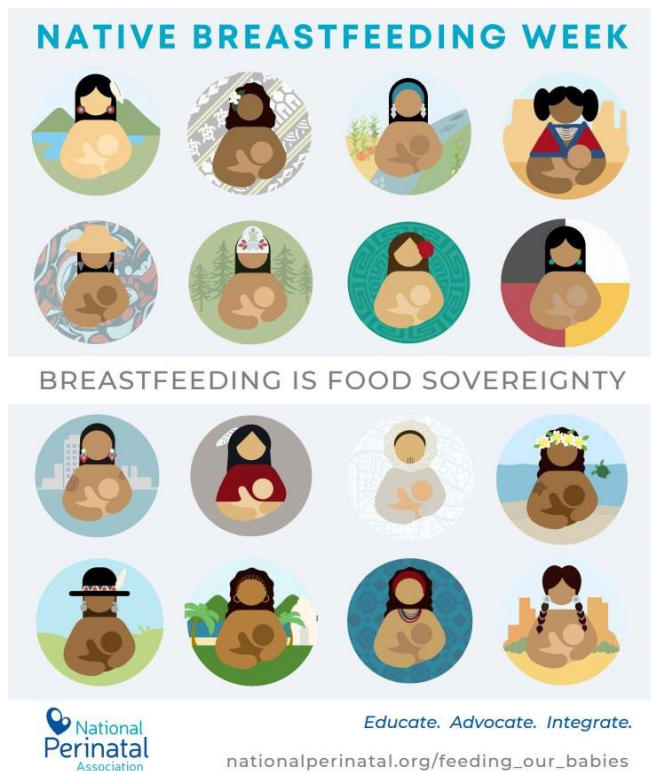




TEN STEP TUESDAY

# Native Breastfeeding Week

## It's Ten Step Tuesday and Native Breastfeeding Week!



### Why Native Breastfeeding Week?

Native Breastfeeding Week occurs during the week beginning on the second Sunday in August, which is recognized as National Breastfeeding Month in the United States. According to the CDC, the current literature on breastfeeding patterns among American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) mothers is scarce, thus warranting further research. Based on the limited data, AI/AN mothers have lower rates of breastfeeding initiation duration, and exclusivity relative to other racial/ethnic groups except for African Americans:

- AI/AN rates of breastfeeding initiation (73%) among all races/ethnicities versus the average (83%)
- Rates of breastfeeding duration at 6 months (42.4%) and at 12 months (20.7% of mothers who initiate)
- 76% (3 out of 4) of AI/AN mothers terminated breastfeeding within 4 months of the child's birth.
- There's no regulation on how baby formula is advertised in the U.S., a reason mothers could think formula is a substitute for breast milk.

- Pasteurized donor milk could help those babies, but it's often not covered by either private or public insurance, and buying donor milk without insurance can easily cost thousands of dollars a month.
- That leaves many newborns, especially those in low-income families, without access. At "safety-net" hospitals where more than 75 percent of patients are on Medicaid, only 13 percent routinely make donor milk available to premature babies in intensive care, according to a 2012 survey.
- Lack of knowledge about breastfeeding, unsupportive cultural and social norms, concerns about milk supply, poor family and social support, and unsupportive work and childcare environments make it difficult for many mothers to meet their breastfeeding goals. These political, social, and environmental factors that actually shape breastfeeding rates in the U.S.
- On a positive note, AI/AN mothers who were still breastfeeding at 6 months were more likely to still be breastfeeding at 12 months.

Native Breastfeeding Week puts a face to the data and to share the contributions, importance, adversity, and celebration of Native breastfeeding families.

Information from:

<http://www.nationalperinatal.org/>

<https://illusa.org/a-closer-look-at-native-breastfeeding-week/>

For more information contact

Cara Gerhardt, BSN RN IBCLC, [coordinator@high5kansas.org](mailto:coordinator@high5kansas.org)