

Benefits of Breastfeeding for the Baby

In some parts of the world the difference between breastfeeding and bottle-feeding can be the difference between life and death.

- ✚ Human milk is made for human infants. It changes to meet the needs of a growing baby. It is perfectly balanced with protein, fat, minerals and vitamins.
- ✚ Breastmilk is readily available, requires no preparation, sterilization or refrigeration. In developing countries where food storage and supplies are limited, breastmilk is the only safe way to feed babies.
- ✚ It protects against infections (including ear, respiratory and urinary infections).
- ✚ It prolongs the period of natural immunity to mumps, measles, and polio.
- ✚ Breastfeeding lowers the risk of asthma, colic, food allergy, and eczema in infants with a family history of asthma.
- ✚ Mother's milk is easily digested so there is far less constipation, gas, colic and spitting up. Breastfed babies are less likely to develop chronic bowel diseases including ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease and celiac disease.
- ✚ Breastfeeding keeps baby well hydrated during illness and helps with speedy recovery. Breast milk decreases the risk of diarrhea and dehydration.
- ✚ It enhances proper jaw development. Children who are breastfed have fewer speech problems.
- ✚ Breastfeeding promotes dental health. (less cavities)
- ✚ Breastfeeding is good for brain development (higher IQ)
- ✚ Children who are breastfed develop better interpersonal relationships and have greater ability to give comfort and to comfort themselves.

Benefits of Breastfeeding for Mom

- ✚ It gives mom time to relax and enjoy feeding her baby.
- ✚ It helps the uterus contract to usual size and reduces bleeding after birth.
- ✚ It helps mom lose weight faster.
- ✚ Breastfeeding promotes a special closeness between a mother and her baby.
- ✚ Breastfeeding provides maternal protection against breast cancer.
- ✚ Some studies have shown reduced risk of ovarian and cervical cancer.
- ✚ Breastfeeding provides protection against osteoporosis and hip fracture in later life.
- ✚ It delays the return of menstruation.
- ✚ Parents who breastfeed have lower health care costs because babies are healthier. Parents save money and time by not having to purchase and prepare formula.
- ✚ Parents miss fewer days at work because babies are healthier.