

Wyandanch

Community Advisory Board

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July Events

- **Culture of Care Block Party**, Wyandanch Plaza, July 25
Noon to 3 pm
- Check the Wyandanch Plaza website for upcoming weekend public health & youth events, wyandanchplaza.org
- **Wyandanch Public Library**, Summer reading programs
- **BFREE** offers in-person and online support, bfreecoalition.org

Editor & CAB Coordinator:
 Dr. Scott Carlin
NYSHECK.ORG/Wyandanch



The Environmental Benefits of Breastfeeding

An article by Kate Metzendorf, Leya Khan, and Emma Yeung of the BFREE Team, featuring the expert perspectives of Julia Bourg, Catherine Sullivan, and Brandi Harrison.

Questions can be directed to bfree@northwell.edu

Introduction

Currently, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization recommends exclusively breastfeeding/chestfeeding infants up to six months of age and introducing appropriate solid foods while continuing to breastfeed up to 2 years of age. Breastfeeding offers many benefits for both the baby and mom: it serves as a source of vitamins and minerals to support a baby's growth and development, it protects the baby from conditions, like obesity and asthma, and it lowers mom's risk of breast cancer and type 2 diabetes.¹ Practiced across the world, breastfeeding is one of the safest, most reliable, and sustainable forms of infant feeding.

Breastfeeding provides significant environmental benefits, which have become increasingly important in the context of climate change and sustainability. Breastfeeding minimizes environmental impact by contributing minimally to carbon emissions, conserving water and energy, and eliminating packaging waste when compared to formula feeding. In contrast, formula production is resource-intensive and generates significant plastic and landfill waste, making breastfeeding a more sustainable feeding practice.² We recognize that every woman and every child have unique circumstances, and that each family has the right to choose what is best for them. Above all, we support decisions that help both mother and baby thrive. Connect with your doctor and other trusted health professionals to receive the information and support you need to make informed, healthy choices.

Professional Perspectives

The BFREE team had the pleasure of speaking with Julia Bourg, BSN, RN, IBCLC, and Catherine Sullivan, MPH, LDN, IBCLC, FAND. Julia and Catherine are part of the Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute (CGBI) and are experts in the sustainability of human milk feeding. They shared meaningful insights on the connection between breastfeeding and the environment.

What are the environmental benefits to breastfeeding/chestfeeding?

Catherine: “Breast/chest feeding produces less overall environmental waste, from industry to transport. Breastfeeding/chestfeeding reduces carbon footprint and conserves resources like water. Breastfeeding also reduces environmental pollution, especially from dairy/cattle farms. If we are breastfeeding more, we are reducing the reliance on those farms. This lowers global methane production and creates less fertilizer and manure runoff since breastfeeding reduces reliance.”

What are ways in which mothers can make their breastfeeding/chestfeeding experiences more sustainable and environmentally friendly?

Julia: “In terms of increasing duration and exclusivity, I think prenatal lactation education and anticipatory guidance goes a long way. This will make it less scary when the time comes and parents feel more prepared. Support networks with lactation support providers and ensuring more access to these lactation support providers can be a game changer. Peer-to-peer support, especially in the emergency context, is also important. In an emergency situation, [first responders and lactation counselors] can help connect lactating families, which can be very sustaining, effective, and empowering. Family and partner support and involvement in care is also important. Direct chestfeeding/breastfeeding can be more sustainable in emergencies and in general because it requires less resources.”

The BFREE team also had the privilege of speaking with Brandi Harrison, BS, IBCLC. Brandi was a first responder during Hurricane Helene and witnessed firsthand the devastating impact climate change and climate disaster had on breastfeeding moms and families. (SAFE refers to Support and Advocacy for Infant Feeding in Emergencies.) Here are her insights:

“Breastfeeding is food security. Breastfeeding is food equity. It has no carbon footprint. It is protective against climate change. We also know that one of the instances that happens in disasters is mass amounts of unregulated donations of powdered infant formula flood into communities after these types of events. And a lot of the work the SAFE team did was spent just hours and hours disposing of thousands and thousands of pounds of expired or poorly/improperly stored formula which filled the landfills and created lots of trash. It takes a lot of energy and water and all kinds of things to create infant formula and breastmilk substitutes. We know all of that has a huge carbon footprint. We know as moms we are kinda targeted in those marketing tactics for gadgets we need to purchase and plastic things we need to buy that they keep making.

