

# *Reasons to breastfeed*

## **1. You want to.**

Breast milk is the best food for your baby. It is specifically designed for your infant: on a hot day breast milk contains the right amount of water to keep your baby hydrated, your breast milk changes as your baby grows, you can give your baby antibodies to boost their immune system. It is a bonding experience for mom and baby. Only you can do it.

## **2. Helps mom lose that baby fat.**

There are certain fat stores that go on your body during pregnancy that are destined to be for breastfeeding. Breastfeeding helps tap into those stores and reduce the fat deposits laid down in pregnancy. Breastfeeding requires about 500 calories a day to simply produce the milk. You can use those extra 500 calories to add more food to your diet or to help you lose weight after the birth.

## **3. Breastfed babies are less likely to die of SIDS.**

About 7,000 US babies die every year from SIDS. While we don't know what causes SIDS, we do know what the risk factors are, that includes using formula to feed your baby. Breastmilk is one of the few factors that you can control.

## **4. Reduced allergies for breastfed babies.**

Breastfeeding your baby causes baby to have fewer allergies. There are lots of reasons why this happens, but remember - Mother's milk is specific for each and every child. It changes throughout the day and throughout the span that you nurse.

## **5. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that you breastfeed.**

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that your baby begin breastfeeding within the first hour of life and that they only receive breastmilk until they are older. It's also recommended by the American Dietetic Association (ADA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF.

## **6. Formula increases the risk of diabetes (type I).**

Infants who are exposed to formula, particularly early on have a greater likelihood to develop Type I diabetes. Infants who were expressly breastfed for at least 5 months with no formula had lower rates of Type I diabetes. The longer they were breastfed, the lower the risk.

## **7. Postbirth benefits are also many.**

By breastfeeding your body releases a hormone that helps your uterus contract, oxytocin. This can reduce your risk of postpartum hemorrhage or the need for other medications. Nursing also helps your uterus heal after birth and get back to its pre-pregnancy size.

## **8. Cancers decrease with breastfeeding too.**

Your risk of developing breast cancer and other cancers is increased if you do not breast feed. Breastfeeding can help lower the incidence of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, endometrial cancer, etc.

## **9. Increases Baby's IQ**

Breastfeeding has been shown to increase your baby's intelligence quotient (IQ). The average increase is about 7 points. While it might not be the difference for acceptance to Harvard, we all need every point we can get!