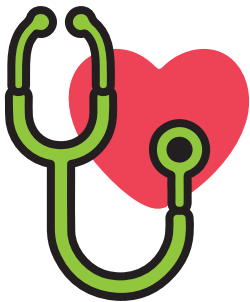


The Benefits of Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding gives your baby the nutrition they need from their very first moments. Even though it's a natural activity, it can be challenging at first, with many ups and downs. Breastfeeding takes practice and it may take some time to get the hang of it, which is common for many moms.



Breastfeeding gives babies a healthy start in life. But it's not just good for babies — it's good for moms too.



Health Benefits

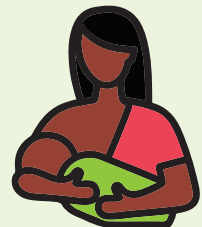
Research shows that breastfeeding lowers your baby's risk of certain infections and diseases, including these:

- Asthma
- Type 1 diabetes
- Ear infections
- Lower respiratory infections
- Diarrhea and vomiting
- Childhood obesity
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

For moms, breastfeeding can help you recover faster from childbirth. It can also reduce your risk of high blood pressure, certain breast and ovarian cancers and type 2 diabetes. Breastfeeding may also help you lose weight after childbirth.

Bonding with Baby

Physical contact is very important for your baby. It helps your baby feel safe, warm, secure and loved. The skin-to-skin contact from breastfeeding also boosts your levels of oxytocin, a hormone that helps breast milk flow and helps you feel calm.



Nutrients

Breast milk is one of the best things that your baby needs to grow and develop. It even changes to meet your baby's needs as they get older. Breast milk is rich in vitamins, minerals, and nutrients as well as other ingredients that help your baby grow healthy and strong.

Digestion

Babies can easily digest breast milk. And colostrum, the thick milk moms make during pregnancy and just after birth, helps your baby's digestive system grow.



Cost

Breast milk is free. Breastfed babies may also be sick less often, which may keep your health costs low.

Saves Time

With breastfeeding, the milk is warm and ready to go whenever your baby is hungry. That means no bottles to heat up and no formula to measure and mix, which saves time.



Every mom and baby is different, and your breastfeeding journey will be unique. Having support along the way can help make breastfeeding easier. Before your baby arrives, talk to family, friends and your doctor about how they can support you. Remember you are not alone and that it's okay to ask for help.

For more information about breastfeeding, visit
<https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/>

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