



Onkwehonwe Midwives Collective
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10 Reasons to Breastfeed

Breastfeeding is by far the best nutrition for your baby. Here are some of the best reasons to choose breast milk as the food of choice for your growing baby.

1. **Breast milk is specifically made for your baby**

Your body will “tailor make” the perfect milk for your baby. It will have just the right proteins, vitamins, water and nutrients for your growing baby. It’s the easiest food for them to digest. It will also change as your baby’s needs change. Because of this, breastfed babies are less constipated and fussy and are less likely to be obese later in life.

2. **Contains the best nutrients**

The first milk called colostrums, is not only filled with proteins, sugar, water and vitamins but contains immunity that will help protect your baby against infections, ear aches and colds. Breastfed babies have less chances of developing asthma and intestinal problems. Breast milk is also important for brain development and breastfed babies tend to have higher IQ’s.

3. **Convenient and Safe**

Breast milk is always available, safe and at the right temperature. There is no need to sterilize bottles or heat them up. It’s always available no matter where you are. Traveling is easy.

4. **Your body and your baby are designed to breastfeed**

Babies are born with the instinct to feed and mothers all have the capacity to produce breast milk. As soon as your baby starts to feed, your body will produce the hormones needed to produce the milk. The amount of milk your baby takes will cue your body to produce the same amount. If the baby needs more, he will suck more often and tell your body to produce more. There is no need to measure.

5. **Build a special bond with your baby**

You can start to breastfeed as soon as the baby is born. A loving and secure relationship is being built right from the beginning. You can’t spoil a baby. Babies need a lot of love and attention to comfort them and breastfeeding provides that.

6. **Available for months**

Babies need only breast milk for the first 6 months. That means not water or other fluids and no foods. The baby will let your body know how much he needs and your body will produce the appropriate milk for your growing baby. Trust them! Your baby will slowly wean himself from breast milk once foods are introduced after 6 months.

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7. It's FREE

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You do not need to buy many bottles or formula. Other than the extra food you may eat, breastfeeding is much easier on a budget than formula feeding.

8. Helps you lose weight

Even if you need to eat a few more calories while breastfeeding, your body uses approximately 940 calories to produce 1 liter of breast milk. This means that breastfeeding will help you lose the extra weight you might have gained at a slow and steady pace.

9. An enriching learning experience

Breastfeeding is a learning process for you and your baby. It is sometimes difficult in the beginnings. But with patience and help from your support people (midwife, lactation consultant, family), most women will find breastfeeding to be well worth it. Don't hesitate to ask your questions and most of all ask for help if you need it.

10. Healthy for you too!

Mom's who breastfeed are less likely to develop breast and ovarian cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes and post-partum hemorrhage. Breastfeeding is usually a relaxing time for you and your baby which helps decrease your stress.

Breastfeeding is nature's wonderful way of caring for your new baby. You can give your baby something no one else can: A nurturing relationship as well as the best start for a healthy life!

Check out the midwifery library for DVD's and books to prepare for breastfeeding. You can also visit the following website for great information including video clips to help with successful breastfeeding: <http://www.breastfeedinginc.ca/>