



## **A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC**

### *Helping New Moms from Day One*

*Vital Signs: Hospital Practices to Support Breastfeeding — United States, 2007 and 2009*

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*[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.*

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Getting off to a good start is always important, especially when it comes to our health. New mothers can give their babies a healthy start in life by breastfeeding.

Dr. Larry Grummer-Strawn is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, and he's joining us today to discuss the importance of breastfeeding during the first year of life. Welcome to the show, Larry.

[Dr. Grummer-Strawn] Thank you, Bob. It's good to be here.

[Dr. Gaynes] Larry, how does breastfeeding improve the health of newborns?

[Dr. Grummer-Strawn] Well, in addition to the well known nutritional benefits of breast feeding, we also know that breastfeeding protects against a whole host of infectious diseases, diabetes; it protects against sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS, as well as obesity.

[Dr. Gaynes] How about moms? How does it improve their health?

[Dr. Grummer-Strawn] Well, moms are also protected the longer that they breastfeed from breast cancer and ovarian cancer.

[Dr. Gaynes] How long should a mother breastfeed?

[Dr. Grummer-Strawn] Experts recommend that children should be breast fed for at least a full year, but also that they don't feed anything other than breast milk for the first six months of life. But in spite of those recommendations, many women are not able to breastfeed as long as they would like to.

[Dr. Gaynes] Why don't moms breastfeed as long as they'd like to?

[Dr. Grummer-Strawn] There are a number of different barriers to breastfeeding in our country. Certainly hospitals don't provide the kind of support that they need to get off to a good start with breastfeeding, and it's difficult for them to find access to health care professionals who are trained in breastfeeding. Also, when they go back to work, there are many barriers to trying to mix breastfeeding and working.

[Dr. Gaynes] What can we all do to help moms who are breastfeeding?

[Dr. Grummer-Strawn] Anyone can help someone that they know who is breastfeeding. Certainly, making her feel more comfortable about breastfeeding because they know how important it is, and at home, helping out around the house so that they can give her the kind of time that she needs to be with her baby to have a really good breastfeeding experience. Also, to be supportive of co-workers who are breastfeeding in the workplace.

[Dr. Gaynes] Larry, where can listeners get more information about breastfeeding?

[Dr. Grummer-Strawn] We would invite anyone to visit our website at [www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding).

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Larry. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Larry Grummer-Strawn about the importance of breastfeeding during the first year of life.

New mothers can give their babies a healthy start by breastfeeding. Professionals trained in breastfeeding counseling and support can help moms overcome any barriers to nursing. Talk to your health care provider about where you can get this type of help, and if you know a mom who is breastfeeding, find out how you can help her to succeed.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

*[Announcer]* For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.