



Breastfeeding is perfect for you and your baby

Breast milk is the perfect food for your baby and breastfeeding is perfect for you too. Find out why.

Breast milk is the perfect food for your baby

Breast milk is the perfect food for your baby because:

- it's all that your baby needs to eat and drink for about the first 6 months
- it helps to protect your baby against colds, tummy bugs, infections and allergies. It also helps to protect your baby from [dying suddenly in their sleep](/your-health/pregnancy-and-kids/first-year/first-6-weeks/keeping-baby-safe-bed-first-6-weeks) (</your-health/pregnancy-and-kids/first-year/first-6-weeks/keeping-baby-safe-bed-first-6-weeks>)
- breastfeeding helps your baby to feel safe and secure.

Breastfeeding is perfect for you too

Breastfeeding is perfect for you too because:

- it gives you a chance to rest while you are feeding your baby
- it helps you to feel close to your baby
- it saves you time
- it's free
- it may reduce your risk of some cancers and bone disease.

Exclusive breastfeeding

Exclusive breastfeeding means that, since birth, your baby has only had breast milk (from the breast or expressed) and prescribed medicines. Try to breastfeed your baby exclusively until they are around 6 months old.

If your baby is exclusively breastfed they don't need water or any other drinks or food until they're around 6 months old.

After 6 months, exclusive breast milk is not enough on its own for your baby to grow and develop. You should start your baby on solid food (</your-health/pregnancy-and-kids/first-year/6-12-months/feeding-your-baby>) and also continue breastfeeding until they're at least 1 year old.

When you're away from your baby, try to ensure that they're fed with expressed breast milk (</your-health/pregnancy-and-kids/first-year/helpful-advice-during-first-year/breastfeeding-perfect-you-and-your-baby/breastfeeding-getting-out-and-about>) rather than infant formula.

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