

live well, work well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at M3.

Pregnancy: Breast-Feeding

The personal decision to breast-feed is just one of the many decisions you need to make during your pregnancy.

Breast Milk or Formula

Both breast milk and formula will help a baby grow, but health experts universally agree that when it comes to feeding an infant, breast milk is best. Breast milk is a perfect source of nutrition for a baby's optimal growth and development. It provides the right mix of vitamins, protein, sugar and fat that a baby needs each day. In addition, breast milk offers beneficial substances that commercial formulas simply cannot duplicate.

Benefits to Baby

Breast milk provides a host of protective benefits for a baby's developing immune system. Because a mother's milk transfers her antibodies to the infant, breast-fed babies are better able to fight off infection and disease, including:

- Diarrhea and vomiting
- Allergies
- Pneumonia
- Ear infections

As a result, breast-fed babies are sick less often, which means fewer trips to the doctor's office. Breast-fed infants also respond better to immunizations, including diphtheria, polio, tetanus and certain influenzas. For most babies, breast milk is typically easier to digest than formula. Studies also show that breast-fed infants tend to gain less unnecessary weight.

Research shows that premature infants develop better when breast-fed than those who are formula-fed. Nursing is also good for the development of a baby's jaw, encouraging the growth of straight, healthy teeth.

In addition to nutrition, there are also emotional benefits to nursing. Physical contact is important to a newborn, and the close contact during nursing helps a baby to feel safe and comforted.

Benefits to Mother

Breast-feeding is also beneficial for the mother. Here are some added benefits to consider:

- Nursing is convenient.
- Since breast-feeding requires the mother to take some quiet time to nurse, breast-feeding naturally builds in time to rest throughout the day, as well as time for mom and baby to bond.
- Nursing burns calories.
- Breast-feeding is economical and saves time.
- It delays the return of normal menstrual cycles, helping to lower the risk of pregnancy.



Did you know...?

Research shows that breast-fed babies are healthier, which means they typically have less doctor visits, prescriptions and hospitalizations—reducing medical costs and keeping working moms from missing days of work.