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Baby You Were Born To Breastfeed

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Press Release: IFANZ

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Babies are born to breastfeed and without doubt exclusive breastfeeding from birth to six months of age represents an ideal window of opportunity for reducing the risk of obesity and diabetes.

Presenting an oral submission to the Health Committee today, the Infant Feeding Association of New Zealand (IFANZ) will outline some of the biological mechanisms that set artificially fed infants apart from those who breastfeed.

“Comparing breastfeeding to artificial feeding is like comparing a nutritious home-cooked meal to a third-rate takeaway”, says Marcia Annandale, Trustee and Coordinator of IFANZ.

A recent study showed that breastfed children can still become overweight due to environmental factors. However, when these children participated in a weight management programme they lost more weight and maintained this weight loss better than children who had never breastfed.

The protein hormone Leptin (from the Greek “leptos” meaning thin) found in human milk serves to regulate energy intake and expenditure and act as a circulating satiety factor. In contrast, bottle feeding is largely mediated by the caregiver.

IFANZ will also call on the Health Committee to fully implement the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions.

The International Code establishes minimum standards to regulate industry marketing practices. New Zealand is currently governed by a weaker industry self-regulatory Code of Practice.

Annandale says, “implementation of the International Code and subsequent resolutions remain our best hope for breastfeeding at a time when companies are finding new ways to expand their markets. For example, a new range of formula claims to help prevent common feeding problems such as colic, reflux and sleepless nights. IFANZ maintains claims like these are both unacceptable and unethical as they prey on women’s insecurities about mothering and breastfeeding.”

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