

5. Nursing mothers miss less work

Breastfeeding mothers miss fewer days from work because their infants are sick less often.

Breastfeeding Benefits Society

1. The nation benefits overall when mothers breastfeed. Recent research shows that if 90 percent of families breastfed exclusively for 6 months, nearly 1,000 deaths among infants could be prevented.
2. South Africa would also save a billion per year – medical care costs are lower for fully breastfed infants than for never-breastfed infants. Breastfed infants typically need fewer sick care visits, prescriptions, and hospitalizations.
3. Breastfeeding also contributes to a more productive workforce because mothers miss less work to care for sick infants. Employer medical costs are also lower.
4. Breastfeeding is also better for the environment. There is less trash and plastic waste compared to that produced by formula cans and bottle supplies.



Why Breastfeeding is Important?



You are special because you can make the food that is uniquely perfect for your baby. Invest the time in yourself and your baby – for your health and for the bond between you and your baby that will last a lifetime.

Introduction

The experience of breastfeeding is special for so many reasons, it provides joyful bonding with your baby, it is the perfect food only you can give, it saves costs and has many health benefits for both you and your baby.

Keep in mind that breastfeeding is a learned skill. It needs patience and practice. For some women, the learning stages can be frustrating and uncomfortable. And some situations make breastfeeding even harder, such as babies born early or health problems in the mother. The good news is that it will get easier, and support for breastfeeding mothers is growing.

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M Gilfillan, E van Rooyen

Breastfeed your baby. M Steyn. 2013

Your guide to breastfeeding, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011

Breastfeeding Protects Babies

1 Early breast milk is liquid gold

Known as liquid gold, **colostrum** is the thick yellow first breast milk that you make during pregnancy and just after birth. This milk is very rich in **nutrients** and **antibodies** to protect your baby. Although your baby only gets a small amount of colostrum at each feeding, it matches the amount his or her tiny stomach can hold.

2 Your breast milk changes as your baby grows

Colostrum changes into what is called mature milk. By the third to fifth day after birth, this mature breast milk has just the right amount of fat, sugar, water, and protein to help your baby continue to grow. It is a thinner type of milk than colostrum, but it provides all of the nutrients and antibodies your baby needs.

At the beginning of breast feeding the milk is very watery and this watery milk is called foremilk. After a while the milk thickens and becomes creamy and this milk is called hind milk. It is important that the baby suckles long enough on the breast to drink both the fore- and hind milk. Breast milk is the perfect all-in one food for the first 6 months. Baby does not need anything else.

3 Breast milk is easier to digest

For most babies – especially premature babies – breast milk is easier to digest than formula. The proteins in formula are made from cow's milk, and it takes time for babies' stomachs to adjust to digesting them. These cow's milk proteins often cause constipation and colic.

4 Breast milk fights disease

Breast babies are healthier. The cells, hormones, and antibodies in breast milk protect babies from illness. There is a lower risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome)

This protection is unique; formula cannot match the chemical makeup of human breast milk. In fact, among formula-fed babies, many infections are more common. Exclusive breastfeeding protects against:

- Necrotizing enterocolitis, a dangerous disease that affects the intestines in pre-term infants
- Lung and ear infections and diarrhoea
- Allergies - allergic skin rashes and asthma

- Childhood blood cancer
- Later in life it protects against fatness, diabetes and heart disease

5 Breastfeeding promotes brain development

Breast babies have an average of 7-10 extra IQ points. All of baby's senses are stimulated at the breast. Baby hears your voice, looks into your eyes, smells and tastes your milk, and enjoys the feel of your skin.

6 Breastfeeding promotes emotional development

Baby feels safe when breastfeeding, it calms and comforts baby

7 Breast milk is always at the right temperature and is always readily available.

Mothers Benefit from Breastfeeding

1. Ways that breastfeeding can make your life easier.

Breastfeeding may take a little more effort than formula feeding at first. But it can make life easier once you and your baby settle into a good routine. When you breastfeed, there are no bottles and nipples to sterilize. You do not have to buy, measure, and mix formula. And there are no bottles to warm in the middle of the night.

2. Breastfeeding can save money

Formula and feeding supplies can cost well over R4,000 each year, depending on how much your baby eats. Breast milk is free. Breastfed babies are sick less often, which further lowers costs.

3. Breastfeeding can feel great.

Physical contact is important to newborns. It can help them feel more secure, warm, and comforted. Mothers can benefit from this closeness, as well. Breastfeeding requires a mother to take some quiet relaxed time to bond. The skin-to-skin contact can boost the mother's oxytocin levels. Oxytocin is a hormone that helps milk flow and can calm the mother.

4. Breastfeeding can be good for the mother's health, too.

Breastfeeding is linked to a lower risk of these health problems in women which include type 2 diabetes, breast & ovarian cancer and postpartum depression.