

## Benefits of Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best, most nurturing way of feeding your new baby – something special you can do for your child and you.

### Breastfeeding is best for your baby

- Breastmilk has everything your baby needs to grow and be healthy.
- Breastmilk is easy to digest. Your baby's stools will be soft and easy to pass.
- Breastmilk protects babies from ear infections, colds, allergies, diarrhea and constipation. Your baby will be sick less and have fewer doctor visits.
- Breastfeeding helps baby's eyes and brain develop.
- Breastfed children are less likely to have diabetes or become overweight in later years.
- Breastfeeding is great for mother-baby bonding.

### Breastfeeding is good for moms

- Baby smells sweet and diapers smell less.
- Breastfeeding saves time. No messy bottles to fix at night, so everyone sleeps better.
- Breastfeeding helps you lose weight.
- Breastfeeding lowers your risk of breast and ovarian cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes and heart disease.
- Women enjoy breastfeeding. Hormones your body makes during breastfeeding help you relax and feel close to your baby.
- Breastfed babies are easy to take on trips. Just grab the diapers and go!
- Breastfeeding saves money (no formula or bottle costs, fewer doctor bills and medication costs).
- WIC moms may get extra food for the first year of breastfeeding.





## Breastfeeding is good for your family

- Breastfeeding families are happy knowing their babies are getting the best food possible.
- Fathers and others are very important. They can:
  - √ Talk and sing to baby
  - √ Cuddle baby
  - √ Take baby for a walk
  - √ Bathe baby
  - √ Read or tell stories

## How long should I keep breastfeeding? The choice is yours.

- Any amount of breastfeeding is good for you and your baby.
- You can breastfeed as long as you and your baby want to. You and your baby benefit from breastfeeding beyond one year of age.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding for a year or more.
- The longer you breastfeed the easier it is to breastfeed.

## Plan ahead for breastfeeding

- Tell your doctor or midwife you want to breastfeed immediately after you deliver.
- Tell the nurses NOT to give your baby pacifiers, water or formula bottles at any time.
- Have the baby room-in with you in the hospital. Nurse the baby often and whenever she shows interest.
- Try to manage your labor and delivery without medications (medications do affect babies and make them drowsy at the breast).

**Breastfeeding is a special gift only you  
can give your baby.**