



# Advantages to Breastfeeding

## Did You Know?

Breastfeeding is not only a great way for the mother and infant to connect, but also enables healthy development for the baby.

Through breastfeeding:

- Infants feel warm, comforted, and safe, and form a strong bond with their mother.
- The strong mother-child connection made through contact can lead to improved brain development.

Experts agree that breastfeeding is the best method for feeding infants, and up until 6 months old, it is recommended to only feed your infant breast milk. From 6-12 months of age, breast milk in addition to semi-solid and solid foods is encouraged.

## Breastfeeding Benefits

There are many health advantages of breastfeeding to both mother and baby, as well as financial benefits to the family.

### Baby's Health

- Early breast milk provides infants with important antibodies that protect against infections.
- Breast milk provides the perfect balance of nutrients for healthy growth and development.
- Breast milk decreases risk for allergies, SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), and infections.
- Breast milk reduces risk of future health problems such as obesity, diabetes, asthma, and leukemia.

### Mother's Health

- Breastfeeding lowers the risk for diabetes, post-partum depression, and breast or ovarian cancer.

### Cost Savings

- 12 months of baby formula costs about \$1500, but breast milk is nearly free, since just a small amount of extra calories are needed to produce breast milk!
- Breastfed babies are usually healthier than formula-fed babies, meaning lower healthcare costs.
- A healthy baby can result in fewer missed work days for parents.

For additional information on breastfeeding, see 'Breastfeeding Challenges.'

