

Babies who are breastfed exclusively are reported to be at less risk of stomach upsets and infections of the ear, respiratory and urinary tracts than those who are bottle-fed formula milk. They're also less likely to become obese or suffer from constipation and vomiting. If there's a family history of allergies or diabetes, breastfed babies are less likely to develop these.

Breastfeeding Babies

The majority of new mothers leaving the hospital today breast-feed their babies, at least at the beginning—about 60%. This is especially true for middle-class and professional women, which the majority of older mothers are likely to be. Age does not seem to have any great effect on breast-feeding. It is not commonly known that any woman who has had a baby can breast-feed, and that in other cultures grandmothers breast-feed their daughter's children. Occasionally a much older mother may find it a problem to produce enough milk, due to hormonal problems, but this is rare.

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Many hospitals now give great support and encouragement to mothers who want to breast-feed, recognizing that it is the best food for a baby and that there are emotional rewards for the nursing mother. The American Academy of Pediatrics issued a strongly worded policy in 1997 that suggests women nurse for six to 12 months, because of a strong association between breastfeeding and immunities for babies from a variety of ailments. But some women decide they do not want to breast-feed. There is no reason to feel guilty about this. There are excellent baby formulas available now that are made to match the nutrition of mother's milk as closely as possible. Bottle-fed babies also thrive. Love is more important than the way you choose to feed, though many mothers choose to express their love through breast-feeding.

BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

Breastmilk contains substances that help the development of a baby's brain, retinas, gut lining and protective sheath for the central nervous system. And there's more. Not only does breastmilk contain all the nutrients a baby needs, it also holds hormonal factors that help the baby's growth and development. It carries digestive enzymes, too, which help to digest the nutrients in the milk, helping the baby's immature digestive tract.

[Baby Gifts and Gift Baskets](#) provides timely and practical information for new moms, as well as gift ideas for pregnancy, baby showers, and to celebrate birth:

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Breast-feeding is best for a baby because it is a living substance transmitted directly from mother to baby, containing white blood cells, antibodies and other substances that help protect the baby against disease. We haven't yet identified all these protective properties. It is composed of exactly the right nutrients for human babies and is produced in exactly the quantities the baby demands.

Sweet Baby Hamper Basket



Send your congratulatory wishes on the birth of the sweet baby boy or girl with this exceptional gift basket. A fabric-lined storage hamper holds a "Baby Tips For Moms & Dads" Book, Bear Rattle, Booties, Baby Beanie Cap, 5"x7" Picture Frame, a 100% Cotton Baby T-shirt, Burp Cloth, a three piece Terry Washcloth Set, 9 oz Johnson & Johnson Baby Lotion, Baby Soap and a Baby Teddy Bear with an It's a Boy or Girl T-shirt. Mom will love using the storage hamper to store baby essentials in the nursery. Choose pink or blue.

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After the birth a mother produces colostrum, a yellowish fluid rich in antibodies, which protects the baby from infection. Colostrum also contains protein, water and minerals in just the right proportion for the baby's first few days, and a natural laxative, which helps the baby's bowels start working. When the milk comes in, it is also perfectly balanced for the baby's needs. The milk changes slightly in composition as the baby grows. Research has shown that milk produced by the mothers of premature babies is different from normal breast milk, and is ideally suited for them.

When the baby first goes to the breast and sucks, it takes the watery foremilk stored in ducts behind the areola, the pigmented area around the nipple. The baby's sucking sends a message to the brain to let down the bulk of the milk, and the hormone oxytocin the same hormone that makes the womb contract in labor and at orgasm- is released, causing the muscles around the glands producing the milk to contract and squeeze the milk through the breast to the nipple. The baby usually takes the bulk of the feeding in the first ten minutes or so at the breast. But enough milk is always produced so the feeding can last much longer than this.

Most hospitals have made-up bottles of formula readily available. This is a great temptation to a mother who is having problems with breast-feeding and who is very tired. If you are certain you want to breast-feed, resist this temptation! It takes some time to establish breast-feeding and

there are often some initial problems, but they should resolve themselves shortly. Some babies who get used to the bottle find it is more difficult to take the breast. Babies who have had bottles sometimes reject the breast altogether. Mothers who want to avoid cow's milk because of eczema and asthma in the family should also resist the temptation to give a bottle.

