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This e-mail is provided by the Urban Indian Health Institute, a division of the Seattle Indian Health Board. It contains opportunities for staff development, grant announcements and other relevant public health information. We hope you find these resources useful. If you have any questions about the information below, or you are unable to open any of the links, please contact info@uihi.org. If this e-mail was forwarded to you, you may sign up here.

**Health Alert: Early Introduction to Solid Foods**

**Recommendations for breastfeeding and introducing infants to solid foods**

Approximately 40% of mothers introduced solid foods to their babies before the infant was four months of age, and 93% introduced solid foods before six months of age, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted between 2005 and 2007. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) now recommends exclusive breastfeeding for six months, followed by a period of continued breastfeeding as solid foods are introduced into the infant's diet for up to a year or longer. While breastfeeding is preferable to formula feeding, when breastfeeding is not possible, formula feeding is preferable to solid foods before six months of age.
Women in the study introduced solid foods for a variety of reasons, with two-thirds citing babies’ interest in solid foods and 55% noting that a “health care professional said my baby should begin eating solid food.”

According to the AAP, breastfeeding and delaying the introduction of solid foods can reduce a child’s risk for a variety of health problems, including respiratory tract infections, gastrointestinal tract infections, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), obesity, diabetes and certain allergies. Information about the benefits of breastfeeding for American Indian and Alaska Native babies and mothers can be found in Breastfeeding: A Review of the Benefits for American Indian Women. Further information can be found in An Easy Guide to Breastfeeding for American Indian and Alaska Native Families, which points to the cultural and health benefits of breastfeeding, as well tips for breastfeeding success. In addition, the Native Breastfeeding Council website provides helpful resources to promote breastfeeding for families, communities and health care providers.

Share these materials with your patients to promote breastfeeding and following recommendations regarding the introduction of solid foods.


More reports, resources and other information can be found on the UIHI website, www.uihi.org