

Module 1A- What's so great about breastfeeding?

What I learn: Breastfeeding is powerful – it benefits mom and baby- Exclusive breastfeeding (means just breastmilk!) for 6 months is best. Breastmilk has all the fluid and nutrition your baby needs for the first 6 months.

Babies and Kids:

1- “Builds baby’s immune system” - Less infections + less likely to get sick enough to go to the clinic or be overnight in the hospital- count any of these:

- * Less diarrhea/vomiting illnesses (“stomach flu”)
- * Less respiratory/breathing infections (pneumonia, wheezing, bad cold)
- * Less ear infections
- * Fewer urinary tract infections
- * Fewer blood infections

2- Lower risk of infant death:

- * Less babies die worldwide when breastfed (compared to fed formula)
- * Lower risk of SIDS (Sudden infant death syndrome)
 - don’t know why but studies show much less risk for breastfed babies

3- Less chance of these, especially if it runs in the family:

- * Obesity/overweight
 - breastfeeding babies seem to learn when they are full
- * Eczema (“ex-zee-ma”-Atopic dermatitis)
- * Asthma (wheezing, reactive airways)

4- Possibly higher intelligence AND faster development

–this also depends a lot on mom and how baby is raised, but it is a wonderful possibility.

Moms’ benefits

1-Lower risk of cancer:

- * Breast cancer risk is less the longer you breastfeed total over all your kids
- * Ovarian cancer risk is less if you breastfeed for 6+ months over all your kids

2- Less chance of heart (cardiovascular) disease with total breastfeeding 12+ months over all your kids- all of these are less likely:

- * Obesity/ overweight
- * High blood pressure (Hypertension)
- * High cholesterols (Hyperlipidemia)
- * Heart disease (Cardiovascular disease)

3- Less chance of diabetes type 2 (if you did not have pregnancy [gestational] diabetes)

4- Child spacing – breast feeding can help you space your pregnancies but it is not birth control alone

Mom + Baby Benefits

Bonding- the hormone that causes the milk to come out (oxytocin- let down hormone)

- * Makes you want to care for your baby,
- * Makes you feel good when you are close to the baby (touching and looking)

This is big – many moms believe this closeness has helped them through many hard times.