

Breastfeeding Bunkum?

Or in other words ;

Should you really be using your breasts for what they were designed for?

Copyright Julie Kyte 5.06.2004

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If as a woman someone were to offer you the chance to reduce the possibility of suffering from breast cancer, and also ovarian or uterine cancer. Osteoporosis, or putting on weight, you would probably accept the offer without a moments thought. Wouldn't you?

If as a mother someone offered you the chance to have a healthy and happy baby and child, what would you do? For them to have less childhood illnesses and allergies, reduce the risk of juvenile arthritis, make less visits to the doctor, have better and healthier teeth and in return less visits to the dentist for treatment. To have increased intelligence and have very good eyesight, again, you would more than likely accept this offer. I'm sure you would, or would you?

To make things even more appealing what if this wonderful offer came not in the form of medication, was free of charge, and had no detrimental side effects.

You might ask what is the catch, but sorry to disappoint you because there isn't one.

Well I can make you this offer right now!

It's called BREASTFEEDING.

So if breastfeeding is so beneficial for both the mother and her child why are so few women choosing to do it?

Some UK facts are,

- UK has one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in Europe. 29% of women in England and Wales never ever try to breastfeed compared to 2% in Sweden.
- Younger women are less likely to breastfeed with over 40% of mothers under 24 never making the attempt.
- 21% of women who started breastfeeding stopped in the first two weeks, 93% said they would have liked to have fed for longer.
- 36% of women give up within the first six weeks.
- Women are three more times likely to give up breastfeeding in the first two weeks if none of their friend's breastfeed.

Long Term Breastfeeding Benefits for the Mother

Following delivery, breastfeeding causes the uterus to contract so reducing the risk of post partum bleeding.

It delays the return of ovulation and menstruation so can help in preventing iron deficiency anaemia and unwanted pregnancies.

If breastfeeding exclusively for the first six months with no break in feeding and night feeds, it can be used as a form of contraception and is considered to be 99% effective.

It maintains a stable weight for the mother. The production of milk uses up 200-500 calories per day. To use an equivalent number of calories, an artificially feeding mother would have to swim 30 laps or ride a bicycle for over an hour.

Mothers who breastfeed for at least 6 months have a decreased risk of breast cancer, and also reduced rates have been shown for ovarian and uterine cancers. Being breastfed has also been associated with a decreased risk of developing breast cancer in the breastfed female child.

Diabetic mothers who breastfeed tend to need less insulin or medication.

Reduces coronary artery disease.

Protects against osteoporosis.

A healthier and happier baby, due to their benefits from breast milk, will make them easy and less stressful to care for.

Long Term Breastfeeding Benefits for the Baby

It provides antibodies, which protect the baby from many common respiratory and intestinal diseases. Artificially fed babies have higher rates of middle ear infections, pneumonia, and gastroenteritis. It also protects from developing cancers, and bowel diseases such as Crohn's disease and celiac disease, and against juvenile rheumatoid arthritis.

Exclusive breastfeeding, especially if continued for at least six months, provides protection against allergies, asthma, and eczema.

Artificially fed infants have a higher risk of developing obesity as adults.

It leads to optimal brain development, and breastfed babies tend to spend a lot of time in the "quiet alert" state, which is most conducive to learning. Artificial milk formulas try to emulate this by adding 'brain chemicals'.

It optimises good teeth development and growth, this means less risk of irregular grown teeth (pushed out of normal growth position by an artificial teat), and lower corrective treatment dentist bills. Artificially fed babies have a higher risk of baby bottle tooth decay.

Long Term Breastfeeding Benefits for the Father

Breastfeeding also benefits fathers.

Breastfed babies have less dirty nappies to change.

There are no bottles to prepare and warm in the middle of the night. (Or for any other time for that matter!)

They benefit from having a healthy, happier baby that they can play and communicate with.

If they want to help with feeding, he can be the main solid-food feeder later on. (This helps greatly when weaning, as when the mother tries to wean the baby will often protest as they expect milk from mom!).

They generally appreciate a family budget of lower health care costs, and they also benefit from a healthier partner (due to the beneficial effects of breastfeeding).

I am a mother of two girls and I have been breastfeeding for three years now. So I speak from experience when I say it has got to be one of the best things I could do for my children and myself.

Some advantages are I can feed anytime, any place, anywhere. The milk is always sterile and at the right temperature, No expense of buying bottles, teats, sterilizing equipment and powered milk. Or being away from home and wondering how you are going to heat the milk. When my baby is hungry they can be fed straight away and not kept waiting while I have to heat the milk.

No laboriously making up feeds and sterilizing equipment day after day.

I am also kinder to the environment by not constantly throwing away empty powered milk tins and old bottles and teats onto already overfilled land sites.

My three year old daughter had not had a days illness in her life, Not any of the so called “childhood illnesses” which so many children seem to suffer from these days, including asthma or eczema. She has not been to the doctor at all and why should she!

She is highly intelligent, alert and enquiring and has straight white non-decayed teeth to boot.

Her eight-month-old sister is following in her footsteps.

I wish more women would breastfeed, we expect the best for ourselves and when we have children we want to give them the best. So when we don't breastfeed we are denying our children the best possible start in life.

And what about ourselves? I am happier and healthier for breastfeeding in all the ways I mentioned above. Not only that, but breastfeeding is so much less stressful than having to bottle feed, and I have a really close intimate relationship with both my daughters. What more could I want?

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