

## PART 3: Breastfeeding



### BREASTFEEDING BENEFITS

You may know that breastfeeding has benefits for your baby. By choosing to breastfeed, you're providing the best source of nutrition for your new baby. Plus, breastfeeding promotes bonding and contributes to your baby's emotional development.

The benefits a baby receives from human milk will last a lifetime.

#### For your baby

- Lowers risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Protects against respiratory and diarrheal disease
- Reduces ear infections
- Decreases obesity later in childhood
- Lessens likelihood of type 1 diabetes
- Decreases risk of childhood cancer
- Protects against allergies

#### Why breast milk is the ultimate baby food

- It has all the nutrients your baby needs
- It has antibodies that fight off viruses and bacteria
- It protects your baby's gut from germs and diseases

But did you know that breastfeeding also has benefits for you?

#### For you

- Lowers risk of osteoporosis later in life
- Reduces risk of breast, uterine, endometrial, and ovarian cancer
- Decreases insulin use for a breastfeeding parent who has diabetes
- Releases the hormone that helps your uterus shrink and prevents bleeding

### EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING

Exclusive breastfeeding means your baby gets only breast milk without any extra food or drink—not even water. And that's all your baby needs. So, make exclusive breastfeeding your goal.

#### Tips to help

- Room-in with your baby in the hospital and at home
- Put your baby skin-to-skin as much as possible
- Respond early to your baby's feeding cues
- Breastfeed at night when *prolactin* (your lactation hormone) levels are highest
- Avoid giving formula unless there is a medical reason
- Avoid pacifiers and nipples in the first few weeks
- Find support through friends, support groups, or play groups
- Contact a lactation consultant if you need help

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend exclusive breastfeeding for about six months. Breastfeeding, along with complementary foods, should continue for the next six months and for as long as both you and your baby desire.

### DO I NEED TO SUPPLEMENT WITH FORMULA?

Breastfeeding provides all the nutrients your baby needs. Healthy full-term babies do not need supplementation unless it is for medical treatment and breast milk is not available. Supplementing with formula for non-medical reasons comes with risks. Formula can decrease the healthy bacteria in your baby's gut that protect against infection. Formula is harder to digest, so your baby may not breastfeed as often. This can lead to **engorgement**, a lower milk supply, and parents not reaching breastfeeding goals.



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