



**THE DIRECTORATE
OF WOMEN'S HEALTH**



The National Breastfeeding Coordinating Unit of the Ministry of Health leads the way in the protection, promotion and support of Breastfeeding and is committed to providing accurate and up to date information to our citizens, in keeping with international standards.

The information contained in this document is intended solely as a guide for general information only.

Please consult with your health care provider for specific advice based on your own health assessment. This brochure was produced using the most up to date information at the time of production, by the Directorate of Women's Health, Ministry of Health, Trinidad and Tobago.

Additional resources are available via The Ministry of Health's Website:
www.health.gov.tt



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WOMEN'S HEALTH



**Benefits of
Breastfeeding
to Babies**

Why Breastfeed your baby?

Breast milk provides the ideal nutrition for babies and infants. It contains a nearly perfect mix of nutrients needed for baby's growth. In addition to this, it contains antibodies which help your baby to fight off viruses and bacteria.

What are some of the benefits of breastfeeding for your baby?

1 It Provides Ideal Nutrition

- Breast milk contains everything the baby needs for the first six (6) months of life.
- During the first days after birth, the breasts produce thick and yellowish fluid called colostrum. This fluid is high in protein, low in sugar and is loaded with beneficial compounds.
- Colostrum helps the newborn's digestive tract develop.
- Breast milk changes in composition to suit the needs of the baby.
- Infants who breastfeed have a fresh food source that is clean and served at the right temperature.
- Breast milk requires no preparation.

2 Breast Milk Contains Important Antibodies

- Colostrum provides the infant with high amounts of antibodies that protect your baby.
- Babies who breastfeed exclusively for six months are healthier.
- When the mother is exposed to viruses or bacteria, she produces antibodies which are then secreted into the breast milk and passed to the baby during feeding.
- Breastfeeding makes vaccines more effective.

3 Breastfeeding May Reduce Disease Risk

(This is particularly true of exclusive breastfeeding).

It may reduce your baby's risk of many illnesses and diseases including:

- Middle ear infections
- Respiratory tract infections
- Colds and infections
- High blood pressure
- Gut infections
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Diabetes
- Childhood leukemia
- Eczema
- Allergies

4 Breast Milk Promotes Healthy Weight

- Breastfeeding for longer periods reduces the risk of infants becoming obese later on in life.
- Infants who breastfeed develop healthy eating patterns. Breast milk also contains an ingredient that regulates appetite and fat storage

5 Breastfeeding May Make Children Smarter

- Some studies suggest that there may be a difference in brain development between breastfed and formula-fed babies.
- Studies also indicate that breastfed babies have higher intelligence scores and are less likely to develop problems with behaviour and learning as they grow older.
- Breastfeeding promotes healthy bonding with mother.
- Bonding is the most powerful form of human contact.

6 Breastmilk is Free