

Your Breastmilk is all Your Baby Needs

Information for parents of healthy, full-term newborns

Health experts agree:

Healthy full-term babies should be fed only breastmilk for the first 6 months of life.

Your breastmilk is made especially for your baby. Although formula provides basic nutrition, it lacks living nutrients that are found only in breastmilk. Your healthy, full-term baby does not need anything other than your breastmilk for the first 6 months of life and may breastfeed for 2 years and beyond.

Giving only breastmilk (exclusive breastfeeding) has proven benefits. Research shows that breastfeeding often, without extra feedings called supplements, helps the mother build a good supply of milk.

Most formula is created from cow's milk. Formula supplements, should only be given to your baby if there is a medical reason. Occasionally your care provider may decide supplements are necessary for a baby's health. Your own breastmilk is the best supplement. Your nurse or a lactation consultant can show you how to express your breastmilk and give it to your baby.

Possible effects of formula supplements	Benefits of breastmilk ONLY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formula changes the natural protection against infection found in the baby's intestines. • Formula is slow to digest. If your baby feeds less often, your milk supply may decrease. • Early use of formula may trigger allergies in some children. • Giving formula supplements without a medical reason often leads to early weaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastmilk coats the intestines and prevents infection from harmful bacteria and viruses. • Breastmilk digests easily. Feeding your baby more frequently will increase your milk supply. • Breastmilk helps protect against allergies. • Feeding only breastmilk builds your milk supply and your confidence.

We will do everything we can to help you with breastfeeding.

Adapted with permission from Hamilton Health Sciences and the Hamilton Regional Lactation Committee