



Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding definitions

Exclusive Breastfeeding: The infant has never, to the mother's knowledge, had any water, formula or other liquid or solid food. Only breastmilk, from the breast or expressed, and prescribed* medicines have been given from birth

* Prescribed as the Medicines Act 1981

Fully Breastfeeding: The infant has taken breastmilk only, no other liquids or solids except minimal amount of water or prescribed medicines in the past 24 hours.

Partial Breastfeeding: The infant has taken some breastmilk and some formula or other solid food in the past 48 hours.

Artificial Feeding: The infant has had no breastmilk but has had alternative liquid such as infant formula with or without solid food in the past 48 hours

(NZBA: www.babyfriendly.org.nz)



Benefits of breastfeeding

Meets the full term baby's complete nutritional needs for the first 4-6 months of life

Benefits for the baby:

Exclusively breastfed infants have at least 2 1/2 times fewer illness episodes than infants fed breastmilk substitutes

Non-breast fed infants are:

- About 250% more likely to be hospitalized for respiratory infections like asthma and pneumonia
- About 100% more likely to suffer from diarrhoea
- About 60% more likely to suffer from recurrent ear infections
- About 40% more likely to develop type II diabetes
- About 30% more likely to suffer from leukemia
- About 25% more likely to become overweight or obese

Reduced risk of:

- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Chronic disease (obesity)
- Food allergy
- Other allergies (asthma, atopic dermatitis)

Psychosocial and developmental benefits

- Child development (eye and brain development)
- Mother - Baby bonding

Benefits for the mother:

- Faster recovery from birth (oxytocin released during breastfeeding helps the uterus return to its previous size and reduces postpartum (post birth) bleeding.
- Delayed new pregnancies
- May help mother return to pre-pregnancy weight over time
- Enhanced bonding
- Savings in time energy and money

Reduced risk of:

- Breast (premenopausal) & ovarian cancers
- Osteoporotic bone fractures later in life

(Infant health: Guidelines for NZ health workers, MoH)
DHB Toolkit: Improve Nutrition 2001 NZ Health Strategy.