



The air is cooler, the leaves are turning colour and daylight hours are decreasing - all signs that fall is here.

This issue we are shining a spotlight on breastfeeding in honour of Breastfeeding Week (which is from October 1-7 in Canada) as well as the inevitable cold and flu season.

Our final article is about another important topic - perinatal depression and anxiety - signs to watch for and where to get help.

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10 GREAT REASONS TO BREASTFEED YOUR BABY

October 1-7 is Breastfeeding Week in Canada and there is a lot to celebrate! Breast milk is the ultimate convenience food. It's inexpensive and readily available in the perfect feeding vessel at just the right temperature.

The World Health Organization recommends early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding until six months of age and continued breastfeeding, with the introduction of solid food, for two years or beyond. Breastfeeding has many well-documented benefits for both mothers and babies.



Here are 10 great reasons to breastfeed:

1. Breast milk contains the right amount of nutrients to help baby grow. As the baby grows, breast milk changes to meet his/her needs.
2. Breastfed babies may score higher on IQ tests.
3. Breast milk is safe and always ready. Plus, it's free!
4. Moms start to produce breast milk during pregnancy. After the baby is born, mom makes more milk. The more the baby breastfeeds, the more milk mom makes.
5. Breastfeeding is good for mom. She has less risk of developing osteoporosis, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and she loses pregnancy weight quicker.
6. Breast milk also contains antibodies and other immune factors that help protect against infections and disease. These benefits last a lifetime.
7. Breastfeeding helps form an intimate loving relationship that strengthens the bond between mom and baby.
8. Breast milk continues to provide protection and nutrition for older babies and toddlers.
9. Working moms can still offer breast milk to their babies by hand expressing or pumping milk for other caregivers to feed baby when they are away.
10. Breastfeeding is good for the environment. There is no packaging, pollution or waste.

Check out this [health file](#) for more information on the benefits of breastfeeding.

PROMOTING BREASTFEEDING THROUGH ART

Have you checked out the Breastfeeding Art Expo yet? The Breastfeeding Art Expo is a community art project, focused on promoting breastfeeding and influencing change through art. It is an expo of 15 community art projects and 70 independent artworks by citizens across the Interior Health region.

The expo has been called a passionate comment and provocative display on the culture of breastfeeding in our communities, in our country and around the world. Stops are coming up in Penticton, Trail, Williams Lake and Kamloops. For more information, check out the [website](#).



COLD AND FLU SEASON IS COMING: TIPS TO KEEP THE WHOLE FAMILY HEALTHY

Getting a flu (influenza) shot this fall will help protect you and your family from influenza but it won't protect you from other viruses that cause colds or the stomach flu. In addition to getting a flu shot, hand washing is one of the most effective ways to stay healthy.

You can prevent viruses from spreading by washing your hands before preparing or eating food and after:

- Coughing, sneezing or wiping your nose
- Being in contact with someone who is ill
- Wiping your child's nose
- Changing a diaper
- Using the toilet



Additional tips include:

- Keep babies away from people who have a cold or flu, whenever possible.
- Teach children to cover their nose and mouth with tissues when they sneeze or cough or to cough into their sleeve or elbow.
- Avoid sharing toys that kids place in their mouths until the toys have been cleaned.
- Avoid sharing cups, utensils, or towels until they have been washed.
- Make sure your child receives all of the routine recommended vaccines.

For more information on handwashing - see this [health file](#).

More information on colds and flus can be found [here](#).

Find a flu clinic near you on Immunize BC's [Flu Clinic Locator](#). Check back often as more clinics will be added in the coming weeks.

BABY BLUES, DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

During pregnancy and after the birth or adoption of your baby, you may feel happy and excited. It is normal for new parents to have lots of different feelings and emotions.

It is common to experience the "baby blues" which can include crying for no apparent reason, rapid mood swings (happy one minute and sad the next) and feelings of anxiety. These feelings usually don't last more than a couple of weeks, but for some mothers these feelings may get worse or not go away. This might be depression.

Depression can begin in pregnancy, right after birth or anytime within the entire first year after birth. Up to one in five women experience a significant depression in pregnancy and/or following childbirth.

What to watch for: The symptoms can range from mild blues to total despair.

- Feeling sad, anxious or crying a lot
- Feeling guilty, worthless or hopeless
- Finding it hard to focus or concentrate
- Feeling like you have no energy
- Not wanting to be with your family or friends
- Not enjoying life like you did before
- Not enjoying time with your baby
- Having panic attacks, excessive worrying, obsessive or scary thoughts
- Feeling inadequate or resentful towards the baby
- Feeling more angry or irritable than usual



Take gentle care of yourself

- Be kind to yourself
- Find someone to talk to
- Ask for help from your family and friends
- Try to get as much sleep as you need, including naps
- Choose healthy foods like fresh fruits & vegetables, lean meats (and other protein foods such as cheese and tofu), low fat dairy products, and whole wheat bread and try to eat regularly
- Try your best to find time to exercise
- Find time for you to relax - even if it is just for a few minutes to put your feet up or go outside for some fresh air

Experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety is common. Please know that there is help available - reach out to your family doctor, midwife or public health nurse. More information on supports can be found [here](#).

NEWS YOU CAN USE



CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH

On average the temperature of the earth is rising causing more extreme weather events such as the droughts, fires and floods much of our region has experienced this year.

These changes affect our environment and also can have negative effects on our health. The good news is there are things we can do to reduce the impacts of climate change. Read on to learn more... [Climate change and health](#)

Sources and where to get more info

[Interior Health - Search for Health Centres under "location type"](#)
[Interior Health](#)
[HealthLinkBC](#)
[ImmunizeBC](#)

This e-newsletter is an Interior Health project to provide quick and easy health tips for new parents and caregivers of children ages 0 to 2 years. Your comments and topic suggestions are welcome! Simply email us at: healthmatters@interiorhealth.ca.

For more info or to attend a free child health clinic, contact your local Public Health Centre. You can find contact info online at: www.interiorhealth.ca or look it up under Interior Health in the blue pages of your local phone book.

Sincerely,
Interior Health Authority

