

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**January 1, 2010**

**Contact: Geauga County WIC Program**  
**(440-279-1936)**

### **National Birth Defects Prevention Month Sounds Diabetes Alert for Women**

Chardon, Ohio – Geauga WIC Program is joining the over 350 members of the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) to alert women of childbearing age about the critical link between diabetes and increased risk for birth defects. January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month and this year Geauga County WIC Program is focusing on addressing diabetes among women of childbearing age.

“All types of diabetes, not just gestational, have been linked to birth defects when the disease is not carefully controlled,” says Tammy Hawn RDLDCCLC. The prevalence of diabetes in women of childbearing age has doubled in the last decade, affecting 1.3 million nationwide women of childbearing age.

Although diabetes has been identified as a public health concern, the general public is unaware of the complications that uncontrolled diabetes can have on both the pregnant woman and her baby.

Studies have demonstrated that the key to a healthy pregnancy for women with diabetes is keeping blood glucose in target range -- both before and during pregnancy. Babies born to women with diabetes, especially women with poor diabetes control are at greater risk for birth defects.

“Small steps like visiting a health care provider before pregnancy and taking a multivitamin everyday can make a big difference,” says Tammy Hawn RDLDCCLC. The National Birth Defects Prevention Network is working with health care providers around the country to encourage diabetes prevention and control for the over 60 million women in the U.S. of childbearing age.

Geauga County WIC Program is participating in National Birth Defects Prevention Month with distributing information to women at local WIC clinics and through our website. We are excited to be part of this national movement. Through our efforts across the country we reach millions of women and their families with vital prevention information,” says Tammy Hawn RDLDCCLC.

Women can take other steps in their everyday lives to maintain good health such as having regular health care check ups and learning about family history and genetic risks.

To learn more, please contact Geauga County WIC Program at (440-279-1936).

###