

# Deciding How to Feed Your Baby



## Benefits of Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact promote bonding and attachment of mother and baby. The cells, hormones and antibodies in breast milk protect babies from illness. This protection is unique and changes to meet your baby's needs. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, with continuation of breastfeeding for one year or longer as mutually desired by mother and infant.

### Breastfed babies have a lower risk of:

- Asthma and allergies
- Childhood leukemia
- Childhood obesity
- Diarrhea and vomiting
- Ear infections
- Eczema (skin rash)
- Necrotizing enterocolitis (a disease affecting the digestive system of preterm infants)
- Respiratory infections
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that pacifiers should not be used until breastfeeding is well established (usually three to four weeks).

### Mothers who breastfeed have a lower risk of:

- Excessive bleeding after delivery
- Type 2 diabetes
- Certain types of breast cancer
- Ovarian cancer
- Osteoporosis

## Risks of feeding formula when you are breastfeeding:

If you are breastfeeding and choose to supplement with formula, the following may occur:

- Problems with baby latching to your breast
- Sore nipples
- Less interest with your baby feeding at breast
- Spitting up as a result of stomach overfilling
- Engorgement (painful swelling of the breast)
- Plugged ducts
- Decreased milk supply

**Babies who drink only their mother's breast milk receive the most health benefits.** Although we encourage exclusive breastfeeding, it may be medically necessary to supplement your baby. If it becomes necessary, your health care provider will discuss this with you.

## Formula Feeding

### Infants who are fed formula are at a higher risk for:

- Asthma and allergies
- Eczema (skin rash)
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Ear infections
- Respiratory infections

Studies suggest that formula feeding can change a baby's normal intestinal bacteria. This could increase the risks for infection in the digestive system and immune problems later in life.

