

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends “exclusive breastfeeding” (or only breast milk) for up to 6 months of age. After that, solid food should be introduced while the baby continues to be breastfed for at least the coming year.

Let's start talking about Breastfeeding



Photography credits:
Emma Reisman

Prenatal breastfeeding education -
1st Trimester

Why breastfeed?

Breast milk is a special gift only you can make that will sustain the health of your baby and promote bonding.

It's best for your baby.

Experts around the world agree that breast milk is the only food your baby needs. Studies show that babies who are exclusively breastfed get more health benefits than babies who are fed both breast milk and formula.

Breast milk is...

- Rich with antibodies. Antibodies are special proteins that fight infection and help the baby ward off illnesses. Literature sometimes refers to breast milk as “baby’s first vaccine.”
- Filled with vitamins and nutrients that help with brain development.
- Easier to digest than formula, resulting in less spit-up and constipation.

Babies who are exclusively breastfed are...

- Less likely to get ear infections, diarrhea, or to be hospitalized for pneumonia.
- Less likely to develop asthma, some cancers, diabetes, and obesity later in life.
- Less likely to die from SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

It's best for you.

Breastfeeding...

- Helps your body recover from pregnancy and labor.
- Lowers your risk of getting diabetes, ovarian cancer, and some forms of breast cancer.
- Helps you bond with your baby.
- Saves time: breast milk is always the right temperature and requires no bottles to wash and sterilize.
- Saves a lot of money that would have been used to buy formula and other supplies.
- Helps your baby stay healthy, leading to fewer absences from work for you.

Can I breastfeed?

Under most circumstances, a mother will be able to breastfeed her baby. The longer a mother breastfeeds, the greater the benefits are to the baby.

Mothers can breastfeed if they...

- Have a cesarean section.
- Take medications for illnesses; many are permitted, but always check with a provider.
- Have had certain breast surgeries, often with support from a lactation consultant (IBCLC).
- Have hepatitis A or B, once the baby is given protective shots in the hospital, or have hepatitis C, unless the nipples are cracked or bleeding.
- Have pierced or inverted nipples.
- Have an occasional alcoholic drink, as long as there is a span of time between the drink and next feeding.
- Smoke tobacco. It is best for the health of the mother and baby for the mother to not smoke, but a smoking habit is not a reason to avoid breastfeeding.

Mothers cannot breastfeed if they...

- Have HIV.
- Use illegal drugs.
- Are receiving cancer chemotherapy, radioactive isotopes or thyroid-toxic agents.
- Have a Human T-cell Lymphotropic Virus.
- Have active shingles or chicken pox on the breast (herpes viruses).
- Have untreated active tuberculosis.



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