

HUMAN MILK SAVES LIVES, ESPECIALLY DURING EMERGENCIES!

Formula should not be the default response during a water crisis, like the ones in Flint, Detroit, and Benton Harbor. Formula significantly increases risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), pneumonia, ear infections, obesity, asthma and allergies. Human milk is safest, especially during emergencies.

LEAD CRISIS FAQ #1: CAN I STILL BREASTFEED IF I HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO LEAD?

YES! The breast acts as a natural filter so that very little lead in the mother's system is passed into the breastmilk. Breastfeeding is recommended unless blood lead levels in the mother are very high.

LEAD CRISIS FAQ #2: WHAT CAN I DO AS A BREASTFEEDING MOTHER TO KEEP MY BABY SAFE?

It is important to follow all recommendations regarding exposure to lead. The safest choice for pregnant and breastfeeding women and children is to (a) KEEP BREASTFEEDING! And (b) use bottled water for drinking or cooking. Filtered water is a safe option ONLY if your filter is certified to remove lead and you follow all the instructions and on how to use it/when to replace it.

LEAD CRISIS FAQ #3: IF I AM BREASTFEEDING AND I LIVE IN AN AREA WITH AN ONGOING WATER CRISIS, SHOULD I GET MY LEAD LEVEL TESTED?

It depends. If you are breastfeeding, and you feel you have recently been exposed to lead, reach out to your provider and/or local WIC office for lead testing and/or referrals to testing.

LEAD CRISIS FAQ #4: IF I AM BREASTFEEDING AND I LIVE IN AN AREA WITH AN ONGOING WATER CRISIS, SHOULD MY BABY BE TESTED FOR LEAD?

Yes. Every baby in your community should be tested for lead, regardless of how the baby is being fed. The testing can occur as soon as possible after birth.

LEAD CRISIS FAQ #5: WHERE CAN I GET LEAD TESTING FOR MYSELF AND MY BABY?

Your doctor or local health department can do lead testing.

Attention Breastfeeding Supporters:

Make no mistake - lead crises across Michigan are happening in predominantly Black communities. This further emphasizes the reality that access to human milk is both a racial equity and public health imperative. Our work continues.

Please consider donating to Black-led organizations in the communities most impacted by these crises. Visit mibreastfeeding.org/donate and type "SEMI" (Detroit), "LactPower" (Benton Harbor), "Birth Queens and Milk Queens" (Benton Harbor), and/or "YOLO" (Flint) to support their life-saving efforts. ALL donations will be distributed directly to these organizations.

MIBFN
Michigan Breastfeeding Network

MIBREASTFEEDING.ORG

This flyer is adapted from a parent resource initially published by the Genesee County Breastfeeding Coalition in 2016.