

### What is Breastfeeding Awareness Month?

This breastfeeding campaign, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, strives to empower women to commit to breastfeeding. This month will highlight research showing that babies who are exclusively breastfed for six months are less likely to develop ear infections, diarrhea, and respiratory illnesses, and may be less likely to develop childhood obesity.

### What are the benefits of breastfeeding?

Breastfeeding is very healthy for you and your baby. Experts recommend breastfeeding your baby for at least the first 12 months. Breastfeeding is natural, but that doesn't mean it's always easy. You and your baby may need practice, especially in the beginning. But it does get easier with time. Breastfeeding allows mom and baby time to bond.

Benefits for your baby:

- Breast milk has just the right amount of protein, fat, sugar, and water to help your baby grow. It helps protect your baby from infection and illness, and is easier for babies to digest than formula.

Benefits for mother:

- Breastfeeding can save your family thousands of dollars. It may help protect you from ovarian cancer, breast cancer, and heart disease.

### Apps for your smartphone

- [Baby Nursing](#)
- [LactMed](#)
- [Pump Log](#)
- [Baby Development](#)

### Tips from our docs

This month, our healthy tip is brought to you by **Jan Kovach, MD**, NMHC's Medical Director.

Until your baby is 6 months old, they need only your breast milk. In fact, giving babies other foods like rice cereal, baby food, or formula during the first 6 months can keep them from getting the nutrients they need from breast milk. Below are some age guidelines to help you make sure your baby gets the nutrition he or she needs.

- Birth to age 6 months:
  - Feed your baby breast milk only (no formula, juice, cow's milk, solid foods, or water).
  - Give your baby any vitamins, minerals, or medicine that your doctor recommends.
- Ages 6 months to 12 months:
  - Keep breastfeeding your baby.
  - Introduce your baby to new foods.
- Age 12 months and up:
  - Keep adding new foods to your baby's diet.
  - Continue to breastfeed as long as it feels right for you and your baby.

Many health centers, clinics, and hospitals have lactation (breastfeeding) experts to answer all your questions and help you get started. If you and your child are having a difficult time with breast feeding, please contact your doctor or a lactation consultant right away. Not all mothers and infants are successful at breast feeding. Dehydration and nutritional imbalances can occur rapidly in infants.

### Additional resources

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Healthfinder.gov](#)
- [Medline Plus](#)
- [U.S. Breastfeeding Committee](#)