

# Human milk for babies

Human breastmilk has been the normal, natural milk to nourish babies for as long as humans have been on earth. Breastfeeding promotes a joyful closeness with your baby and a special lifelong bond.

## Benefits of breastfeeding:

- Breast milk naturally has all the nutrients and antibodies babies need to grow, develop, and prevent illnesses.
- Breastfeeding is convenient and a great timesaver. You can breastfeed almost anywhere and anytime your baby is hungry.
- Breastfeeding helps the uterus return to its normal size.
- Breastfeeding reduces health care costs because babies are healthier.
- Breastfeeding develops a special bond between you and your baby.
- Breast milk is always sterile, warm, and ready to serve.



WIC participants who breastfeed receive bigger WIC food packages with additional items like canned fish and whole grains. They can also get more milk, cheese, juice, eggs, dried beans and peanut butter. They may continue to receive them for a year after giving birth. Breastfeeding can also save you up to **\$1,500** a year—the cost of additional baby formula needed to meet your baby's needs.

## For your baby, breastfeeding reduces the risk of:

- Pneumonia
- Lower IQ
- Ear Infections
- Childhood leukemia
- Stomach and bowel problems
- Obesity and diabetes
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Allergies and eczema

## For mothers, breastfeeding reduces the risk of:

- Diabetes
- Postpartum depression
- Cardiovascular disease
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Breast and ovarian cancer
- Child abuse and neglect



## Every ounce counts!

Any amount of breastmilk you give your baby will be of great benefit – every ounce counts!

# Embracing Motherhood

## Human Milk for Human Babies



naturalNutrition





# Common Breastfeeding Myths

**Myth: I won't be able to make enough milk.** Moms almost always make enough milk to feed their babies. Your baby is likely getting more than you think at each feeding. A newborn's stomach is only the size of an almond. Eating healthy, drinking water, and nursing often will help maximize your milk supply.

If you have any questions about your milk supply or your child's weight, please contact your local WIC office or your baby's health care provider.

**Myth: I will have to eat a special diet if I breastfeed.** Your body will produce healthy milk for your baby even if you don't eat a healthy diet. But a healthy diet will help YOU stay healthy. While what you eat (including foods like onion, garlic, or broccoli) may affect the flavor of your breastmilk, this is not bad—it is actually the way your baby learns to like various foods and flavors unique to your lifestyle and culture. Breastfeeding may also help you lose weight.

**Myth: I can't breastfeed because I'm in school or working.** You can return to work or school and continue to breastfeed. Your WIC staff will help you get a pump so you can pump milk for your baby while at work or school. This will also help keep your supply up. You can breastfeed your baby before and after work. Your workplace or school should provide a private place for you to pump. Most employers are also required to allow you to take the time you need to pump.<sup>1</sup>

**Myth: Breastfeeding may change the shape of my breasts.** Actually, it's pregnancy that stretches the ligaments of your breast tissue, whether you breastfeed or not. Age, genetics, and the number of pregnancies you've had also play a role. Your breasts were made for breastfeeding!

**Myth: Breastfeeding didn't work for my first baby/mom/friend, so I don't think it will work for me.** Every baby is different, and every mother is different. Knowing what to expect and how to prepare in advance may prevent many common problems. Most problems related to soreness and milk production can be solved with position adjustments and feeding on demand. WIC has special staff—available during and outside of normal clinic hours—to help you work through common breastfeeding problems.

**Myth: My breasts are too small or too large to breastfeed.** Size and shape of breasts do not affect ability to breastfeed and have nothing to do with how much milk a woman actually produces. This includes women with large areolas (the area around the nipple), flat nipples, and even women who've had breast surgery. If you have very large breasts or have had surgery, it may take some extra patience or some assistance from a lactation consultant. Your WIC staff includes breastfeeding experts who are here to help you.

**Myth: Breastfeeding hurts.** The truth is that breastfeeding is not supposed to be a painful experience. In fact, pain is usually a red flag that something is wrong. While a baby's latch can be strong, it's not actually biting, not even when the baby is cutting teeth.

As with any new skill, there is an adjustment period. WIC provides breastfeeding peer counselors, lactation consultants, and educational materials to help you get a good start and proper latch—a key to preventing pain.

**Myth: If I breastfeed, baby will want only me, or be spoiled.** You don't need to feel like your baby will be tied to only you if you are breastfeeding, although it's not a bad thing for baby to be attached to mama! There are many things others can do, especially dad—such as playing with baby, holding baby skin to skin, changing diapers, and more.

When dad holds baby skin-to-skin, he can also develop a special bond with baby. And research shows that breastfed children grow up to be confident and self-sufficient when parents meet their needs.

1. Federal Fair Labor Standards Act Section 7  
2. Office on Women's Health, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. . It's Only Natural. . <https://www.womenshealth.gov/its-only-natural/>