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The U.S. Lactation Consultant Association Marks Diabetes Alert Day

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RALEIGH, N.C. --- The United States Lactation Consultant Association joins the American Diabetes Association (ADA) in marking Diabetes Alert Day—a one-day “wake-up call” during which the ADA invites the public to take the Diabetes Risk Test to find out if they are at risk for type 2 diabetes. According to the American Diabetes Association, 25.8 million people—or 8.3 percent of the population—have diabetes. In children under 20 years of age, 15,600 are newly diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and 3,600 with type 2 diabetes each year.

With such high rates, it is no surprise that diabetes is the primary cause of death for 71,382 Americans each year and contributes to 231,404 more deaths annually. Diabetes can have a devastating impact on quality of life and has significant health care costs attached to it. March 25 marks Diabetes Alert Day, and what better way to celebrate than be reminded there are ways to *prevent* this disease!

You may be surprised to learn that one of the many benefits of breastfeeding includes reducing the risk of developing diabetes for both children and adults. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality has highlighted evidence that breast milk is protective against type 1 and 2 diabetes.

For mothers, not only does breastfeeding increase metabolic expenditure by 400-600kcal each day, it also reduces abdominal fat and improves insulin sensitivity and glucose tolerance. In November of last year, researchers compiled a meta-analysis of studies looking at breastfeeding and type two diabetes. They found a 32 percent risk reduction of developing type 2 diabetes in the group with the longest breastfeeding duration compared to the group that did not breastfeed at all.

Reducing the risk of developing diabetes is an important benefit to breastfeeding mothers and their children. Considering the health care costs related to the chronic disease, the entire nation stands to benefit by providing an environment that promotes and supports breastfeeding. With the help of International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC) women can feel confident in their decision to choose breastfeeding. For more information about the IBCLC or to locate a lactation professional in your area, visit www.uslca.org.

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