

Breast feeding vs. Bottle Feeding

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Breast feeding

Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for the first 6 months of life. It contains appropriate amounts of carbohydrate, protein, and fat, and provides digestive enzymes, minerals, vitamins, and hormones that infants require. Breast milk also contains antibodies from the mother that can help the baby resist infections.

Experts agree that breastfeeding baby for any length of time, regardless of how short, is of benefit to mother and baby

Breast milk is good for baby in many ways:

- It provides natural antibodies that help baby resist illnesses, such as ear infections.
- It's usually more easily digested than formula. So breastfed babies are often less constipated and gassy.
- It may lower the risk of sudden infant death syndrome in the first year of baby's life.
- It may raise child's intelligence. Studies show breastfed babies have higher levels of cognitive function.
- Breast milk may even help child in later years, by reducing the risk of being overweight, and of developing asthma, type 1 and type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, Hodgkin's disease, leukemia, and lymphoma.

Breastfeeding is good for moms, too. Women who breastfeed have a reduced risk of breast cancer, diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, and ovarian cancer

Formula Feeding

Formula feeding is also a healthy choice for babies. If you use a formula, your baby will get the best possible alternative to breast milk. (You should not attempt to make your own formula or feed an infant cow's milk.)

Many moms choose formula for a variety of reasons:

- It's convenient. Formula-fed babies can be fed by anyone at any time.
- It's flexible. You don't have to fit pumping into your work schedule. Instead, you can simply leave formula for your babysitter or day care center.
- Your partner can help out with nighttime feedings and share that bonding experience with baby.
- Scheduling feedings may be easier. Formula isn't digested as quickly as breast milk, so formula-fed babies don't need to eat as often, especially in the first few months.
- You don't have to worry about what you eat. Moms who breastfeed may have to avoid certain foods that her baby can't tolerate.
- You can have a glass of wine or a cocktail once in a while. Alcohol is a no-no for women who breastfeed because they pass on tiny amounts of it to their babies.

- If you run into any problems, contact a lactation consultant. Moms who breastfeed may experience:
 - Nipple soreness
 - Breast engorgement
 - Leaking breasts
 - Let-down reflex (other than during breastfeeding)
 - Difficulty knowing how much milk the baby is drinking
 - Infection of the nipple or breast

Cow's milk by itself is not an adequate source of complete nutrition for infants. Commercially prepared formulas for bottle-feeding are adequate sources of nutrition for babies that do not breastfeed.

Some babies are unable to adequately breast feed due to:

- Premature birth
- Small size
- Weak physical condition
- Difficulty sucking
- Birth defects of the mouth (cleft lip or cleft palate)

Some mothers are advised NOT to breastfeed due to health problems such as:

- Active, untreated tuberculosis
- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infection or AIDS
- Active herpes lesions on the breast
- Severe malnutrition
- Hepatitis infection
- Use of street drugs or uncontrolled alcohol use

There are advantages and disadvantages to both breastfeeding and bottle-feeding. Ultimately the decision should be made by the parents. The following table outlines several of the issues that need to be considered when making the decision on whether to breastfeed, bottle-feed, or a combination of the two.

Breastfeeding vs. Bottle-feeding

	Breastfeeding	Bottle-feeding
Nutrition		
	Perfect balance of nutrients	Not as efficiently utilized as breast milk
	Contains high levels of nutrients	Nutritional content depends on proper preparation
	Easily digested and absorbed	Some babies have difficulty tolerating certain nutrients
	Content varies according to milk production stage, which meets the changing nutritional requirements	Pediatrician/care-giver determines amount
	Infant determines amount	

Advantages

Always the perfect temperature

Anyone can feed the baby

No preparation time

Milk is readily available at any time and any place

Disadvantages

Mother must be available for feeding or to provide pumped milk if she is absent

Warming formula

Mother must pump if feeding is missed

Preparation time varies

Early breastfeeding may be uncomfortable

Baby may not tolerate formula well

Certain medications can interrupt breastfeeding

Always have to carry bottles, formula/mixing items with you