

BENEFITS OF Breastfeeding

The well-being of children starts with proper nutrition, and breastfeeding is a great source of nourishment for infants. Breastmilk has everything babies need to grow and changes to meet the needs of every baby.



RESEARCH SHOWS THAT BREASTFED BABIES HAVE REDUCED RISK OF:

- Asthma
- Obesity
- Ear and respiratory infections
- Eczema
- Diarrhea and vomiting
- Necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) for premature babies

Breastfeeding is the most natural and beneficial source of nourishment for infants.

Breast milk has all the nutrients infants need to be strong and healthy.

- **Breastmilk contains immunity-boosting antibodies and healthy enzymes** that help to protect your baby from viruses and diseases. Breastfed babies are healthier and get sick less often.
- **Babies who are breastfed also have a 36% lower risk of SIDS** (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) which peaks at 2-4 months of age.
- **The protein in breastmilk is much easier to digest than the protein in formula.** This makes your baby less likely to have digestive problems, such as gassiness, rashes, and colic.



Breastfeeding not only provides babies with all the nutrients they need, but it also provides a number of benefits for mothers as well. Breastfeeding protects mothers' health and reinforces the maternal bond.

- **Lowers the risk of breast and ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.**
- **Helps moms lose pregnancy weight.** Milk production burns about 300 to 500 calories a day and nursing mothers tend to have an easier time losing pregnancy weight in a healthy way.
- **As a mother breastfeeds, her body releases prolactin,** the "mothering hormone," which helps with relaxation and oxytocin which helps the uterus contract to pre-pregnancy size and reduces post-partum bleeding.
- **Breastfeeding can be convenient for moms** as there is nothing to prepare or buy before feeding.



Visit sheahealth.org for more information about the benefits of breastfeeding and for resources to help breastfeeding mothers and families.

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