

The benefits of breastfeeding babies aren't just for babies for mummies too

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[Breastfeeding babies](#) is not just beneficial to the children, it has many benefits for nursing mothers.

Mothers who breastfeed their babies right after birth are less likely to suffer haemorrhaging as the baby's suckle releases oxytocin which helps the uterus continue to contract and return to its normal size quicker.

Breastfeeding can help with weight loss. A breastfeeding mother is also advised to consume 500 calories extra a day, that's the equivalent to a plate of pasta.

- Mothers are often under the impression that artificial infant feeding leads to better sleep for the parents, as the artificial milk would be 'richer' and takes longer to digest. On the contrary, studies have shown that breastfeeding mothers slept more than bottle-feeding mothers when co-sleeping with their babies¹. Another study demonstrated how the breast milk composition changes throughout the day to help babies sleep better at night².
- [Breastfeeding babies](#) helps with natural spacing of pregnancies. Mothers who are exclusively breastfeeding and who don't have their periods have less than a 2% chance of becoming pregnant in the first six months post-partum. "Fully breastfeeding" is defined as supplementing no more than one or two mouthfuls a day and waiting no more than four to six hours between nursings.³
- Studies have also shown the extensive benefits of breastfeeding to protect mothers from breast cancer⁴ and ovarian cancer⁵ as well as osteoporosis. More research is needed regarding the benefits of breastfeeding to protect the mother against heart disease.
- Breastfeeding may protect new mothers against negative moods and perceived stress.
- The benefits of breastfeeding aren't just limited to health but are also financial. Breastfeeding save a parent £500 per year on bottles, teats, formula. This doesn't even take into account the cost of health issues associated with artificial infant feeding (ear infections, diarrhoea ...) both for the health services and the loss of income for the carer who looks after the child.

References:

1-Alana Juman Blincoe British Journal of Midwifery, Vol. 13, Iss. 6, 02 Jun 2005, pp 398 - 401

2-Quillin SI and Glenn LL (2004). Interaction between feeding method and co-sleeping on maternal-newborn sleep. J Obstet Gynecol Neonatal Nurs 33:580-8. http://www.babyfriendly.org.uk/items/item_detail.asp?item=28

3-Naturally occurring chemicals called nucleotides, which have previously been linked to sleepiness, were found to be at their highest levels at night-time. http://www.babyfriendly.org.uk/items/item_detail.asp?item=604

4-<http://www.llli.org/llleaderweb/LV/LVDec98Jan99p128.html>

5-Collaborative Group on Hormonal Factors in Breast Cancer (2002). Breast cancer and breastfeeding: collaborative reanalysis of individual data from 47 epidemiological studies in 30 countries, including 50 302 women with breast cancer and 96 973 women without the disease. *Lancet* 360: 187-95.

6-http://www.babyfriendly.org.uk/items/item_detail.asp?item=611

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