

The Benefits of Breastfeeding for Mom and Baby

Breast milk is best for your baby, and the benefits of breastfeeding extend well beyond basic nutrition. In addition to containing all the vitamins and nutrients your baby needs in the first six months of life, breast milk is packed with disease-fighting substances that protect your baby from illness.

Breastfeeding Benefits for Babies

Breast milk provides the ideal nutrition for infants. It has a nearly perfect mix of vitamins, protein, and fat; everything your baby needs to grow. And it's all provided in a form more easily digested than infant formula. As your baby grows, breastmilk changes its nutritional composition for what your baby needs. Breast milk contains antibodies that help your baby fight off viruses and bacteria. Breastfeeding lowers your baby's risk of having asthma or allergies. Plus, babies who are breastfed exclusively for the first 6 months, without any formula, have fewer ear infections, respiratory illnesses, and bouts of diarrhea. They also have fewer hospitalizations and trips to the doctor.



Breastfeeding has been linked to higher IQ scores in later childhood in some studies. What's more, the physical closeness, skin-to-skin touching, and eye contact all help your baby bond with you and feel secure. Breastfed infants are more likely to gain the right amount of weight as they grow rather than become overweight children. The AAP says breastfeeding also plays a role in the prevention of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome). It's also been linked to lower the risk of diabetes, obesity, and certain cancers as well.

Breastfeeding Benefits for Mothers

Breastfeeding burns extra calories, so it can help you lose pregnancy weight faster. It releases the hormone oxytocin, which helps your uterus return to its pre-pregnancy size and may reduce uterine bleeding after birth. Breastfeeding also lowers your risk of breast and ovarian cancer. It may lower your risk of osteoporosis, too.

Since you don't have to buy and measure formula, sterilize nipples, or warm bottles, it saves you time and money. It also gives you regular time to relax quietly with your newborn as you bond.

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