10 More Reasons to Breastfeed!

Breastfeeding has been around as long as humanity. Modern-day research methods allow us to measure the positive impact this simple and loving activity can have on maternal and infant health. Have you read these recent studies?

### Child

**Reduced Risk of Adult Obesity:** A study of seniors in Finland found that people breastfed for 5-7 months had the lowest reported BMI at 60 years of age.


**Lower Blood Pressure:** In a European study, on average, children who were breastfed had lower blood pressure than those who were not. The discrepancy was greater the longer a child was breastfed.

Lawlor DA, Riddoch CJ, Page AS, et al. Infant Feeding and components of the metabolic syndrome findings from Europe Youth Heart Study. *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 90:582-588, 2005

**Reduced Risk of Osteoporosis:** An Australian study demonstrated a link between breastfeeding in early life and bone mass in 8-year-old children born at term, particularly those breastfed for 3 months or longer.


**Improved Lung Function:** Breastfeeding for at least four months enhances lung volume in children. This change in volume helps to mediate the child’s airflow.


**Reduced Risk of SIDS:** A German study of 333 infants who died from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and 998 age-matched controls, found that breastfeeding reduced the risk of SIDS by 50% at all ages throughout infancy.


### Mother

**Lower Blood Pressure:** Both systolic and diastolic blood pressures fall during a breastfeeding session and pre-breastfeeding blood pressure decreases during the first 6 months in a homelike environment.


**Less Stress:** Breastfeeding is associated with decreased neuroendocrine response to stressors, improved moods, and enhanced physical and mental health.


**Reduced Risk of Rheumatoid Arthritis:** A Swedish study found that women who breastfed for 13 months and up were half as likely to get Rheumatoid Arthritis as those who never did.


**Reduced Risk of Metabolic Syndrome:** A cluster of risk factors that make heart disease and diabetes more likely was rarer among women who reported breastfeeding their babies. The longer they breastfed during the first nine months, the less likely they were to be diagnosed with metabolic syndrome during a 20-yr study.


**Reduced Risk of Cardiovascular Disease:** In postmenopausal women, increased duration of lactation has been linked with lower prevalence of hypertension and cardiovascular disease.