

## Benefits of Breastfeeding for Mom

Breastfeeding is a wonderful gift for you as well as your baby.

### Release of Good Hormones

Many mothers feel fulfillment and joy from the physical and emotional communion they experience with their child while nursing. These feelings are augmented by the release of hormones, such as:

- **Prolactin:** Produces a peaceful, nurturing sensation that allows you to relax and focus on your child.
- **Oxytocin:** Promotes a strong sense of love and attachment between the two of you.



These pleasant feelings may be one of the reasons so many women who have breastfed their first child choose to breastfeed the children who follow.

### Health Benefits

Breastfeeding provides health benefits for mothers beyond emotional satisfaction.

- Mothers who breastfeed recover from childbirth more quickly and easily. The hormone oxytocin, released during breastfeeding, acts to return the uterus to its regular size more quickly and can reduce postpartum bleeding.
- Studies show that women who have breastfed experience reduced rates of breast and ovarian cancer later in life.
- Some studies have found that breastfeeding may reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and cardiovascular disease, including high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- Exclusive breastfeeding delays the return of the mother's menstrual period, which can help extend the time between pregnancies. (*Note: Exclusive breastfeeding can provide a natural form of contraception (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Birth-Control-and-Breastfeeding.aspx>) if the mother's menses have not returned, the baby is breastfeeding day and night, and the baby is less than six months old.*)

### Practical Added Bonuses

There are quite a few practical advantages to breastfeeding as well—bonuses the entire family can appreciate.

- Human milk is much less expensive than formula. During nursing you will need, at most, an extra 400 to 500 calories daily to produce sufficient milk for your baby, while formula can cost between \$4 and \$10 per day, depending upon the brand, type (powdered versus liquid), and amount consumed.
- At night, putting a baby to your breast is much simpler and faster than getting up to prepare or warm a bottle of formula. (Your partner can make night feedings even easier by changing the baby and bringing her to you for nursing.)
- It's wonderful, too, to be able to pick up the baby and go out—whether around town or on longer trips—without having to carry a bag full of feeding equipment.
- Breastfeeding is also good for the environment, since there are no bottles to wash or formula cans to throw away.

## The Top Benefit: Maternal Fulfillment

As welcome as all of these benefits are, though, most mothers put the feeling of maternal fulfillment at the top of their list of reasons for breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding provides a unique emotional experience for the nursing mother and the baby. Breastfeeding is the one parenting behavior that only the mother can do for her baby, creating a unique and powerful physical and emotional connection. Your partner, the baby's siblings, and other relatives can all appreciate the new member of the family being welcomed in such a loving way.

## Additional Information from HealthyChildren.org:

- [How a Healthy Diet Helps You Breastfeed \(/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/How-a-Healthy-Diet-Helps-You-Breastfeed.aspx\)](/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/How-a-Healthy-Diet-Helps-You-Breastfeed.aspx)
- [Medication Safety Tips for the Breastfeeding Mom \(https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=20&ved=0ahUKEwiQmKP\\_37bNAhUJ0h4KHQImDrM4ChAWCFowCQ&url=https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Medications-and-Breastfeeding.aspx&usg=AFQjCNFDVGjiRljZtXGtUnv28PrCDp0TWg&sig2=XQQvQ8Hgg-ZI4qUpFflsZg&bvm=bv.124817099%2cd.dmo\)](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=20&ved=0ahUKEwiQmKP_37bNAhUJ0h4KHQImDrM4ChAWCFowCQ&url=https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Medications-and-Breastfeeding.aspx&usg=AFQjCNFDVGjiRljZtXGtUnv28PrCDp0TWg&sig2=XQQvQ8Hgg-ZI4qUpFflsZg&bvm=bv.124817099%2cd.dmo)
- [How to Tell if Baby is Getting Enough Milk \(/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/How-to-Tell-if-Baby-is-Getting-Enough-Milk.aspx\)](/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/How-to-Tell-if-Baby-is-Getting-Enough-Milk.aspx)
- [Selecting A Caregiver Who Supports Breastfeeding \(/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Selecting-a-Caregiver-Who-Supports-Breastfeeding.aspx\)](/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Selecting-a-Caregiver-Who-Supports-Breastfeeding.aspx)
- [Sleep Deprivation and Breastfeeding \(/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Sleep-Deprivation-and-Breastfeeding.aspx\)](/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Sleep-Deprivation-and-Breastfeeding.aspx)
- [Storing and Preparing Expressed Breast Milk \(/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Storing-and-Preparing-Expressed-Breast-Milk.aspx\)](/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Storing-and-Preparing-Expressed-Breast-Milk.aspx)

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