

Why Breastfeeding is Best for You and Your Baby

Breastfeeding is the key to good health for mothers and babies.

Why is Breastfeeding Best for Moms?

- ❖ Breastfeeding is something special you can do for your baby.
- ❖ Breastfeeding helps moms and babies build a close and loving bond.
- ❖ Breastfeeding hormones help you feel more relaxed, loving, and protective of your baby.
- ❖ Breastfeeding can help moms lose the weight they gained during pregnancy.
- ❖ Breastfeeding is an important preventative health measure for mom. It reduces mom's risk of breast and ovarian cancer and osteoporosis (weak bones).



Most Moms Can Breastfeed, including:

Teen Moms	Older Moms
Moms with small breasts	Moms with large breasts
Moms who had a C-section (Cesarean section)	Moms who work or go to school
Moms with disabilities	Moms whose own mothers didn't breastfeed

Why is Breastfeeding Best for Babies?

- ❖ Breastfeeding is how babies are meant to be fed. Infant formulas (artificial baby milks) are usually made from cow's milk which is intended for baby cows! No infant formula can do for your baby what breastfeeding can.
- ❖ Breastfeeding encourages the best brain growth and development in babies. Breastfed babies usually have higher IQs as children and adults than infants who were not breastfed.
- ❖ Breastfed babies are one-third less likely to die of "crib-death" (also known as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or SIDS).
- ❖ Breastfed babies have fewer illnesses and milder effects when illness does happen.
- ❖ Breastfeeding provides protection for your baby against respiratory infections, ear infections, childhood diabetes, and certain types of cancers. Infant formulas can not do this.
- ❖ Breastfeeding helps your child's facial structure develop correctly and can help your child look more attractive. Breastfed babies are less likely to have dental caries or crooked teeth.
- ❖ Breastfed babies rarely grow into overweight children.



Call your WIC staff right away if you need help with breastfeeding. WIC staff know of other breastfeeding mothers and breastfeeding experts who can help you.

While breastfeeding is normal, you may feel unsure of yourself in the beginning. Be patient about learning this new skill. Breastfeeding is important for you and your baby.

NOTE: ALL pregnant women should know their HIV status and should ask their health care provider for an HIV test. In the United States, it is recommended that women with HIV or AIDS not breastfeed, as the virus can be passed to their baby through breastmilk.

Pediatricians recommend...

- ❖ Babies be given only breastmilk for the first 6 months of life.
- ❖ Solid foods be offered at about 6 months of age and breastfeeding continue until the baby is at least 1 year of age or older.

False Ideas About Breastfeeding

- ❖ **Breastfeeding moms have to be extra careful about what they eat.** Breastfeeding moms can eat just about anything they like in reasonable amounts including greens, beans, garlic, onions, broccoli, and pizza. Most babies are never bothered by what mom eats. To keep themselves healthy, breastfeeding moms should eat the same good foods that they ate while they were pregnant.
- ❖ **My mother and grandmother “could not” breastfeed so I can’t either.** The breastfeeding experiences of your mother and grandmother do not relate to your ability to breastfeed. They probably did not have the knowledge, help, and support they needed. Today, we know a lot more about how breastfeeding works and there is help available for you—just ask.
- ❖ **Getting upset or angry spoils your milk.** Your milk is still good for your baby even if you become upset or angry.
- ❖ **Breastfeeding hurts.** Breastfeeding should not hurt if your baby is “latched on” to your breast correctly. Have a breastfeeding educator show you how to get started.
- ❖ **Breastfeeding is embarrassing.** Breastfeeding does not have to be embarrassing. You can learn to breastfeed modestly. Ask the breastfeeding educator to show you.
- ❖ **I’ll have to drink milk while I am breastfeeding.** You do not have to drink milk to make breastmilk. You can eat other foods to get the calcium needed by your body. Ask the nutritionist for ideas.

If you are a WIC breastfeeding mother, you will receive more food for yourself each month until your baby is 12 months old.



If you don't receive infant formula (artificial baby milk) from WIC, your baby from 6 to 12 months of age will receive more baby foods such as baby fruits, vegetables, and meats.



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