

Benefits of exclusive breastfeeding



Health outcomes for infants

- Your milk is both a medicine and a food for your baby.
- This medicine and food protects your baby from many sicknesses while he/she is young, as well as lowering the chances that your baby will have health problems as an adult.
- This is because human milk changes the way your baby's body is able to digest food, fight infections and fight off other problems. So the protection lasts long after you stop breastfeeding (providing milk).



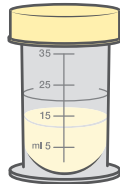
Health outcomes for mothers

- The hormones that are released by your body during breastfeeding help your uterus return to normal more quickly, and lessen the chances of having problems with bleeding and infection after giving birth.
- Breastfeeding lowers the chance that you will get breast cancer or ovarian cancer later in life.
- Other research shows that breastfeeding helps protect your bones and lessens the chances of being overweight and having high blood pressure and heart disease later in life.
- All of the research shows the same effect: the more months out of your life that you breastfeed or provide milk, the greater the protection from these health problems.



Colostrum

- The milk you make during the first days after birth is a special medicine that is intended to gradually shift your baby from swallowing your amniotic fluid to drinking milk.
- Colostrum has 3 special purposes. It grows your baby's intestine, making it more able to take in nutrients. It matures your baby's intestine, causing certain digestive juices to become active. It protects your baby's intestine by making it hard for harmful germs to grow and get inside your baby's body.



Exclusivity of human milk

- The time that it is most important for your baby to receive only your milk is in the first days after birth.
- There are mothers, who don't know if they want to breastfeed or who want to use both breast milk and formula to feed their babies. If you decide you want to use formula, it is best that you do not start it until after your milk stimulates these important changes in your baby's intestines.
- Mothers often worry that it will be more difficult to change milks later, and it is best to get their babies used to both formula and breast milk. However, using only your milk for the first days and weeks (if possible) actually makes it easier for your baby to digest formula later on.



HUMAN MILK

Maternal medications as a barrier

- Almost all medications are safe with breastfeeding.
- We have experts who can tell us about your specific medication.
- We will consult with your prescribing doctor to make sure that he/she is aware of the safety of this medication.



Ways to feed your milk

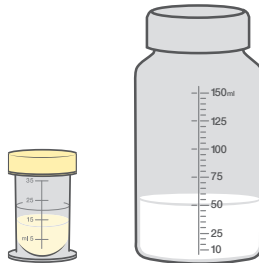
- There are many ways to feed your milk to your baby. Most mothers want to feed their babies directly at the breast.
- If this is not the case with you, your milk can be removed by breast pump and fed to your baby.
- Either way – your baby gets your milk, and this is what is most important.



Adequacy of maternal milk volume

- Newborn babies drink only about 15 ml/half an ounce (1 tablespoon) from the breast in the entire first day after being born. They feed about 10 times, and take only a few drops each feeding.
- Babies suck very fast when they drink such small amounts of milk. They go back and forth between sucking and resting. They may even look like they are asleep, but then they start sucking again. This is a normal sucking pattern during the first days when they do not need much milk to drink.
- Only human babies suck this way in the early days after birth. It is a special type of sucking that helps change your breast tissue into cells that make and release milk.
- It is important to let your baby suck as often as possible during these early days. This helps your breasts make lots of milk by the end of the first week.

- Your milk volume does not go up just a little bit each day. By feeding your baby frequently in these early days, the amount of milk in your breasts increases from 15 ml to around 600 ml (half an ounce to 20 ounces) within just a few days.
- Nearly all mothers are worried that they may not make enough milk for their babies, but we will help you know that your baby is drinking enough milk before you leave the hospital. We will also give you the name and phone number of a person to call if you have any questions or problems.



Perceived infant hunger with breastfeeding alone

- When your baby is inside you, he/she swallows small amounts of your amniotic fluid all day long. He/she doesn't know how long it was since the last time he drank – he just drinks small amounts. Because of this, his/her stomach is very small and needs to have just small amounts of milk in the beginning so it is not stretched too fast.
- Your baby's small stomach is not meant to be stretched with large amounts of formula. If it is stretched too fast, his/her little body will release substances that may cause problems with digestion and other body processes.
- Most babies do not feed so frequently for more than a couple of weeks until your milk supply is regulated to meet your baby's milk needs. Then, most babies settle into a schedule that is more predictable for you. However, this schedule usually has periods in the day when your baby feeds almost non-stop and others where your baby goes 3–5 hours without feeding. Every baby is different, and you will be able to tell when your baby is hungry.

Use of infant dummies

- Lots of research has been done about dummies and breastfeeding. All of the research shows that using a dummy in the first couple of weeks after birth can interfere with establishing a good milk supply.
- The best rule to guide you is that if your baby looks like he wants to suck, try to feed your baby at breast instead – even if he just finished feeding.
- Always try to feed your baby as soon as he wakes up and shows that he wants to eat. It is better to change his/her diaper when you have finished, rather than holding off the feeding (with a dummy) while you change the diaper.
- If you think your baby needs a dummy, try to breastfeed first instead. It is very easy to think your baby just needs to suck when he or she should feed, especially in the first month or so after birth – and that is the major problem with dummies.

Signals that something is wrong

Some mothers have their own health problems that can interfere with babies' feeding well from the breast in the first days post birth.

- Almost always, these problems are temporary – or short-lived – so that breastfeeding progresses well after these early problems. For most mothers, these problems go away after the first week or two, and after that, they can breastfeed like other mothers.
- We do not know that you will have problems with breastfeeding. If you have any risk factors, we will watch you feed your baby very carefully and will give you instructions to follow once you go home.
- If, for any reason, your baby cannot feed early and effectively, we will have you use the Medela Symphony breast pump (equipped with Initiation Technology), since it provides the right kind of stimulation to help teach your breasts to make lots of milk until your baby can take over.



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