

BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

BENEFITS FOR BABY

- Breast milk is the most complete nutrition for babies. A mother's milk has just the right amount of fat, sugar, water, and protein needed for a baby's development and growth. Most babies find it easier to digest breast milk than formula.



- Breast milk has agents (called [antibodies](#)) that help protect babies from bacteria and viruses. Babies who are breastfed for at least six months are less likely to have ear infections, diarrhea, or respiratory illnesses.

- Breastfed babies have lower rates of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) in the first year of life, and lower rates of diabetes, leukemia, obesity, and asthma later in life.



BENEFITS FOR MOM

- Breastfeeding uses up extra calories, making it easier to lose weight after pregnancy. It also decreases any bleeding a woman may have after giving birth.
- Breastfeeding delays the return of normal ovulation and menstrual cycles. (You should still talk with your doctor or nurse about birth control choices.)
- Breastfeeding lowers the risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and diabetes.
- Breastfeeding makes your life easier. It saves time and money. There is no formula to buy or mix, and no bottles to warm in the middle of the night!
- A mother can give her baby immediate satisfaction by providing her breast milk when her baby is hungry. Breastfeeding gives a mother some quiet relaxed time for herself and her baby.



BENEFITS FOR SOCIETY

- Breastfeeding saves on health care costs. Breastfed babies need fewer doctor visits, prescriptions, and hospitalizations.
- Breastfeeding contributes to a more productive workforce. Breastfeeding mothers miss less work because their babies are sick less often. Employer medical costs are lower and employee productivity is higher.
- Breastfeeding is better for our environment. There is less trash and plastic waste compared to formula use.





All babies are born to breastfeed!



More information about breastfeeding is available at:

Maryland Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene
http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/mch/SitePages/bf_home.aspx
410-767-6713

Maryland WIC Program
www.mdwic.org
1-800-242-4WIC

U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org/healthtopics/breastfeeding.cfm

La Leche League International
www.llli.org

National Breastfeeding Helpline
1-800-994-9662

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Maternal and Child Health Bureau
201 W. Preston Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-767-6713



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Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene