

Breastfeeding and Introducing Solids

Description:

Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, then the appropriate introduction of solids at six months with continued breastfeeding to at least 12 months, gives babies the best possible start in life.

Do's

- If possible, baby should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months
- Introduce appropriate solids at six months and continue to breastfeed until baby is at least 12 months (for advice, see fact sheets on *Feeding from six months* and *Food allergies*)
- Mother should enjoy a wide variety of nutritious food (no food has been proven to upset babies or cause wind), drink plenty of water and get some rest.
- If mother is not able or chooses not to breastfeed, infants should be given a breastmilk substitute that conforms to the recommendations of *Food Standards Australia New Zealand*.

Don'ts

- Don't introduce solid food before six months (health implications include increased likelihood of developing eczema or respiratory problems)
- Don't leave it too late to introduce solid food (health implications may include impaired physical and developmental growth due to reduced iron and zinc stores)
- Don't introduce cows milk before 12 months (except cooked in recipes from nine months) (health implications may include increased risk of asthma, type 1 diabetes and iron deficiency)
- Mother should avoid cigarettes, alcohol, coffee, cola and other drugs.

Tips

Breastfeeding should not be painful, apart from some nipple sensitivity and tenderness in the first few days. If it hurts or you suspect poor attachment, put your finger in the baby's mouth to break the suction and start again. If you experience continued pain, see a child health nurse or lactation consultant.

Practical Advice

- Breastmilk contains all the protein, carbohydrates, essential fatty acids, minerals, vitamins and other nutrients needed for healthy physical growth and development until six months of age.
- At six months, the introduction of appropriate solid food is recommended in addition to breastmilk – however, breastmilk remains the most important part of an infant's diet until 12 months of age, and continues to provide ongoing advantages for the growing infant.
- Research shows that the components of breastmilk enhance and develop an infant's immune system and reduce the risks of developing a range of preventable illnesses and chronic diseases throughout the lifecycle, including respiratory infections and illness (eg. asthma), eczema, coeliac disease, diabetes, obesity and tooth decay.
- There are also advantages for mothers who breastfeed, including a reduced risk of developing breast cancer and ovarian cancer.

Other Resources

- Booklet: Child and Youth health Information: Your Guide to the first 12 months (given to parents for every baby born in Queensland with the Personal Health record)
- Visit: Local community Child Health Centre (White Pages – Queensland Health, Community Child Health Service)
- Phone: Child Health Line 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
- Phone: Australian Breastfeeding Association 1800 MUM 2 MUM (1800 686 2 686)

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