

### Positive Feelings

Breastfeeding can help a mother to bond with her baby. Physical contact is important to a newborn and can help them feel more secure, and warm and comforted.

Breastfeeding mothers may have increased self-confidence and feelings of closeness and bonding with their infants.

### SOCIETAL BENEFITS

Breastfeeding saves on health care costs. Total medical care costs for the nation are lower for fully breastfed infants than never-breastfed infants since breastfed infants typically need fewer sick care visits, prescriptions, and hospitalizations.

Breastfeeding contributes to a more productive workforce. Breastfeeding mothers miss less work, as their infants are sick less often. Employer medical costs also are lower and employee productivity is higher.

Breastfeeding is better for our environment because there is less trash and plastic waste compared to that produced by formula cans and bottle supplies.

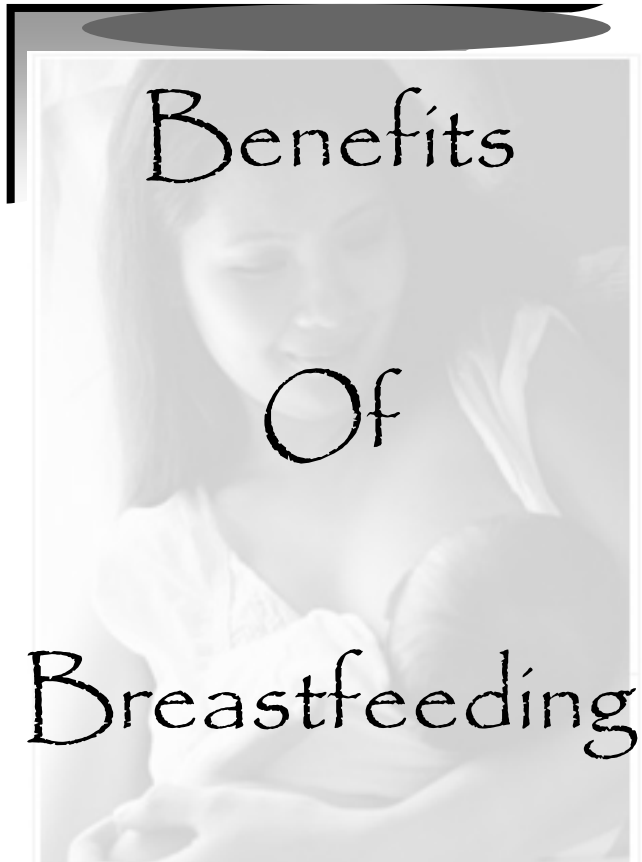


*Breast milk is the most complete form of nutrition for infants. A mother's milk has just the right amount of fat, sugar, water, and protein that is needed for a baby's growth and development.*

**Information contained in this booklet is meant for informational purposes only and should not substitute the visit to your doctor nor his/her advice for your health care.**

**Accuracy of the content is current to the date of printing.**

January 2009



# Benefits Of Breastfeeding



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# BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

There are many benefits to breastfeeding. Even if you are able to do it for only a short time, your baby's immune system can benefit from breast milk. But it should be noted that the longer one breastfeeds, the more benefits the baby receives. The following will describe some of the benefits of breastfeeding to mother, infant and society.

## HEALTH BENEFITS FOR MOM AND BABY

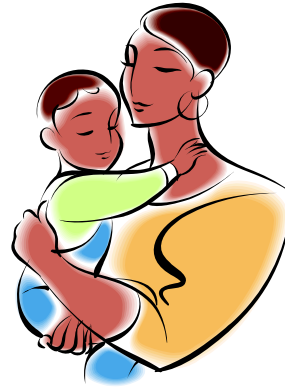
### Nutrition and Growth Benefits

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

As a result, breastfed infants grow exactly the way they should. They tend to gain less unnecessary weight and to be leaner. This may result in being less overweight later in life.

Premature babies do better when breastfed compared to premature babies who are fed formula.

Although researchers are not certain, results from some studies show that breastfed children have greater brain development than non-breastfed children.



### Enhanced Immune System & Resistance to Infection

Breast milk has agents (called antibodies) in it to help protect infants from bacteria and viruses. Breastfed babies are more able to fight off infection and disease, such as diarrhea, ear infections, allergies and asthma. They are sick less often and have fewer visits to their doctors.

Breastfed infants' immune systems (the system that helps fight infection) have a better response to immunizations like polio, tetanus, diphtheria, and *Haemophilus influenzae*, and to respiratory syncytial virus infection, a common infant respiratory infection.

When you breastfeed, there are no bottles and nipples to sterilize. Human milk straight from the breast is always sterile (or clean).

### Improved Health of Mother

Nursing uses up extra calories, making it easier to lose the pounds of pregnancy. It also helps the uterus to get back to its original size and lessens

any bleeding a woman may have after giving birth.

Breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding (no supplementing with formula) delays the return of normal ovulation and menstrual cycles. (However, you should still talk with your health care provider about contraceptive choices.)

Breastfeeding lowers the risk of breast and ovarian cancers.

### EMOTIONAL BENEFITS

#### Convenience and Making Your Life Easier

Breastfeeding saves time and money. You do not have to purchase, measure, and mix formula. There are no bottles to warm in the middle of the night!

A mother can give her baby immediate satisfaction by providing her breast milk when the baby is hungry.

Breastfeeding requires a mother to take some quiet relaxed time for herself and her baby.

