



Healthy Families Homebirth

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Advantages of Breastfeeding

Human milk is made for human babies. Research is beginning to find out all the benefits that breastfeeding has to offer and the problems associated with feeding in any other way. Of course there can be problems with the way the breastfeeding system works, but many problems are temporary. Sometimes breastfeeding can be hard, but often times it is a joy. By putting out the intention to breastfeed, your child will be off to a great start.

Breastfeeding advantages for the newborn- Colostrum

- The newborn's gastrointestinal tract is born without any probiotics living in it yet. Colostrum provides the first healthy residents of the intestines
- High in protein- contains all 10 of the essential amino acids+ nucleotides
- Contains additional amino acids and antibody rich proteins- secretory IgA and lactoferrin
- Nucleotides are necessary for energy metabolism, enzymatic reactions, and growth and maturation of the developing gastrointestinal tract. Plus, they aid in immune function
- Skin-to-skin helps the newborn regulate temperature, respiration, and sugar levels

Breastfeeding advantages for the infant

- Breastfeeding exclusively for the first 6 months can reduce the chances of diarrhea, respiratory illnesses, and ear infections
- Less likely to develop allergies
- Breastmilk contains enzymes that help with digestion and development
- Lactose enhances calcium absorption and breaks down quickly to supply energy to the brain
- Promotes the growth of probiotics
- Prevents the growth of pathogens- bad bacteria
- Human milk has the proper balance of casein and whey protein, which makes it easier for the baby to digest
- Nutritional values change with your infant as he or she grows, getting the right amount of fats, protein, vitamins, and minerals every time
- When you are exposed to illnesses you develop antibodies which are then passed onto your infant protecting him or her against disease

Breastfeeding advantages for the toddler

- Breastfeeding often helps calm a cranky toddler
- Breastfeeding can help when adjusting to sleep routines
- Breastfeeding helps toddlers feel safe and loved
- Creates a bonding time with mom

This is general information. Please speak to your health care provider about your unique health needs.



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Advantages of breastfeeding that carry into childhood and adulthood

- Heart disease protection
- Less likely to develop Crohn's, Celiac, and Colitis
- A stronger immune system
- Less risk for Type 1 diabetes
- Asthma and eczema are less likely

Breastfeeding Advantages for the Nursing Mother

- Bonding time with baby is increased
- Breastfeeding helps the uterus contract back to the non-pregnant size
- Risk of osteoporosis and breast cancer are lower
- Breastfeeding burns more calories. Although you should be eating more food, many women find breastfeeding helps with losing pregnancy weight.
- You will always have a solution for your hungry child. In disasters, breastfeeding mothers have been able to keep their children alive by breastfeeding while help was on the way.

Risks of not breastfeeding

- Baby uses more energy to break down proteins and can't break them down completely
- Fortified formulas with DHA have been reported to have adverse effects with infants, including vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, seizures, sepsis, and even death (Agency, 2009)
- Baby is likely to develop more infections costing more at the doctor's office
- There are no immune boosting cells in formula

Breast milk is a free and healthy way to feed your infant. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to address them to me at your next appointment, by e-mail, or phone call.

References:

Agency Response Letter GRAS Notice No. GRN 000041. (2009, June 18). *U S Food and Drug Administration*. Retrieved July 05, 2011, from <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodIngredientsPackaging/GenerallyRecognizedasSafeGRAS/GRASListings/ucm154126.htm>

Riordan, J., & Auerbach, K. G. (1999). *Breastfeeding and human lactation*. Boston ; Toronto: Jones and Bartlett.