



Breastfeeding for Me

Maternal Breastfeeding Benefits: Fact Sheet

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This fact sheet provides a concise overview of the significant benefits breastfeeding offers to mothers. These points are crucial for empowering mothers to make informed decisions about their own health and well-being.

1. Faster Postpartum Recovery

- **Benefit:** Breastfeeding helps the mother's uterus (womb) shrink back to its pre-pregnancy size more quickly. It also helps reduce postpartum bleeding.
- **How it Works:** When a baby nurses, the mother's body releases a hormone called oxytocin. This hormone causes the uterus to contract, which helps it return to normal faster and lessens blood loss.
- **Why it Matters for Mom:** Quicker recovery means less discomfort and a faster return to feeling like herself after childbirth.

2. Breastfeeding Burns Extra Calories

- **Benefit:** Breastfeeding burns 400-600 extra calories a day.
- **How it Works:** Producing breast milk requires a significant amount of energy from the mother's body, leading to an increased calorie burn each day.
- **Why it Matters for Mom:** It's a natural and active way to support mom's health.

3. Reduced Risk of Certain Cancers

- **Benefit:** Breastfeeding is linked to a decreased risk of developing certain cancers, specifically breast cancer and ovarian cancer.
- **How it Works:** The longer a mother breastfeeds, the greater the protective effect. For breast cancer, it's thought that hormonal changes during lactation and fewer menstrual cycles may play a role. For ovarian cancer, it's believed to be linked to the suppression of ovulation during breastfeeding.
- **Why it Matters for Mom:** This offers a powerful long-term health benefit, acting as a preventative measure against serious diseases.

4. Lower Risk of Type 2 Diabetes

- **Benefit:** Breastfeeding can lower a mother's risk of developing type 2 diabetes, especially for those who experienced gestational diabetes during pregnancy.
- **How it Works:** Research suggests that breastfeeding improves the body's sensitivity to insulin, which helps regulate blood sugar levels.
- **Why it Matters for Mom:** It contributes to better metabolic health and reduces the likelihood of developing a chronic condition.

5. Reduced Risk of Osteoporosis

- **Benefit:** In the long term, breastfeeding may have a protective effect against osteoporosis, a condition that makes bones weak and brittle.
- **How it Works:** While bone density may slightly decrease during lactation, studies show that mothers regain and often exceed their previous bone density after weaning, leading to a long-term protective effect.
- **Why it Matters for Mom:** It helps maintain strong bones for future health and mobility.

6. Enhanced Emotional & Mental Well-being

- **Benefit:** Breastfeeding can promote feelings of calm, reduce stress, and potentially lower the risk of postpartum depression and anxiety.
- **How it Works:** The hormones oxytocin and prolactin, released during breastfeeding, have calming and mood-enhancing effects. Oxytocin is often called the "love hormone" for its role in bonding and reducing stress.
- **Why it Matters for Mom:** Supports better mental health during the often challenging postpartum period, promoting a stronger sense of connection and well-being.

7. Convenience

- **Benefit:** Breastfeeding saves mothers time and effort.
- **How it Works:** No need to mix formula. Breast milk is always available, at the right temperature, and ready whenever and wherever the baby needs it.
- **Why it Matters for Mom:** Convenient, allowing more time for herself and her family.

Please Note: This fact sheet summarizes common benefits. For specific medical advice or concerns, always consult with a healthcare professional.

Empowering Mothers Through Education
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Supporting Documentation

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