



# The Wellness News

## The Truth About Breastfeeding

### The breastfeeding debate

When the topic of breastfeeding comes up in conversation, most people have a firm opinion about whether a woman should or shouldn't breastfeed. The debate usually ranges from whether it is appropriate to breastfeed in public, to what age is too old for a child to be breastfed. There is no right or wrong choice, however the decision to breastfeed or not is best made by taking into consideration the benefits to the mother and baby as well as the needs of the family.

### A brief history of breastfeeding

As one would expect, women have been breastfeeding since the beginning of time. Prior to the 19th century, if a woman had difficulty producing milk for her child, a "wet-nurse" was used to breastfeed the child for her. The option to formula-feed your baby only came into existence around the mid-19th century and only gained popularity after WWII. Since that time, the support for breastfeeding women has ebbed and flowed. Today, families have access to sound information to help them identify the option that best fits their unique needs and philosophy.



### What are the benefits of breastfeeding for the baby?

- Greater immunity
- Fewer infections
- Reduced risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Less obesity and childhood diabetes
- Possible protection against allergies
- Increased cognitive development
- Infant/mother bonding
- Increased felt security and attachment



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## What are the benefits of breastfeeding for the mother?

- Infant/mother bonding
- Relaxation through hormone release
- Enhanced postpartum weight loss
- Reduced likelihood of pregnancy while exclusively breastfeeding
- Lowered risk of some cancers, postpartum bleeding, insulin resistance, even heart disease

## Possible drawbacks of breastfeeding:

- For women with TB, HIV, and certain other conditions which involve taking specific drugs, breastfeeding greatly increases the risk of transmission of these conditions to the baby.
- Limitations in caffeine, drug, and alcohol consumption recommended for breastfeeding women
- Lack of support for breastfeeding

## Common breastfeeding misconceptions:

Some women do not produce enough milk:

- It is rare for a woman to not produce enough milk. If a baby is not getting enough milk it is because he/she may not be latched properly onto the breast. Therefore, it is important for new mothers to be shown how to latch properly by a professional.
- When a mother breastfeeds early and often, an average of 9.9 times a day for the first two weeks, her milk production is greater, her baby gains more weight, and breastfeeding duration is longer.
- Milk supply declines when feedings are infrequent or restricted.



It is normal for breastfeeding to hurt:

- Tenderness and discomfort should be temporary issues. Ongoing pain that is severe and abnormal is most likely due to the baby latching on poorly.

A mother must drink milk to produce milk:

- A healthy, well-balanced diet full of fruits, vegetables, grains, and protein is all a mother needs to produce adequate nutrients to produce milk.

Both breasts should be used at each feeding:

- It is important to allow your baby to finish on the first breast, even if your baby does not take the second breast at the same feeding. There are two types of milk: foremilk and hindmilk. Foremilk is the thinner milk your baby gets first, which is lower in fat and higher in lactose. Hindmilk is the high fat milk that follows. It is important for your baby to drink hindmilk to ensure adequate weight gain, energy, and brain development.

Call Your Health Coach for More Information (800) 343-3822

### Sources:

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<http://www.llli.org/nb/lvaprmay98p21nb.html> [http://wic.ufl.edu/breastfeeding\\_myths.shtml](http://wic.ufl.edu/breastfeeding_myths.shtml)