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IMMEDIATE NEWS RELEASE

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2009 Breastfeeding Awareness Month Mother's Milk: It's all a Baby Needs

Kingsford, Michigan – August 5, 2009. Mother's milk has all the good things baby needs! Packed with nutrients and antibodies to protect against illness, breastmilk is nature's perfect food. Health officials recommend that mothers breastfeed exclusively (offering infants no water, juice, or formula) for the first six months of their infant's life. Studies show that babies who are not exclusively breastfed for six months are more likely to develop a wide range of infectious diseases including ear infections, diarrhea, and respiratory illnesses, as well as require more hospitalizations.

According to Marie Pera, RN, the Breastfeeding Educator at the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department, we should encourage and support exclusive breastfeeding because it is the healthiest way to feed an infant. Pera recommends starting breastfeeding in the first hour of life, introducing solid foods at six months, and continuing to breastfeed through the first year of life. Research shows that exclusive breastfeeding for six months decreases an infant's risk of developing several chronic diseases later in life including obesity, diabetes, and asthma.

"It is important that mothers are aware of the health benefits of their infant feeding decisions. When a mother chooses to breastfeed, we have a responsibility to protect and support her decision by providing an environment that enables her to be successful," says Pera.

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