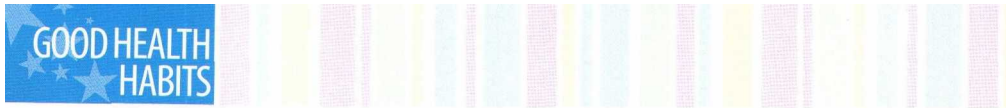


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BREASTFEEDING
14 Sep 2011
Health Today
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BREASTFEEDING

FACT: Breastfeeding is the best way to provide a newborn baby with nourishment for the first six months of life.

Not only does breast milk contain all the nutrients that a newborn baby needs, it is also rich in hormones and infection-fighting properties, ensuring that your baby has everything he/she needs to stay healthy.

Breast milk contains water, amino acids, lactose and fatty acids in the exact amounts needed for growth, digestion and brain and neurological development.

Benefits for baby

- A lower chance of developing early-onset diabetes (juvenile diabetes).
- A reduced risk of becoming obese during adolescence.
- Less likely to develop asthma and eczema.
- Better digestive health, with a lower reported incidence of two commonly

occurring inflammatory bowel conditions – Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

- A lower chance of sudden infant death syndrome.
- Less susceptible to diseases like diarrhoea, meningitis, and respiratory and ear infections.
- Higher IQ scores at school-going age.

Perfect for pre-mature infants

- A lower chance of contracting possible life-threatening infectious diseases.
- Faster brain maturation.
- A shorter hospital stay, which leads to a reduction in costs for parents.

Benefits for mums

- Breastfeeding strengthens the bond between mother and child.
- Lowers the risk of pre-menopausal breast and ovarian cancers. The longer the breastfeeding period, the lower the risk.
- Lower risk of developing obesity and osteoporosis.
- Breastfeeding reduces

the risk of post-partum haemorrhage, which can be hazardous to the mother. It also speeds up post-delivery recovery.

- Though not a 100% guaranteed method, exclusive and continuous breastfeeding for the first six months can help prevent pregnancy by delaying ovulation.
- Exclusive breastfeeding can prevent anaemia in the mother.

Who cannot breastfeed?

As important as breastfeeding is, there is a small group of women who cannot breastfeed, eg, those with:

- HIV/AIDS.
- Herpes.
- Hepatitis.

However, each woman is unique, so it is advisable to consult a doctor before breastfeeding.

Illnesses like colds and the flu cannot be transmitted through breast milk. In fact, if a mother has any of these illnesses, her body will produce antibodies that will be excreted in the milk, thus preventing her child from acquiring the illness.

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GOOD HEALTH
HABITS

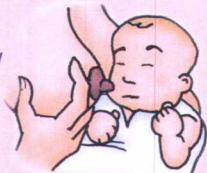
How to Breastfeed

- Wear dresses and bras that open in front so that you don't have to undress each time to breastfeed your baby.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water before you begin.
- Clean your nipples and areola with cotton wool dipped



into water that has been boiled and then cooled.

- Hold baby close to your breast, supporting his head in the crook of your arm. Let your nipple touch his cheek. Baby will automatically turn his head to face your breast.



- Stretch your nipple between your index and middle finger and guide it into his mouth. Make sure baby holds both the nipple and the areola in his mouth.



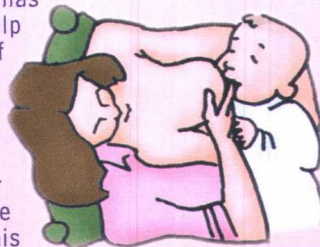
- Do not squeeze his cheeks or push him towards the breast – he might end up refusing the breast altogether.

- Use your fingers to push down the part of the breast nearest to his nose so that he can breathe without difficulty.



- Feed baby from both your breasts at each feeding, i.e. 5-10 minutes at each breast, to avoid nipple soreness. As you become more accustomed to breastfeeding you can gradually increase the length of feeds to 15-20 minutes.

- After baby has finished, help him to let go of your nipple by pressing gently on your breast. This allows air to enter into the corner of his mouth.



- After feeding on each breast, rest baby's head on your shoulder or sit him on your lap and gently pat/rub his back. This helps him to burp and bring up any swallowed air.



- Once the feeding is over, clean your nipples and areola and let them dry naturally. Rub lanolin cream on your nipples, if necessary, to keep them supple and to prevent cracking.
- Always start the next feeding on the breast that baby suckled on last at the previous feeding.