

Reasons to Breastfeed

- Breast milk cannot be duplicated by any artificial means.
- Breast milk changes over time, even throughout the course of the day, to meet the changing needs of the growing child.
- Children who are breastfed score higher on IQ tests at school age and also on visual acuity tests.
- Children who are breastfed have a lower incidence of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Children who are breastfed are significantly protected against asthma and eczema, and allergic disorders if exclusively breastfed for at least 4 months.
- Premature infants who receive breast milk have IQ's that are 8-15 points higher than those who receive formula.
- Women are less likely to develop ovarian and breast cancers. The more months a woman has breastfed, the greater the benefit.
- Mothers are more likely to return to their pre-pregnancy weight than mothers who formula feed.
- 1.3 billion more is spent by insurance and Medicaid to cover sick-child office visits and prescriptions to treat the three most common illnesses- respiratory infections, ear infections, and diarrhea- in the first year of life for formula-fed infants versus breastfed infants.

Benefits of Breastfeeding to the Mother

1. Suckling helps to shrink a mother's uterus after childbirth.

"Nursing will help you to regain your figure more quickly, since the process of lactation causes the uterus (which has increased during pregnancy to about 20 times its normal size) to shrink more quickly to its prepregnancy size."

2. Not breastfeeding increases a mother's risk of developing ovarian cancer.

3. Not breastfeeding increases a mother's risk of developing endometrial cancer.

4. Not breastfeeding increases a mother's risk of breast cancer.

If all women who do not breastfeed or who breastfeed for less than 3 months were to do so for 4-12 months, breast cancer among parous premenopausal women could be reduced by 11 percent, judging from current rates. If all women with children lactated for 24 months or longer, however, then the incidence might be reduced by nearly 25 percent. This reduction would be even greater among women who first lactate at an early age.

5. Nursing helps a mother lose weight after her baby is born.

Breastfeeding requires an average of 500 extra calories per day.

6. Breastfeeding is easier than using formula.

After the initial start-up period, breastfeeding is very easy. No shopping for formula, bottles, and other supplies. No mixing, heating, refrigerating, and cleaning up formula.

7. Breast milk is free.

The added calories a mother must take in are a negligible expense, and nursing clothes are optional. If you need to pump, excellent pumps are available between \$100 and \$225. They can be used for more than one child, so they are really an investment. Any way you look at it, you'll spend a lot more money if you choose to formula feed.

8. Formula is expensive.

The cost of feeding a baby on formula for one year was estimated to be around \$1,000 in 1990.