



10

Great Reasons to Breastfeed

Breastfeeding is best for you and your baby
To find out why turn the page...



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Today, most mothers are choosing to breastfeed their babies. As more Canadians understand just how much of a difference breastfeeding makes to the health of both the mother and her baby, more families are supporting mothers to breastfeed longer, up to 2 years and beyond.

Here are 10 Great Reasons to Breastfeed your Baby:



To promote and protect the health of Canadians through leadership, partnership, innovation and action in public health.

— Public Health Agency of Canada

This publication was developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada in partnership with the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (www.breastfeedingcanada.ca)

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This Publication is also available in PDF format (Colour and B&W) on the Internet at the following address: www.publichealth.gc.ca/breastfeeding.

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Cat.: HP15-6/2009 • ISBN: 978-0-662-06835-8

Online: Cat.: HP15-6/2009E-PDF • ISBN: 978-1-100-12732-3



Nutrients and Protection

Breast milk is the best food to help your baby to grow and develop. It is custom-made by each mother for her own baby, and contains the perfect amount of protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins and minerals. Remarkably, as your baby grows, your milk will also change to keep up with your baby's needs. Human milk is also easier than formula for your baby to digest, which means less mess and fuss!



Breast milk contains valuable antibodies that help prevent disease and may reduce the risk of your baby developing allergies. After birth, your first milk, called *Colostrum*, offers vital early protection and helps to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria by coating your baby's digestive system. This early protection is even more important if your baby is born prematurely – *Colostrum protects!*



Brain Power

There is strong evidence that children who were breastfed score higher on IQ tests, as well as on teacher ratings of their academic performance.

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Convenient and Portable

Breast milk is always safe, fresh and exactly the right temperature. It's ready for baby at a moment's notice, and you don't have to heat it, boil water, or sterilize bottles. This makes night time feedings a lot easier.

Since breast milk is always with you, travelling and shopping with your baby is simpler, with no equipment to carry or refrigeration needed.

4

Size Doesn't Matter

The size of your breasts doesn't matter. Big or small, they will produce milk for your baby. Breasts begin to prepare for baby very early in pregnancy and are able to produce Colostrum (the first milk) from about 24 weeks of pregnancy. As soon as your baby is born, hormones begin to activate the breasts to make more milk for your baby. You will continue to produce milk through the wonderful partnership of supply and demand – ***the more your baby breastfeeds – the more milk you will produce!***



A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair, smiling warmly as she holds a baby. The baby is wearing a bright red long-sleeved shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light grey.

Benefits Mothers Too

Research suggests that breastfeeding provides a measure of protection against breast cancer, ovarian cancer and weak bones later in life.

Your body uses calories to produce milk, so breastfeeding can help you to gradually lose weight gained during pregnancy. Exclusive breastfeeding may also delay the return of menstruation for at least a little while.

Continues the Special Relationship

The closeness and comfort of breastfeeding strengthens the bond with your baby, as one part of all the things you can do to build a secure, loving relationship. Dads and moms can't spoil a baby, so give your baby all the cuddling she or he wants.

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Benefits Don't Stop

Research shows that breast milk is so important that it is the **only food or drink your baby needs for the first 6 months of life**. Beginning at 6 months of age babies need a variety of foods in addition to breast milk, which continues to provide nutrition and protection. Many mothers continue to breastfeed until their babies are two years old or more, as recommended by Health Canada – any amount of breastmilk is always good for babies.



8

Works for Working Mothers

Your baby can have all the benefits of your milk even if you plan to go back to work or school. You can express milk by hand or with a breast pump and leave it with your caregiver to feed the baby. Breast milk can also be frozen for future use.

Some mothers have childcare facilities at their place of work, school, or nearby, so they can breastfeed during their breaks.





Good for Environment

Breastfeeding is good for your baby, for you and the environment! Human milk is produced and delivered to the consumer – your baby - without any pollution, unnecessary packaging or waste.



Easy on the Budget

Breastfeeding saves you money! Without question, breastfeeding saves hundreds – even thousands – of dollars.



9

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***Ask for Breastfeeding Advice
and Support – it is worth it!***

Breastfeeding is natural, but learning to breastfeed can sometimes take a little time and patience.

There are many groups and individuals available to help you, including: public health nurses, lactation consultants, the La Leche League, your doctor, midwife, family members or friends who have breastfed.

For more information on where to get breastfeeding advice and support, please visit the Public Health Agency of Canada at the following web address:

www.publichealth.gc.ca/breastfeeding

Also available on this website, is the **10 Valuable Tips for Successful Breastfeeding**, a guide to help make your breastfeeding experience successful and enjoyable.

Breastfeeding Friendly



ANYTIME. ANYWHERE.