

Topic #1: Benefits of Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the gift of a lifetime, a gift that only a mother can give.

Breastfeeding Gives Your Baby Comfort and Nutrition.

- Breastfeeding gives your baby the comfort of being close to you as well as the comfort of sucking. Breastfeeding can help you and your baby feel more relaxed.
 - Breastfeeding decreases stress hormones in you and your baby.
 - Breastfeeding has pain-relieving properties for your baby. (Pediatrics 2002;109;590-593)
 - Breast milk contains everything your baby needs to grow and develop the healthiest body possible. Your breast milk changes as the baby grows to give baby the nutrition they need! Since the nutrients come from a human source, it perfectly matches the baby's digestive system and is digested rapidly and easily.
 - Breastfeeding gives your baby all the nutrition, growth factors and disease protection needed for normal growth, as well as lifelong disease protection.
 - Babies who are breastfed have fewer allergies and have a decreased risk of adult onset diabetes.
 - Breastfeeding protects your baby from digestive problems such as diarrhea.
 - Breastfeeding protects against obesity.
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Breastfeeding Protects Your Baby Against Disease.

- Your breast milk has many proteins that fight bacteria and viruses, and may reduce ear infections, respiratory infections, gastrointestinal diseases, colds and flu, while formula has no disease fighting or protective components.
- Breastfed infants receive protection that lasts a lifetime: lower incidence of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and serious diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.
- Nonbreastfed infants have a greater incidence of ear infections, diarrhea, respiratory illness, gastrointestinal illness, cancer, heart disease, obesity, and SIDS.



Breastfeeding Promotes Your Baby's Growth and Development.

- Breast milk contains enzymes and hormones that help baby's digestion and promote healthy growth.
 - The milk of mothers whose infants were born prematurely has more protein and other nutrients specially needed to meet the growth needs of the premature baby.
 - Breast milk contains important fats that help your baby's brain grow. Breastfed babies have higher intelligence scores. These important fats also make your baby have better vision and digestion the rest of his/her life.
 - Formula has no enzymes or growth promoting factors. Formula fed infants are more likely to be overweight.
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Breastfeeding Saves You Time and Money.

- Breast milk is always fresh, free, and ready to feed. Formula costs over \$1,700 a year, not including supplies.
 - Since breastfed babies get sick less, it means less money spent on doctor's visits, medicines, hospitalizations, and less time lost from work to stay home with a sick baby.
 - Breast milk requires no preparation. Formula takes time to buy, mix and prepare. Bottle nipples drip milk and may lead to stimulation of your baby's suck reflex and overfeeding.
 - Breastfeeding requires no clean up or disposal. Formula creates more work for moms and more trash for the environment.
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Breastfeeding Benefits Your Health.

- Women who breastfeed have decreased rates of breast and ovarian cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and depression.
- Breastfeeding will help you lose more weight and reduces postpartum bleeding.
- Women who breastfeed return to prepregnancy weight faster.
- Women who breastfeed have less bleeding and their uterus returns to normal size faster.
- The longer a woman breastfeeds, the more benefit she receives.