Information for breastfeeding families

**Risks of Not Breastfeeding**

**For Infants**

It may not seem like offering your baby a bottle of infant formula has any consequences. However, it does. And there are some drawbacks to just one bottle, and more to more feedings of infant formula. Before you make a decision, consider these things. Ask your nurse, physician or lactation consultant for more details if you have questions.

**Increased risk of**

- Infections (lung and GI tract)
- Childhood obesity
- Type 1 and type 2 diabetes
- Childhood cancer
- Sudden infant death syndrome
- Otitis media (ear infections)
- Lower respiratory tract infections
- Asthma
- Atopic dermatitis (skin allergies)
- Heart disease and high blood pressure
- Diarrhea
- Necrotizing Enterocolitis in premature infants
- Colic and stomach upset
- Change the digestive bacteria in your baby’s GI tract
- Dental malocclusion

**If you are breastfeeding, offering a bottle can:**

- Reduce your breastmilk supply
- Change your baby’s suck at the breast
- Reduce your baby’s desire to breastfeed

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**For Mothers**

It may be surprising that there are benefits of breastfeeding for mothers of breastfed infants. The longer the mother breastfeeds, the more the benefits.

**Increased risk of:**

- Premenopausal breast cancer
- Ovarian cancer
- Obesity
- Retained pregnancy weight gain
- Type 2 diabetes
- Myocardial infarction (heart attack)
- Metabolic syndrome
- Osteoporosis
- Rheumatoid arthritis

**If infants were breastfed optimally (6 months exclusively, continuing for a year or more), it would save $14.4 billion in premature death, $733.7 million in direct care costs and $126.1 million in indirect costs for only 3 diagnoses (breast cancer, hypertension, and MI) annually.**


In addition, there is the risk of possible contaminated formula or improper preparation of ingredients. There have been several recalls by formula manufacturers in recent years.

The Centers for Disease Control, The American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization and other professional groups involved in infant health, all recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months, and then continue for 1-2 years with the gradual introduction of solid foods.

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Bibliography for the Risks of Formula Feeding


Zeiger RS. Food allergen avoidance in the prevention of food allergy in infants and children. *Pediatrics* 2003;111:1662-1671