

# Breastfeeding

## Best for baby and for Mum

### Remember...

- Breastmilk gives your baby the best start in life.
- It is the only food your baby needs for about the first six months.
- Breastmilk is always natural, fresh, clean and the right temperature.
- Your breastmilk will change over time to suit your baby's changing needs.
- Breastmilk helps protect your baby against illnesses, allergies and other diseases.
- Infant formula isn't the same as breastmilk.
- Breastfeeding is best for you and your baby.

Nature has provided mothers with the perfect food for babies – breastmilk. You can give your baby something that no one else can, and it's natural, free and environmentally friendly. Breastfeeding gives your baby the best possible start in life. Support from family and friends is a really important part of establishing and continuing breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding is more than providing food for your baby. Holding your baby close during breastfeeding builds a close, loving bond between you, by the feel, smell and visual image imprinting on you and your baby.

Breastfeeding provides the perfect natural mix of nutrients that your baby needs in a form specially designed for your baby's maturing digestive system and growing body. Breastmilk is made especially for your baby.

### Added advantages for your baby

Your breastmilk not only has all the nourishment that your baby needs, but it also reduces the risk of your baby developing infections and diseases such as:

- urinary tract infections
- gastrointestinal infections (eg. diarrhoea)
- respiratory illnesses (eg. asthma)
- some childhood cancers
- obesity, diabetes and heart disease later in life.

Breastfeeding also reduces the risk of your baby developing allergies and food intolerances, such as coeliac disease.

Breastfeeding promotes jaw development.

All the goodness in breastmilk is yet to be discovered, so it can't be replicated in infant formula. Breastfed babies are less likely to get infections and are less likely to go to hospital than formula-fed babies.

### Added advantages for you

- Breastfeeding helps your uterus return to its pre-pregnant state faster.
- Breastfeeding can help you lose weight after your baby's birth.
- Breastfeeding lessens the likelihood of ovarian cancer and premenopausal breast cancer.
- Breastfeeding lessens the likelihood of osteoporosis.
- Breastfeeding lessens the likelihood of mothers with gestational diabetes developing Type 2 diabetes.

### Convenient, safe and natural

- Breastmilk is always available and is fresh, clean and safe.
- It is the only food that your baby needs for around the first six months.
- It is good for your baby even when she or he is over 12 months old.
- It saves you time as you don't need to prepare formula and sterilise bottles.
- It is always ready for your baby.
- Breastmilk is free. The money saved could be more than \$1000 in the first year of your baby's life.

### Acknowledgements

This fact sheet is consistent with current Infant Feeding Guidelines and Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia, as produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

It is also based on information drawn heavily from:

- Infant and Toddler Feeding Guide, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District, 2004.
- Breastfeeding: A Simple Guide to Help You Establish Breastfeeding, Community Child Health Service, Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District, 2004.
- Growing Strong: Feeding You and Your Baby, Public Health Services, Queensland Health, 2003.
- Optimal Infant Nutrition: Evidence Based Guidelines 2003-2008, Queensland Health, 2003.

This fact sheet is also the result of input and effort from many health professionals in Queensland. Their help with the content is greatly appreciated.

To access the full set of fact sheets, go to <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/child&youth/factsheets>.

