Breastfeeding Recommendations:  
Initiation and Duration

- The World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) recommend that initiation of breastfeeding occur within the first hour of life.  
- Breast milk within the first few days of lactation, called colostrum, is filled with antibodies and growth proteins. It also helps develop the infant’s digestive system.  
- It is recommended infants be exclusively breastfed (consumption of human milk with no other liquid or food, including water) for the first six months and continue breastfeeding until at least 12 months.  
- Some women cannot or should not breastfeed, and every woman should speak with her health care provider to determine what is right for her and her infant.

Health Benefits For Baby

- Protects against infection
- Reduced risk of:
  - Childhood obesity
  - Diabetes
  - Diarrhea
  - Allergic disease
  - Respiratory tract infections
  - Gastrointestinal tract infections
  - Sudden infant death syndrome

Health Benefits for Mom

- Return to pre-pregnancy weight faster
- Reduced risk of:
  - Diabetes
  - Heart disease
  - Breast and ovarian cancer
  - Postpartum bleeding

Other Benefits

- Save $1,200 in formula costs in the first year alone
- One-day absences from work to care for sick children occur less than half as often for mothers of breastfed infants compared to formula fed infants  
- Promotes bonding between mother and child
- The most environmentally sound option: natural, renewable, and no packages involved
Barriers to Initiation:
From 2007-2010, 85.8% of Wyoming women initiated breastfeeding. Reasons for not initiating breastfeeding were collected in WY PRAMS from 2007-2008.

The two most common reasons reported for not initiating breastfeeding were dislike (35.4%) and other reasons (31.9%).

*Break the Barrier:* Public Health Nurses in Wyoming; Women, Infant and Children (WIC) staff; and/or your health care provider can provide you with support to begin breastfeeding or to make it a more comfortable experience.

One in five women (19.8%) reported going back to school or work as a barrier to breastfeeding.

*Break the Barrier:* While it is difficult to find time to breastfeed or pump at work/school, most employers are required to give you breaks, private area to express milk and provide a safe place to store milk. Go to www.wybreastfeedatwork.org to learn more.

Barriers to Continued Breastfeeding:
From 2007-2008, the percent of women breastfeeding in Wyoming at four weeks was 72.5%. By 16 weeks, the percent of women still breastfeeding had fallen to 48.1%.

The three most commonly sited reasons for discontinuing breastfeeding were: women thought that they were not producing enough milk (44.1%), women thought breast milk alone did not satisfy their infant (37%), and difficulty nursing (27.4%).

*Break the Barriers:* Talking with a Public Health Nurse, your or your baby’s health care provider, or with WIC staff, can help prepare you to face these potential barriers. Ask a PHN about the “Happiest Baby on the Block” program that empowers parents to soothe babies which may also help women continue breastfeeding.

References: