

**Ukiah Valley  
Medical Center**



**Marketing/Development**

275 Hospital Drive  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
Phone: 707-463-7606  
Fax: 707-463-7384

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CONTACT: Jarrod McNaughton, Director, Marketing & Development  
707-463-7606

### **World Breastfeeding Week – August 1-7**

World Breastfeeding Week will be held August 1- 7 to promote exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of a baby's life. This year's slogan is "Exclusive Breastfeeding: The Gold Standard *Safe, Sound, Sustainable.*" Exclusive breastfeeding can provide everything a baby needs for the first six months of life, and can help prevent and fight infections, along with allergic reactions.

"The goal of breastfeeding week is awareness, as well as to get mothers to give the best nutrition possible to their babies. We want them to highly consider breastfeeding, which can give newborns immediate immunities from allergies and other risk factors," said Bonnie Bruce, RN, IBCLC. Bruce is an internationally certified lactation consultant and has over 200,000 hours of experience in her 25 years of work.

A mother's choice to exclusively breastfeed is a choice that can have positive effects on her baby's overall health. There is a long list of risk factors that are increased when babies are not breastfed which include: Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, lymphoma, allergies, botulism, lower IQ scores and lower developmental scores.

When asked why breastfeeding week is so significant, Bruce said, "It brings to light that women in this country believe they have the choice not to breastfeed because of marketing, but really mothers are not made aware that breast milk provides vital nutrition for newborns."

The Mendocino County Breastfeeding Coalition has joined thousands to assist in encouraging exclusive breastfeeding around the world. The statistics show that most babies worldwide are not exclusively breastfed. Worldwide, only 39 percent of infants are exclusively breastfed during the first four months of life. While the statistics show the reality, the facts demonstrate the importance for exclusive breastfeeding.

The World Health Organization recommends that "all health and other relevant sectors protect, promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding up to two years of age or beyond, while providing women access to the support that they require to achieve this goal."

Furthermore, the Mendocino County Breastfeeding Coalition, which is comprised of many Mendocino County Organizations, will be holding a convention at the Redwood Empire Fair Grounds. This event will be held August 12-15, and will promote, protect and support breastfeeding.

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*Ukiah Valley Medical Center is a member of Adventist Health, a not-for-profit health care system headquartered in Roseville, California, and affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Spanning California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington, the organization is comprised of more than 85 distinct business units, including 20 hospitals—controlled, managed or leased—with over 3,100 beds, 17,500 employees, numerous clinics and outpatient facilities, 16 home care agencies and two joint-venture retirement centers. For more information, visit [www.uvmc.org](http://www.uvmc.org) or [www.adventisthealth.org](http://www.adventisthealth.org).*