



Breastfeeding means the world to me

My world is a haven of comfort and warmth. Suddenly, I am thrust into a cold, noisy world filled with lights and sound and touch. The gentle thump-thump that has been my constant companion for all that I can remember is gone. And then I feel it: the warmth of her skin, the beat of her heart. My hand reaches, my mouth searches, rooting for the sweet nectar of my mother's breast.

Skin-to-skin contact between mother and infant immediately after birth has been proven to be a factor in both the success and duration of breastfeeding. A Polish study that followed 1250 children for three months after birth discovered that infants who were kept with their mothers for at least 20 minutes were exclusively breastfed for 1.35 months longer and weaned 2.10 months later than infants who received no such contact after birth.

Mikiel-Kostrzya K, Mazur J, Boltrusko, I, Effect of early skin-to-skin contact after delivery on duration of breastfeeding: a prospective cohort study. Acta Paediatr 91:1301-1306,2002

Both the release of oxytocin and the sensory response to touch after birth when the areola and nipple are extremely sensitive have been cited as reasons for the positive effect.

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This new world is a strange place. I feel something that I've never quite felt before. It makes me feel hollow side. My mouth opens and I hear a strange sound coming from inside. I feel her warmth and hear the sound of her heart silencing my cries.

Kangaroo care has proven to be particularly beneficial for premature babies. Better survival rates, improved ability to breastfeed, improved temperature control, heart

rate, breathing, growth and reduced respiratory infections have been demonstrated.

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It's dark again. Not the gentle darkness of my first place, but a large darkness, cold and lonely. I cry out for the warmth of my mother's milk and she is there: holding me close and offering me her life-giving breast. As my tummy fills with it's comforting warmth, I feel content. As I drift back into the gentle world of sleep, I feel her body next to mine. I am loved.

The myth that baby should not be allowed to fall asleep at the breast is simply that: a myth. One of the advantages of breastfeeding is that mothers have a handy, healthy, way of putting tired babies to sleep. According to Dr. Jack Newman, "One of the great pleasures of parenthood is having a child fall asleep in your arms, feeling the warmth s/he gives off as sleep overcomes him/her. It is one of the pleasures of breastfeeding that the baby falls asleep at the breast.

Newman, Dr. Jack, Some Breastfeeding Myths, Revised, January 1995

My eyes are beginning to focus and I can see her. The colors of the day are becoming more vivid. I reach for my mother's breast. Her eyes meet mine and we both smile.

Breastfeeding protects against vision defects and the act of suckling optimizes hand-to-eye coordination. Breastfeeding may help combat eye infections.

Breastfeeding 101

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I can feel my body growing. I am more aware of the world around me. She carries me with her, wherever she goes, and whenever I have this feeling that I now know is hunger, she fills me with warm comfort of her breastmilk.

Breastmilk not only provides the perfect nutrition for babies, it's convenient, portable, always served at the right temperature and comes in a nifty, sanitary package. Unlike formula that provides the same nutritional components, day in, day out, week in, week out, breastmilk is custom designed to meet the changing needs of a growing, healthy baby.

I feel something in my mouth - it's a painful, new feeling. My gums are getting bigger and it feels like there's something growing inside there. Suckling at my mother's breast makes my gums feel better and fills my tummy, too.

Breastfeeding is the perfect remedy for the teething baby. Breastmilk provides natural pain relief for baby while breastfeeding facilitates proper dental and jaw development. Breastfed babies also get fewer cavities and require less orthodontic work later in life.

Breastfeeding 101

It's dinnertime. I never tire of that wonderful food that fills my belly and makes me feel warm, content and loved. I hear my mother say that I'm growing strong and healthy - whatever that means.

Breastfed babies are healthier babies. Breastfeeding decreases the risk of juvenile rheumatoid arthritis,

Hodgkins disease, osteoporosis, asthma, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), allergies, ear infections, bacterial meningitis, respiratory infections, certain childhood cancers, cardiopulmonary distress, necrotizing enterocolitis, urinary tract infections and eczema.

Breastfeeding 101

I hear my mother say that I'm a smart baby and one day I'll grow up to be a star. The way breastfeeding makes me feel, I feel like a star already!

Breastfeeding means better speech and cognitive development. Increased breastfeeding has been associated with statistically significant increases in IQ, reading comprehension, math ability and higher levels of school exiting exams.

Horwood, L.J and Ferguson, D.M. Pediatrics, 101(1)99.1998 (electronic abstracts) www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/101/1/e9

Breastfeeding means no money spent on formula and other infant feeding paraphernalia, less money spent on corrective orthodontia and dentists, less money spent on anti-biotics - all in all saving more money to set aside for baby's university education!

For more information about the 101 Benefits of Breastfeeding, order INFACT Canada's Breastfeeding 101 posters and fact sheet pads.