



10

GREAT REASONS TO BREASTFEED YOUR BABY

Breastfeeding is important for you and your baby.
To find out why turn the page...



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TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE HEALTH OF CANADIANS THROUGH
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Today most babies are breastfed. And as more Canadians understand how important breastfeeding is for the health of mothers and babies, more people are supporting mothers to breastfeed for longer, up to 2 years and more.

Here are 10 Great Reasons to Breastfeed your Baby:

01

PERFECT NUTRITION

Breast milk is the best food to help your baby grow and develop. It is custom-made by each mother for her own baby. Breast milk has the perfect amount of protein, carbohydrates, fat, vitamins and minerals, and is easy to digest.

02

PROTECTION

Breast milk helps your baby fight off sickness and disease.

After birth, the first milk your breasts make is called colostrum. It helps to stop harmful germs that can make your baby sick. Colostrum does this by coating your baby's digestive system so that germs have no place to grow. This protection is even more important if your baby is born early (premature).

Breastfeeding helps reduce the chance your baby will:

- have diarrhea, ear infections or lung infections
- die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- be overweight or obese when they are older

03

BRAIN POWER

Research shows that children who were breastfed score higher on intelligence (IQ) tests. They may even stay in school longer and earn more money as adults.

04

READY AND PORTABLE

Breast milk is always fresh and exactly the right temperature. It is ready for your baby whenever they are ready to eat. You do not have to heat it, boil water or sterilize bottles. This makes feedings so much easier!



SIZE DOES NOT MATTER

The size of your breasts does not matter.

Big or small, your breasts will make enough milk for your baby. Breasts start to get ready for baby very early in pregnancy. Your breasts can make colostrum once you are in your second trimester.

As soon as your baby is born, hormones tell your breasts to start making more milk. Your breasts will make as much milk as your baby needs. The more your baby breastfeeds—the more milk you will make!



06

GOOD FOR MOTHERS TOO

Research shows that breastfeeding can protect mothers from many diseases such as:

- breast and ovarian cancer
- diabetes
- heart disease

Your body uses energy to make milk, so breastfeeding can help you to lose weight that you gained during pregnancy.

Exclusive breastfeeding (feeding your baby only your breast milk) may also delay the return of your periods for at least a little while. It is important to know that you can still get pregnant even if your periods do not start.

07

BUILDS A SPECIAL BOND

The closeness and comfort of breastfeeding helps you bond with your baby. It is one of the many things you can do to build a secure and loving relationship. Cuddling your baby can help your baby be more trusting and confident as they grow older.

08

ADVANTAGES CONTINUE AS BABY GROWS

Breast milk is so complete, it is the only food or drink your baby needs for the first 6 months. As your baby grows, your breast milk will change to keep up with your baby's needs.

From about 6 months of age, your baby will need a variety of healthy foods as well as breast milk. But breast milk continues to be an important source of nutrition and protection for your baby. Breastfeeding is recommended for up to two years or more, or for as long as you and your baby want to. Any amount of breast milk that you can give your baby is good!

09

GOOD FOR THE PLANET

Breastfeeding is good for your baby, for you and for the environment. Breast milk is made and delivered right to your baby—without any processing, chemical preservatives, packaging or waste.

10

EASY ON THE BUDGET

Breastfeeding saves you money. Having a baby can be expensive, so it is nice to know that breastfeeding is not! Breastfeeding could save you hundreds—or even thousands—of dollars.



Ask for breastfeeding information and support

Learning to breastfeed can take time and patience. It is a skill that mother and baby learn together.

Do not give up! There are many people and groups that can help you, including:

- family members and friends who have breastfed
- health care providers (nurses, doctor or midwife)
- lactation consultants
- support groups such as La Leche League

Going back to work or school? Your baby can still have all the benefits of your breast milk.

You can express breast milk and leave it with your caregiver to feed your baby

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Breast milk can be frozen and used later

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If you have childcare at work, school, or nearby, you can breastfeed during your breaks

Also available is *10 Valuable Tips for Successful Breastfeeding*, a guide to help you reach your breastfeeding goals.

For more information, please visit: www.canada.ca