



60 Reasons to Breastfeed

Baby

1. Breast milk is a **complete food for baby with high-quality** nutrients that provides an important source of **energy** for growth and development and is easily digested and efficiently used by the baby's body.
2. Today over **200 components** are found in breast milk; it contains live cells, micro organisms, fat, proteins carbohydrates, hormones, vitamins, growth factors, antibodies and immune factors. Its composition is very **stable**, even when the mother has a poor diet or is ill.
3. Breast milk is a dynamic fluid that changes based on infant's gestational age to meet the **infant's needs**. Breast milk composition changes with the baby's age and need within a feeding in a day.
4. Breast milk has the **right amount** of fat, sugar, water, and protein that is specially made for a baby's **growth and development**; it matches 50% of their genetic material.
5. Breast milk provides vitamin D for infant's bone development and prevention of rickets for the first two months. Inadequate exposure to sunlight cannot maintain Vitamin D level after two months; supplementation is recommended.
6. Iron is an important element for red cells production and brain development. 50%-70% **iron** in breast milk is absorbed by infants; only 10% is absorbed from artificial milks.
7. Breast milk has 80% **whey protein**, a compound that is easy to digest and is the appropriate solute load for immature infant kidneys. Some of the proteins in human milk are nutritional, and some are immunological.
8. Two proteins, K-casein and lactoferrin in breast milk provide protection against bacteria, viruses and fungus.
9. Breast fed babies feel content; breast feeding reduces **diarrhea** indigestion, constipation and colic.
10. Breast milk provides all the **water** a baby needs; **no need** for any additional fluid.
11. Colostrum is the thick, creamy and bright yellow, breast milk that comes in day 1-3 before the mature breast milk, and it has a variety of developmental, digestive and protective factors (IgA).
12. Colostrum, a laxative, helps to remove bilirubin-rich meconium and **prevents jaundice**.
13. Breast milk **improves growth** of babies born small for gestational age; preterm milk has high levels of lactoferrin, lysozyme, 30% more fat and 20% more protein to meet preterm babies' needs.
14. Premature babies do well when breastfed because breast milk provides passive-immune protection and easily digested nutrients for growth and development.
15. Breast milk is **vitamin A** rich and increases infants' visual acuity and reduces vitamin A-related eye diseases.
16. Breast milk contains **essential fatty acids, such as Omega 3** for brain and eye development.
17. Breast milk is a living fluid that protects infants against bacterial, viral and parasitic infection. Breast milk contains the most important passive immunoglobulin, **IgA**.
18. Breast milk provides certain selective bacterial growth factors that support the growth of healthy enteric flora in the infant's intestines, further enhancing immune competence.
19. Breast milk also has growth factors that stimulate epithelial maturation of infants' digestive system, which is not ready for solid foods until around 6 months of age.
20. Breastfeeding has psychological and developmental benefits. BF has significant effects on neurodevelopment.
21. Breastfeeding **reduces childhood obesity**; excess body fat in childhood tends to carry over into adulthood.
22. Breastfeeding prevents obesity, cardiac problems and diabetes in adulthood.
23. Breastfeeding **reduces chronic illnesses**: Excess body fat is a convincing cause of cardiovascular disease, arthritis and six common cancers: colon, kidney, pancreas, esophagus, endometrial and post-menopausal breast cancer.
24. Breastfeeding results in **higher IQs (8-10points)** of infants because breast milk contains the fatty acids essential to the development of the baby's brain and nervous system.
25. Breastfeeding releases endorphins, a **pain reliever**, which creates a feeling of relaxation and well being.
26. "Breastfeeding and breast milk work to **counteract** the adverse developmental, neurological and cognitive effects of persistent organic pollutants exposure in utero." The greatest risk period for adverse effects from environmental exposures is **prenatally**. ILCA: Position on Breastfeeding, Breast Milk and Environmental Contaminants, Oct. 2001
27. Breastfeeding reduces infants' **morbidity and mortality** by reducing the chance of chronic illness, respiratory and GI infection, atopic dermatitis, otitis media, and allergies.
28. Breast milk is totally **free**, always **available** and never spoiled.
29. Breastfeeding promotes **bonding** between mother and baby through skin to skin contact, holding and eye contact with baby.
30. Breastfeeding increases baby's **security and trust**.
31. Breastfed babies are less likely to become sick and less seriously ill when they are sick than formula fed babies.

Mother

32. Breastfeeding immediately after birth helps the uterus return to its previous size and **tones the uterus**. Breastfeeding **reduces** the risk of **postpartum hemorrhage**.
33. Breastfeeding **reduces** the chance of ovarian cancer.
34. Breastfeeding **reduces risk of breast cancer** by 4% per year of breastfeeding.
35. Exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months provides 98% protection against another pregnancy under three conditions (Lactational Amenorrhea or LAM): absence of menstruation since the baby's birth, exclusive breastfeeding, on demand, days and nights (no more than 4 hours between feeds) and baby is less than six month old.
36. A woman suffering from Gestational Diabetes has less risk of developing Type II Diabetes later on if she breastfeeds after that pregnancy. Breastfeeding can reduce insulin requirements in diabetic mothers.
37. Breastfeeding helps mothers return to their pre-pregnancy **weight** more easily.
38. Breastfeeding reduces **osteoporosis and hip fractures** after menopause.
39. Breastfeeding makes the mothers' life easier, saves time and money with no purchasing, measuring and no bottles to warm.
40. Breastfeeding mothers increase **self-confidence, pride, and feelings of closeness and bonding** with their infants.
41. Mother and infants **share** special moments and relaxed time together during breast feeding.
42. Breastfeeding **reduces postpartum depression** by making mothers' life easier and increasing her feelings of fulfillment, happiness and self-esteem.
43. Express breast milk protects nipples by its antibacterial properties and is inexpensive and convenient.
44. Breastfeeding **reduces breast engorgement** and engorgement pain.

Family

45. Better health and nutrition
46. Breastfeeding reduces trips to doctor and hospital.
47. Breastfeeding decreases prescriptions; less illness and less stress
48. Breastfeeding saves money on feeding utensils and medical treatment; artificial baby milk costs \$2000-\$5000 per year per child in Canada.
49. Money saved on formula and feeding utensils can be used to buy nutritious food for mother and family.
50. Breastfeeding increases bonding between family members

Society

51. Stronger families and healthy community
52. Breastfeeding improves health and wellbeing of our population, creating smarter citizens.
53. Breastfeeding benefits health care system by saving costs, providing long term health care savings.
54. Breastfeeding improves productivity and reduces absenteeism among breastfeeding mothers as a result of healthier children.
55. Donation of express breast milk benefits those who cannot breastfeed and increases the health of babies in our society.
56. Breastfeeding saves many babies' lives in natural disasters and emergencies because it is always available and not contaminated.

Ecology

57. **Saves energy**: breastfeeding does not require manufacturing, refrigeration, handling, trucking and storage.
58. No manufacturing mistakes; breastfeeding is always safe.
59. Save resources: no bottle or can waste
60. Less waste: Breastfeeding **saves our environment** and our beautiful planet earth.

Websites

www.who.ca (WHO organization)
www.unicef.ca (UNICEF)
www.canadianpediatricsociety.ca
www.healthcanada.ca
www.nrdc.org/breastmilk/default.asp (contaminants in breast milk)

www.breastfeeding.com
www.bcbabyfriendly.ca
www.infactcanada.ca
www.babymilkaction.org
www.beststart.org