

The benefits of breastfeeding for the baby

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Campaigns after campaigns destined to young mothers reiterate that breast is best, that the [benefits of breastfeeding](#) are numerous...

Previously, we discussed the [benefits of breastfeeding](#) for the mother. Now let's focus on the benefits for the babies. Is *'breast really best'*? The WHO recommends that babies are exclusively breastfed for their first six months - with no water, other fluids or solids and up to two year old. Breast milk is designed to be the ideal nutrition for your baby, combining proteins, fats, carbohydrate, and fluids, in a form that can be easily absorbed by your baby. **Studies have shown that breastfeeding babies reduce the risk of life-long conditions like:**

childhood diabetes
eczema
obesity
asthma

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- Breast milk allows antibodies to be passed from the mother, greatly reducing the risk of infections including: ear infections
- gastro-intestinal infections
- chest infections
- urine infections

Studies have also shown that artificially fed babies are at greater risk of sudden infant death syndrome and childhood leukaemia.

Other studies have shown that breastfed babies may have better neurological development. Breastfeeding also leads to better oral development and fewer dental problems as well as protecting children from cardiovascular disease in later life.

This isn't only true in developing countries where the alternative to breastfeeding might be

artificial feeding with contaminated water. Even in the UK, the [benefits of breastfeeding](#) babies are important: It was estimated that the NHS spends £35 million per year in England and Wales in treating gastro-enteritis in formula-fed infants and that, for every one per cent increase in breastfeeding at 13 weeks, £500,000 would be saved in the treatment of gastro-enteritis. The figures give an idea of the scale of the artificial feeding risks.

As breastfeeding mums have emailed us time and time again, the introduction of breastfeeding can be a very difficult time, especially if you don't have the right support around you. When you cringe in pain every time you feed your little one and people around you are pressuring you to switch to artificial feeding, it is tempting to give up. Try remembering this article when you reach that point when you want to give up. It is 'easier' to resolve breastfeeding difficulties with a young baby than support a child with obesity, eczema, or comfort them when they cry in pain because another ear infection.

Sources:

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Created: December 22, 2009