So I think in terms of breastfeeding, being protective of climate change, it comes in all kinds of ways. It comes from keeping things out of landfills to making sure while we go through the impacts of climate change in our world that we still have a way to keep our babies fed and hydrated and safe and healthy and close. So I feel like breastfeeding is such a cure-all for these types of subjects.”

“When it comes to climate change, I do consider breastfeeding as part of a cure. It’s going to be a part of the solution that fixes this world.”

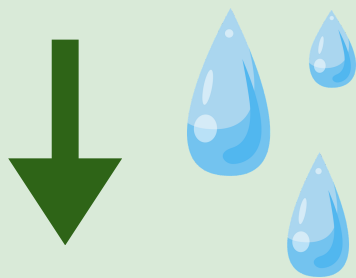
The Environmental Benefits of Breastfeeding³



No factory
production



Lower carbon
footprint



Minimal water
usage



No packaging

Sources

1. U.S. Center for Disease Control. Breastfeeding fast facts. <https://www.cdc.gov/infant-toddler-nutrition/breastfeeding/index.html>
2. Mohapatra, I., & Samantaray, S. R. (2023). Breastfeeding and environmental consciousness: A narrative review of environmental implications and potential contributions to reduce waste and energy consumption.
3. Cureus, 15(9) Karlsson, J. O., Garnett, T., Rollins, N. C., & Rös, E. (2019). The carbon footprint of breastmilk substitutes in comparison with breastfeeding. Journal of cleaner production, 222, 436–445. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.03.043>

Lactation Support Efforts in the Wyandanch Community!

The BFREE team had the privilege of collaborating with Wyandanch-Wheatley Heights Ambulance Corps to earn a lactation friendly recognition.



To earn this recognition, the site must have implemented a policy to support the lactation rights of employees and created a private and clean lactation space. Congratulations to Wyandanch-Wheatley Heights Ambulance Corps on this accomplishment!

BFREE partners with worksites, community spaces, and pediatric and OB-Gyn healthcare practices on this award. **Interested in earning a lactation friendly recognition for your organization? Please email us at bfree@northwell.edu**



Earn Lactation Friendly Designation to Support Breastfeeding in Your Community

BFREE works with
community spaces,
worksites, and
medical practices in
these communities:



BFREE guides your organization through each step
to earn designation

- Provides lactation supplies
- Creates a lactation policy

Why become lactation friendly?

- Fosters an inclusive and welcoming breastfeeding environment for all families
- Supports parents returning to work or school
- Promotes infant health through continued breastfeeding or chestfeeding

Interested? Please contact us!

✉ bfree@northwell.edu

📷 [@bfree.team](https://www.instagram.com/bfree.team)

🌐 www.bfreecoalition.org

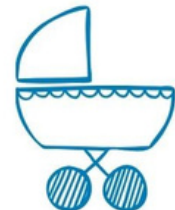
The flyers on the next two pages are examples of the types of bilingual services that BFREE offers at Sun River Health.



Martin Luther King, Jr.



Lactation Support Group in Wyandanch



Join us at our free, drop-in, in-person **breastfeeding support group** to get advice, meet other parents, and share experiences!

No registration necessary. All pregnant or breastfeeding parents and families are welcome.

When: 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the Month

Time: 10AM-12PM

Where: Sun River Health
Conference Room
1556 Straight Path
Wyandanch, NY 11798

Sessions will be held in English, and a Spanish translator will be available.

For more information:

Contact BFREE:

✉ bfree@northwell.edu

☎ 516-838-6416

Contact Sun River Health:

✉ yiguerrier@sunriver.org

☎ 631-626-9701



**Department
of Health**

Breastfeeding, Chestfeeding,
and Lactation Friendly New York



**BFREE: BREASTFEEDING
RESILIENCY,
ENGAGEMENT, AND
EMPOWERMENT**



Grupo de apoyo a la lactancia en Wyandanch



Participe en persona en nuestro **grupo gratuito de apoyo a la lactancia** para recibir consejos, conocer a otros padres y compartir experiencias. No se necesita registrarse de antemano. Todos los padres embarazadas y familias son bienvenidas.

Cuándo: El segundo y el cuarto martes del mes

Hora: 10AM-12PM

Dónde: Sun River Health

Sala de Conferencias

1556 Straight Path

Wyandanch, NY 11798

Las sesiones se ofrecerán en inglés y habrá un traductor al español.

Para más información

Contacta a BFREE:

 bfree@northwell.edu

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