

## **Reasons to Breastfeed or The Advantages of Nursing**

1. It's the perfect food for your baby.
2. Colostrum, which appears in the first few days of nursing, is liquid gold. Thick and creamy, it is chock full of antibodies which help protect a newborn against germs.
3. Colostrum also works as a laxative to help the baby pass meconium which results in lessening jaundice.
4. Breastmilk is associated with healthy brain development. One theory is that because a breastfeeding mother has a free hand, she can touch or cuddle the baby while nursing. Holding a bottle for the baby instead of nursing steals the free hand away.
5. Breastfeeding burns post-partum calories faster.
6. Breastfeeding mothers experience less post-partum depression.
7. No matter what the duration of breastfeeding, it lessens the chance of breast cancer by 10%. Breast cancer chances are decreased by 1/3 if the duration of breastfeeding goes to two years or more. Babies that are nursed also have a 26 to 30 percent reduced risk of breast cancer.
8. Mucus in the breastmilk adheres to the intestinal walls and protects against bacteria. Babies who are breastfed have less colds.
9. Breastmilk requires no preparation and is always the right temperature. It's sterile and safe and one not need worry about the quality or availability of the water.
10. Breastmilk is inexpensive and totally independent of business interests and money.
11. In a matter or 3-4 hours after a baby and mother are exposed to germs, the antibodies in the milk change to meet the needs of the baby.
12. Though not a form or birth control, breastfeeding discourages conception.
13. Some immune factors are still present in breastmilk even after 6 months, and some occur in even higher concentrations.
14. Prolactin, the hormone which helps the milk "come down," relaxes the mother. It affects the pituitary gland. There is evidence of less child abuse in mothers who breastfeed.

For more information read "Nursing Your Baby" by Karen Pryor, or contact your local La Leche League.