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How Breastfeeding Benefits Mothers and Babies

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- One of the best things a mother can do for herself and her newborn baby is to breastfeed, even if circumstances allow breastfeeding for only a brief time or a partial breastfeeding experience or the feeding of expressed mother's milk.
- Breastfeeding results in increased bonding between a mother and her infant as the mother realizes how capable she is in nourishing, loving, and caring for her infant. Studies of a large group of young women in Kentucky showed the mothers who breastfed experienced increased self esteem and were more outgoing. They also finished school, got jobs, and provided well for their babies.^[1]
- Women who breastfeed their infants are less likely to be troubled with long term obesity and tend to lose weight after pregnancy more quickly as compared to women who do not nurse their babies.^[2]
- "Mother's milk is recommended for all infants under ordinary circumstances even if the mother's diet is not perfect, according to the Committee on Nutrition during Pregnancy and Lactation of the Institute of Medicine."^[3]
- **Colostrum** is the medical term used to describe the first milk produced by the mother which provides the newborn with unique protection from infection. "Human colostrum is rich in antibodies, which may provide protection against the bacteria and viruses that are present in the birth canal and associated with other human contact."^[4]



- Infant brain growth and development is enhanced because of the effects of other special nutrients in breast milk.^[5]



- Breastfeeding may decrease the risk of breast cancer before menopause and the risk of ovarian cancer.^[6]
- Breastfeeding women are less likely to develop osteoporosis (a condition where the bones become less dense and are prone to fracture with relatively minor injuries). After breastfeeding is discontinued the mother's bones will become denser.^[7]
- Cow's milk, which is in most formulas, has a different amino acid composition from human milk. Human milk is specific to the human species.^[8]
- Additional information on breastfeeding is available from the lactation services department

of your local hospital, a variety of books for parents, the doctors and nurses who take care of pregnant women and their babies, and many other multimedia sources.

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^[1] Lawrence, 1999, 220.

^[2] Lawrence, 1999, 219.

^[3] Lawrence, 1999, 97.

^[4] Lawrence, 1999, 100.

^[5] Lawrence, 1999, 219.

^[6] Lawrence, 1999, 219.

^[7] Lawrence, 1999, 130-131.

^[8] Lawrence, 1999, 117.

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