Breastfeeding Support Encouraged

As a mother prepares for the birth of her child, she must make many, important health decisions, including how she will feed her baby. A recent study was published in the April 5, 2010 online journal, Pediatrics. It concluded that if most new mothers in the US would breastfeed their babies for the first six months of life, it would save nearly 1,000 lives and 13 billion dollars each year.

For most mothers, the feeding decision is not made just once, but many times, as mothers face challenges and barriers to exclusive and continued breastfeeding, including the lack of support in the workplace. At least 58% of women, who are working when they become pregnant, return to work by the time their child is three months old. Women who wish to continue breastfeeding after returning to work have relatively few and simple needs. They need a dependable efficient breast pump; a convenient, safe, private and comfortable location at the worksite; and the opportunity to pump two or three times during the work day if working more than a 4 hours at a time. Often with shorter work schedules, a working mom may not need a breast pump.

With the recent passage of Health Care Reform legislation and introduction of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services’ Business Case for Breastfeeding toolkit, the Federal government is increasing efforts for improving worksite lactation support. More information on these initiatives is available from the United States Breastfeeding Committee website at http://www.usbreastfeeding.org. Area businesses or individuals can also request additional information about a worksite lactation plan from the Central Michigan District Health Department local county office, and ask for the lactation specialist.

During the month of August, breastfeeding awareness and support is highlighted in communities throughout Michigan. The Central Michigan District Health Department is planning to celebrate the success of breastfeeding mothers and their babies in our offices during the month of August at each of our six county locations. You can visit our website at www.cmdhd.org for location and further information. Anyone who may be seeking information on breastfeeding or seeking help with workplace lactation support is also encouraged to contact us.

Central Michigan District Health Department serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon.

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