

## Facts About How to Best Feed Your Baby: Breast Milk or Formula

Information to help parents make an **INFORMED DECISION** on how to feed their baby.

The staff at the UCSF Birth Center will respect, support, and help parents with their desire to breastfeed or formula feed once parents have made an informed choice. It is important to note that there may be situations in which the baby needs supplementation, which might be temporary or ongoing. Our practitioners and parents must carefully weigh the risks and benefits of this decision, while always putting our patients' health and safety first.

### Benefits of Breastfeeding:

For Infants:

- Breast milk is nutritionally complete and is easily digested
- Breast milk has antibodies to provide passive immunity from mother to baby
  - Lowers the risk of diarrhea, ear infections and respiratory infections
- Breast milk helps provide optimal infant brain development
- Breastfeeding lowers SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)
- Breastfeeding helps decrease the risks of childhood allergies, asthma, obesity and some childhood cancers

For Mothers:

- Breastfeeding helps decrease the incidence of Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, breast and ovarian cancers
- Breastfeeding helps with mother/baby bonding
- Less expensive than formula feeding

### Risks of Not Breastfeeding/Risks of Formula Feeding:

For Infants:

- Increased chance of allergies and asthma
- Increased chance of obesity and diabetes
- Increased incidence of infant infections: ear, respiratory, and gastrointestinal
- Increased chance of SIDS
- Possibility of infant illness from harmful bacteria sometimes found in contaminated powdered infant formula if not prepared properly

For Mothers:

- Increased chance of reproductive cancers
- Increased expenses due to purchase of formula
- Possibility of lower breast milk supply when combination breast milk and formula feeding

The World Health Organization recommends:

- Breastfeeding for two years and beyond

The American Academy of Pediatrics Recommends:

- Exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months with continuation for 1 year or longer as mutually desired by mother and infant

Both Organizations also recommend:

- Gradually introducing other nutritious complimentary foods at six months of age in addition to breastfeeding

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