

Benefits of Breastfeeding

Human milk is uniquely suited for human infants



- Babies were born to be breastfed.
- Human milk is easy to digest and contains more than 200 components that babies need in the early months of life.
- Factors in breast milk protect infants from a wide variety of illnesses.
- Children who have been breastfed have less risk of becoming overweight or obese, even as adults.
- Research has shown that children who had been breastfed had higher IQs.

Breastfeeding saves lives

- Lack of breastfeeding is a risk factor for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Human milk protects premature infants from life-threatening gastrointestinal disease.
- Breastfed children have lower risk of dying before their first birthday.

Breastfed infants are healthier

- Formula fed infants have twice the risk of having ear infections in the first year than infants who are exclusively breastfed for at least 4 months.
- Breastfeeding reduces the incidence, and lessens the severity of a large number of infections, including pneumonia and meningitis in infants.
- Breastfeeding protects infants against a variety of illnesses, such as diarrhea and infant botulism.
- Breastfed babies have less chance of allergies, asthma and eczema.
- Evidence suggests that exclusive breastfeeding for at least two months protects susceptible children from Type I insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM).
- Breastfeeding may reduce the risk for subsequent inflammatory bowel disease, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and childhood cancers.



Breastfeeding helps mothers recover from childbirth

- Breastfeeding helps the uterus to shrink to its pre-pregnancy state and reduces the amount of blood lost after delivery.
- Mothers who breastfeed for at least 3 months may lose more weight than mothers who do not breastfeed.
- Breastfeeding mothers usually resume their menstrual cycles 20 to 30 weeks later than mothers who do not breastfeed.



Breastfeeding keeps women healthier throughout their lives

- Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months can help in child spacing among women who do not use contraceptives (The Lactation Amenorrhea Method).
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of breast and ovarian cancer.
- Breastfeeding may reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

Breastfeeding is economical

- The cost of infant formula has increased 150 percent since the 1980's.
- Breastfeeding reduces health care costs.



Breastfeeding is environmentally sound



- Unlike infant formula, breastfeeding requires no fossil fuels for its manufacture or preparation.
- Breastfeeding reduces pollutants created as by-products during the manufacture of plastics for bottles and metal for cans to contain infant formula.
- Breastfeeding reduces the burden on our landfills, as there are no cans to throw away.

WIC can help you with breastfeeding. Find out if you qualify.

WIC serves low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding and new moms,
and children under 5 years old.



Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program

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