



Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

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Dickinson-Iron District Health Department Kicks off New Year with Healthy Beginnings Month

Kingsford and Iron River, Michigan, January 14, 2008 - Good health before pregnancy helps to protect a baby's growth and development. January is designated as "Healthy Beginnings" month, and Dickinson-Iron District Health Department officials are reminding women to take good care of themselves before, during, and after pregnancy to give their babies a healthy start.

"Long before a woman is ready to be pregnant, the decisions she makes, such as using effective family planning methods and taking steps to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, help her chances of having a healthy pregnancy," said Margie Surface, Public Health Program Coordinator.

Once a woman is pregnant, the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department offers many services to help ensure a healthy baby, especially for low-income women.

"We offer maternal support programs, including the Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program, not only because we care about women and babies but because they are good investment", said Surface, "In fact, for every dollar spent on WIC, \$3.50 is saved in future costs; saving lives means saving dollars."

Good nutrition prevents many health problems in babies. The best food for most babies is breastmilk. Breast-feeding lowers a child's risk for many types of infections and allergies and may also help protect children from some health problems, such as eczema and asthma. Health Department officials encourage moms to breastfeed until their babies are 12 months old, or longer.

"The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is always working to promote healthy babies, encouraging good nutrition, sleep routines, and lots of TLC", said Surface. "Promoting healthy babies also means making sure parents know they need to secure their child in a car seat when riding in a motor vehicle."

Despite the best preparation, some babies are born with disabilities. Then, Health Department staff coordinates Children's Special Health Care Services, which provides financial assistance for health care for certain medical conditions, with other services from Intermediate School Districts, hospitals, and others in the community.

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is committed to promoting wellness, preventing disease, providing health care, and protecting the environment. For additional information visit our website at www.didhd.org.

Additional information about the "Public Health – For Michigan. For You" slogan and "2007: The Year of Public Health" can be found at www.malph.org.

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