

Breastfeeding Benefits from Top to Bottom

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August 26, 2013

Brain. Higher IQ in breastfed children. Cholesterol and other types of fat in human milk support the growth of nerve tissue.

Eyes. Visual acuity is higher in babies fed human milk.

Ears. Breastfed babies get fewer ear infections.

Mouth. Less need for orthodontics in children breastfed more than a year. Improved muscle development of face from suckling at the breast. Subtle changes in the taste of human milk prepare babies to accept a variety of solid foods.

Throat. Children who are breastfed are less likely to require tonsillectomies.

Respiratory system. Evidence shows that breastfed babies have fewer and less severe upper respiratory infections, less wheezing, less pneumonia and less influenza.

Heart and circulatory system. Evidence suggests that breastfed children may have lower cholesterol as adults. Heart rates are lower in breastfed infants.

Digestive system. Less diarrhea, fewer gastrointestinal infections in babies who are breastfeeding. Six months or more of exclusive breastfeeding reduces risk of food allergies. Also, less risk of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis in adulthood.

Immune system. Breastfed babies respond better to vaccinations. Human milk helps to mature baby's own immune system. Breastfeeding decreases the risk of childhood cancer.

Endocrine system. Reduced risk of getting diabetes.

Kidneys. With less salt and less protein, human milk is easier on a baby's kidneys.

Appendix. Children with acute appendicitis are less likely to have been breastfed.

Urinary tract. Fewer infections in breastfed infants.

Joints and muscles. Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis is less common in children who were breastfed.

Skin. Less allergic eczema in breastfed infants.

Growth. Breastfed babies are leaner at one year of age and less likely to be obese later in life.

Bowels. Less constipation. Stools of breastfed babies have a less-offensive odor.