



BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING



Due to its myriad benefits, exclusive breast milk feeding is recommended for the first six months of life. The World Health Organization then recommends continued breastfeeding, alongside other supplemental food and drink, for up to 2 years or as long as mutually desired by the breastfeeding dyad.

Benefits to the breastfeeding infant

- High in protein
- Easy to digest
- Provides antibodies; promotes immune function; reduces risk of infection
- Assists with dental and facial development
- Supports brain development
- Prevents development of allergies in the future
- Protects against development of autoimmune disorders (type I DM, inflammatory bowel syndrome)
- Decreases risk of certain childhood leukemias
- Decreases risk of obesity, metabolic disorders and type II diabetes in adulthood

Benefits to the breastfeeding or chestfeeding parent

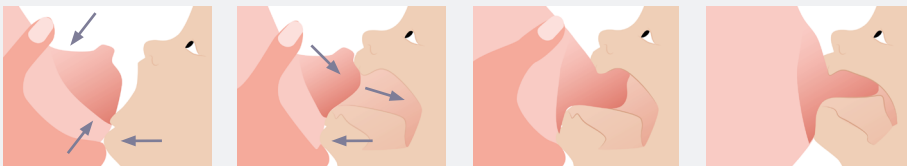
- Increased oxytocin release reduces risk of postpartum hemorrhage.
- Increased parent-infant bonding
- Delays ovulation; helps with child spacing
- Reduces risk of breast, ovarian, and uterine cancers
- Reduces risk of central obesity and metabolic syndrome

Benefits to the family and community

- Decreases food cost to family
- Decreases healthcare cost to family and community due to infection/disease prevention

Client education

Families are more likely to initiate and sustain breastfeeding when they receive timely education, support and encouragement. Teach proper latching-on technique. Achieving a deep latch promotes adequate milk transfer and prevents nipple tissue damage.



Demonstrate and support client to try a variety of breastfeeding positions. Emphasize positions that meet the specific needs of the newborn period. Explain that the ideal feeding position may change as the baby grows.



Baby-friendly birthing facilities

Guidelines for supporting successful breastfeeding initiation:

- Teach families about the benefits of breastfeeding.
- Initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
- Facilitate rooming-in, and frequent skin-to-skin contact
- Provide education and support to establish and maintain lactation.
- Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
- Do not offer food or drink other than breastmilk, unless medically indicated.
- Do not offer pacifiers or artificial nipples to breastfeeding infants.
- Connect breastfeeding families with support groups and other local resources.