

Module 1A- What's so great about breastfeeding?

Teaching Point: Breastfeeding is powerful- it benefits mom and baby, and fathers who support breastfeeding have healthier smarter babies! Exclusive breastfeeding (means just breast milk!) for 6 months is best. Breast milk has all the fluid and nutrition your baby needs for the first 6 months.

Game Plan: Ask fathers to name benefits of breastfeeding for their babies, the mother of their babies and for them.

Babies and Kids:

1- "Builds baby's immune system" - Less infections + less likely to get sick enough to go to the clinic or be overnight in the hospital- count any of these:

- * Less diarrhea/vomiting illnesses ("stomach flu")
- * Less respiratory/breathing infections (pneumonia, wheezing, bad cold)
- * Less ear infections
- * Fewer urinary tract infections
- * Fewer blood infections

2- Lower risk of infant death:

- * Less babies die worldwide when breastfed (compared to fed formula)
- * Lower risk of SIDS (Sudden infant death syndrome)
 - don't know why but studies show much less risk for breastfed babies

3- Less chance of these, especially if it runs in the family:

- * Obesity/overweight
 - breastfeeding babies seem to learn when they are full
- * Eczema ("ex-zee-ma"-Atopic dermatitis)
- * Asthma (wheezing, reactive airways)

4- Possibly higher intelligence AND faster development

–this also depends a lot on mom and how baby is raised, but it is a wonderful possibility.

Benefits for the mother of your baby:

1-Lower risk of cancer:

- * Breast cancer risk is less the longer you breastfeed total over all your kids
- * Ovarian cancer risk is less if you breastfeed for 6+ months over all your kids

2- Less chance of heart (cardiovascular) disease with total breastfeeding 12+ months over all your kids- all of these are less likely:

- * Obesity/ overweight
- * High blood pressure (Hypertension)
- * High cholesterol (Hyperlipidemia)
- * Heart disease (Cardiovascular disease)

3- Less chance of diabetes type 2 (if you did not have pregnancy [gestational] diabetes)

4- Child spacing – breast feeding can help you space your pregnancies but it is not birth control alone

Dad + Mom + Baby Benefits:

Father - Baby Bonding

- * Supporting breastfeeding helps your baby be healthier and smarter and makes you a proud father!
- * Makes you feel good when you are close to the baby (touching and looking) before and after feedings.
- * Skin to skin contact between fathers and babies helps dads bond with their baby (see skin to skin card)
- * Fathers and Mothers that breastfeed learn how to parent cooperatively for the benefit of their baby.

Mother - Baby Bonding- the hormone that causes the milk to come out (oxytocin)

- * Makes your baby's mother want to care for your baby,
- * Makes her feel good when she is close to the baby (touching and looking). This is big – many moms believe this closeness has helped them through many hard times.