



Women's Health

Breast milk is best

For you and your baby

Breastfeeding protects your baby from disease

- Your breast milk has many proteins that fight bacteria and viruses.
- Breast milk may reduce ear infections, nose/breathing tubes, lung infections, stomach diseases, and colds or flu.
- Breastfed infants receive protection that lasts a lifetime: lower chances of sudden infant death syndrome and serious diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease.
- Breast milk is easier for your baby to digest. It protects your baby from digestive problems such as diarrhea.
- Breastfeeding protects against obesity.

Breastfeeding promotes your baby's growth and development

- Breast milk contains important fats that help your baby's brain grow. These important fats also make your baby have better vision and digestion the rest of his/her life.

Breastfeeding gives your baby comfort

- Breastfeeding gives your baby the comfort of being close to you, as well as the comfort of sucking.
- Breastfeeding decreases stress hormones in you and your baby.
- Breastfeeding relieves pain for your baby.

Breastfeeding has benefits for mothers

- Women who breastfeed have decreased rates of breast and ovarian cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis and depression.
- Breastfeeding will help you lose more weight and reduces postpartum bleeding.

Breastfeeding saves time and money, and is better for the environment

- Breast milk is always fresh, free and ready to feed! Formula costs over \$1,500 a year, not including bottles and nipples.
- Since breastfed babies get sick less, it means less money spent on doctor visits and medicines.
- Breastfeeding requires no cleanup or disposal. Formula creates more work for moms and more trash for the environment.

The American Academy of Pediatrics Policy

- Because breastfeeding is so important for babies, the American Academy of Pediatrics supports breastfeeding and the use of human milk.

Breast milk is all your baby needs for the first six months of life

- Breast milk has all the nutrition and fluid your baby needs for the first six months.
- Breast milk is better for your baby than any other food or fluid.
- Giving other food, formula or fluids may decrease your baby's desire for your breast milk.
- Breast milk is still the best milk for your baby after you start adding solid foods.
- You can continue breastfeeding for 12 months or more.



This handout does not take the place of a discussion with your provider. Discuss any questions or concerns you may have with your provider.