



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 08-25-10
CONTACT: Leslie Kinnee
989-831-3669, kinnee@mmdhd.org
Mid-Michigan District Health Department
615 N. State St., Stanton, MI 48888-9702, www.mmdhd.org

When it comes to the health of your baby, the breast is best

Stanton- Mothers make many important decisions each and every day, but perhaps the most important decision a mother can make is the one to breastfeed.

Breastfeeding exclusively is the healthiest choice for both mother and baby. A recent study published in the April 5, 2010 online journal, *Pediatrics*, concluded that if most new mothers in the U.S. would breastfeed their babies for the first six months of life, it would save nearly 1,000 lives and 13 billion dollars each year.

There is simply no denying that breast milk is nature's perfect food; it's packed with nutrients and antibodies to protect against illness, it's easy to digest, it's ready anytime and anywhere and it's absolutely free!

For all of these reasons, the Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) highly encourages mothers to breastfeed exclusively (no other foods or drinks) until their baby is six months of age and continue breastfeeding when other foods are introduced at six months of age. Breastfeeding after six months gives babies powerful protection from bacteria and viruses, provides adequate nutrition and feelings of comfort and security.

Studies show that babies gain numerous benefits from breastfeeding. Those benefits include:

- Protection from bacterial and viral infections
- Decreased chance of developing obesity
- Fewer episodes of diarrhea during infancy
- Fewer cases of sudden infant death syndrome
- Reduction in ear infections by up to 50 percent
- Reduction in serious lower respiratory track infections by 72 percent
- Lower risk of developing asthma
- Reduced risk for developing lymphoma and leukemia
- Reduced risk for developing Type I and Type II Diabetes

Nursing moms gain numerous benefits from breastfeeding as well. Those benefits include:

- Decreased risk of developing Type II Diabetes and Ovarian Cancer
- Reduction in stress levels
- Possible protection against osteoporosis later in life

MMDHD will soon be hiring four part-time peer counselors to provide education and support to WIC clients who choose to breastfeed thanks to a grant received from the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH).

"Breastfeeding makes such a significant contribution to the health, development and emotional well-being of children," said Dr. Robert Graham, Medical Director for MMDHD. "One simply can't ignore the fact that when it comes to feeding newborns, the *breast is best*."

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the counties of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm.

###