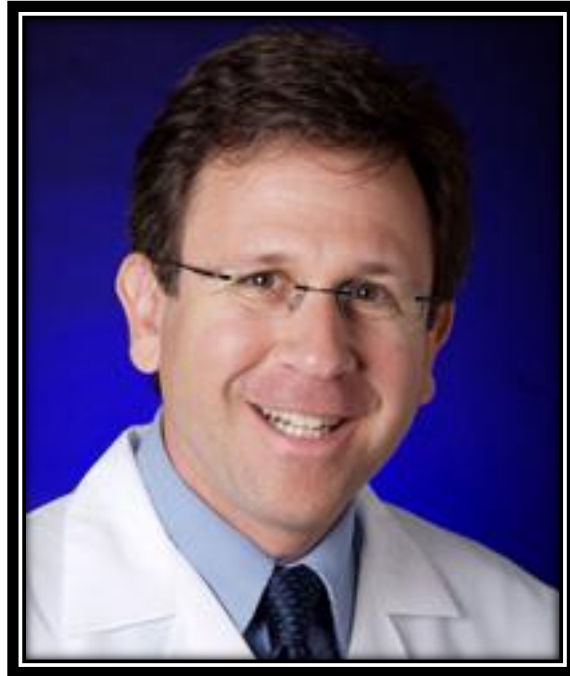


Dr. Richard Isaacs and Kaiser promotes healthy babies



Kaiser pushes for greater [breast-feeding](#) success among moms

The healthiest thing any child will ever consume is his or her mother's breast milk. Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento wants to make certain new mothers learn how to breastfeed their babies before they leave the hospital to increase the future [good health](#) for babies.

Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento was recently designated a "Baby Friendly" hospital in accordance with the World Health Organization's Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.

The staff had a small celebration on Aug. 14.

Max Villalobos, senior vice president for Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento said, "This is an international recognition."

He said a special thanks to Barb Hansen, assistant manager of health education, and Cheryl Cox, manager of the perinatal services unit.

"Sometimes we overuse words, but this is prestigious," he said.

Currently, Kaiser South Sacramento is one of 83 hospitals nationwide to fulfill the program's 10-step process to become baby friendly.

The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative was launched in 1991 with help from UNICEF. Kaiser staff received a certificate of intent to work towards being admitted to the Baby Friendly program in 1993.

Physician-in-Chief, [Dr. Richard S. Isaacs](#) thanked the staff for their commitment. Isaacs, an ear, nose and throat doctor, said he learned that breast-feeding a baby causes fewer ear infections as they grow.

“It gives the child the best start,” he said. “It gives them natural immunity, it helps prevent infection, and it gives them tremendous nutrition. But more importantly it’s an emotional bond between the mother and the child.”

Debra Payne, program planner for First 5 Sacramento was at the Aug. 14 ceremony to congratulate the staff. First 5 Sacramento was involved with this program at Kaiser too.

Joni Wuthrich, director of prenatal [services](#), said the staff have undergone training courses, learning the importance of encouraging breast-feeding over formula and allowing new mothers to “room in,” or stay with their baby the entire hour after delivery to breastfeed.

“I’ve been a nurse for 34 years and every single year more research comes out about how good breast-feeding is for babies,” she said.

Dessiree Whitehurst gave birth to her first child, a girl, on Aug. 13 at Kaiser in South Sacramento. The fact that Kaiser South Sacramento is in the Baby Friendly program and promotes breast-feeding amongst new mothers was reassuring to her as a new mom, she said.

“I’ve heard so many things like ‘It’s hard to breastfeed,’” she said. “Knowing that there is so much help- it’s really good for me.”

Whitehurst had already started breast-feeding her baby by the next day.

As part of the Baby Friendly Initiative, Kaiser will not accept free formula from vendors.

“We separated our relationship with formula vendors and that is a part of baby friendly too,” Wuthrich said.

Formula is prescribed when it is medically recommended for babies, rather than being a substitute for milk.

Wuthrich said baby formula is healthy, but human milk is better.

Not all women have to breast-feed, they support family choice too, she added.