

Breastfeeding *Your* Baby



Breast milk is the most complete form of nutrition for your baby and is easier for your baby to digest than formula. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding your baby for the first twelve months, and to start adding solid foods after six months.

Benefits for Moms

You may have heard about the benefits your baby gets from breastfeeding, but you can benefit too! The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) states the following benefits:

- helps you bond with your baby
- helps your uterus contract and return to its normal size more quickly
- is convenient
- saves time and money
- may help you lose any weight gained during pregnancy
- reduces your risk for developing heart disease and certain female-specific cancers

Benefits for Babies

Here are some of the benefits ACOG lists for your baby:

- is the perfect mix of vitamins, protein and fat that your baby needs to grow
- contains antibodies that help your baby's immune system fight bacteria and viruses
- decreases your baby's risk of death from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

Tips for Breastfeeding

- Nurse early and often. Try to breastfeed within the first hour after birth.
- Nurse with both the nipple and areola in the baby's mouth.
- Watch your baby for signs of hunger, which include nuzzling against your breast, making sucking motions or putting their hands to their mouths.
- Eat an extra 450-500 calories per day since your body is working non-stop to produce breast milk.
- Avoid foods that could upset your baby's stomach, such as gassy foods (cabbage, beans) and spicy foods.
- Drink a glass of water each time you breastfeed.
- Reduce your caffeine intake.
- Avoid alcohol.

Before your baby is born, talk with your doctor about breastfeeding, attend a class, read a how-to book, or talk with friends who have breastfed. Breastfeeding is a skill that needs to be learned. While you are in the hospital, don't be afraid to ask for help from a nurse or your doctor.



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