



The Wellness Family

Dr. Cuperus Keeps You Informed

Breastfeeding

When you're expecting a baby, there are numerous decisions that need to be made –everything from diapers to working outside of the home. Right up there at the top of that list is this: are you going to breastfeed your baby or not and, if so, for how long?

Abundant Benefits

Every year more scientific evidence is gathered to prove what many people already know: a mother's milk is the best food for her baby. In March of 2012, the American Academy of Pediatrics confirmed its recommendation that mothers breastfeed for at least a year and "as long as mutually desired". Mother's milk alone provides all the nutrients necessary for a baby's physical and mental development for at least six months, with the added benefit of natural immunity against numerous diseases.

For instance, studies have proven that breastfed babies experience fewer incidents of the following: ear infections; colds and upper respiratory infections; allergies and asthma; diarrhea or gastrointestinal disease; childhood lymphoma; and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Indeed, the rate of SIDS is reduced by over 33% in breastfed babies and there is a 15-30% reduction in adolescent and adult obesity in breastfed vs. non-breastfed infants.

The facts are, the breastfed child has a stronger immune system, leading to an overall healthier and happier child.

Of course, it's not just better for baby, Mom benefits as well with the following:

- Decreased risk of breast cancer
- Easier recovery from delivery
- Financial savings

Yes, the mother that breastfeeds saves her family an estimated \$1800 per year that isn't being spent on formula. In addition, a study published in 2010 in the journal *Pediatrics*, suggests a \$13 billion savings in healthcare and other costs if women would breastfeed exclusively for six months.

Investigators calculated the current costs of 10 specific pediatric diseases for which there is proven protection through breastfeeding. These include eczema, middle-ear infections, lower respiratory tract infections like pneumonia, asthma, type 1 diabetes and SIDS.

Researchers then estimated the potential savings if 90% of new mothers in the U.S. breastfed exclusively for six months as recommended. They then calculated the direct and indirect costs related to these illnesses. Based on

their calculations, the U.S. could save \$13 billion per year as well as prevent 911 annual deaths – primarily SIDS, necrotizing enterocolitis (an intestinal disorder seen mainly in preterm infants) and respiratory infections.

The IQ Factor

A study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* and performed by University of Kentucky nutritionist James Anderson, showed that breastfed infants tested between 3.1 and 5.2 IQ points higher, depending on different socioeconomic factors, than



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formula fed infants in a comprehensive study involving 11 different studies and over 7000 children.

The Time Factor

Although it is uncommon for North American children to be nursed past infancy, the worldwide average for weaning is 4 to 5 years. The World Health Organization advises breastfeeding until at least two years of age and the American Academy of Pediatrics advises exclusive breastfeeding for six months, with ongoing nursing until 12 months, and then continued nursing for as long as the mother and child want.

According to an article in the *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, babies who are breastfed for at least six months grow to be more intelligent than those who are breastfed for less time.

An analysis of 245 children, 17% of which were breastfed for less than three months, found that those who were breastfed for more than six months scored above average for mental skills at thirteen months and their total intelligence was higher at five years.

Overcoming Potential Problems

Breastfeeding is not without its difficulties. Although approximately 75% of newborn infants initiate breastfeeding, several factors can make breastfeeding feel like "mission impossible"; the first of which is improper latching.

Breastfeeding should not be painful as this is a sure sign that the baby has not properly latched on. This is not an uncommon problem since, although nursing is instinctive, how to latch on is not and may require a little time and patience during the first few attempts.

A hungry newborn will root (or move its open mouth) toward a finger or knuckle that is gently brushed against its cheek. This is the perfect time to place the infant on the breast and this should be done as follows:

- First, take the baby into your arms with its head being supported in the crook of your right arm making sure that the baby's left arm is tucked under your arm. In this position the baby will be tummy to tummy with you.
- Taking your left hand, gently press the right breast between your index and middle finger. This will flatten the breast a little and make it easier for the baby to take into its mouth.
- Finally, wait for the baby to open its mouth wide, and then lift the baby up onto the breast. The baby will take a large portion of the areola/breast into its mouth and begin nursing.

If this is painful, the baby is not properly latched, and you should try again. Start by gently putting your finger between the baby's lips and the breast. This will break the suction and allow you to remove your breast without additional pain.

Some mothers find that holding the baby tucked under their arm like a football with the baby's head resting in their hand is more comfortable. There is no right or wrong way to breastfeed; find what is right for you and the baby (that facilitates proper latching).

If breastfeeding is still painful after multiple attempts to properly latch, take a moment to speak with your Chiropractor or a lactation specialist as it's possible that there is a physical issue, such as tongue or lip-tie, affecting latching.

Surviving Thrush

One of the most painful problems to overcome with breastfeeding is thrush. This common disorder, caused by a yeast infection in the infant's mouth, will transfer from the mother's nipple to the baby's mouth and back. Since it is a yeast infection, most obstetricians and pediatricians will attempt to treat it with oral yeast medications. The problem with this solution is that these are chemicals that are being transferred to the baby through the mother's milk.

Mothering Magazine offers several natural and holistic solutions to this frustrating condition. The first of which is to wash the breast with a vinegar solution of ¼-cup vinegar to 1-cup water. It's important not to wash off the vinegar solution and to allow it to air dry. If the baby protests, the solution can be lowered to as little as 1 teaspoon of vinegar to 1 cup of water but it must be done at least four times a day.

Another successful treatment recommended by Mothering Magazine is 3000 mg of Vitamin C consumed throughout the day. In addition, probiotics formulated for infants can be helpful as well.

The Chiropractic Factor

Your Family Wellness Chiropractor is supportive of breastfeeding and wants you and your baby to succeed. A newborn that can't latch, refuses to suck, clamps down too fast or is not maintaining an open mouth may be suffering from an upper cervical subluxation and should be evaluated. If your newborn is manifesting any of these symptoms, please contact your Family Wellness Chiropractor today to schedule a pediatric Chiropractic screening.

If after all attempts have been made to breastfeed and it is determined an alternative form of feeding is best, don't be discouraged. Weston A. Price's website has a healthy alternative to breast milk. Ask your Family Wellness Chiropractor for more information.



Dear Patient,

Dr. Cuperus is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.

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