

# Pediatric Pointers

by Dr. Joey Bell, Pembroke Pediatrics

What if I told you there is a new infant formula that comes in an easy to open package, requires no mixing, no mess, no bottles, no sterilizing, and no warming. It is less expensive than all other formulas on the market, offers better nutrition for your child, promises protection against stomach infections, ear infections, eczema, colic, and constipation, and may even prevent allergies later in life. Sound too good to be true? It's not. In fact, it isn't new. It's the old fashioned and completely natural way to feed a baby - breastfeeding. Breastfeeding used to be the only way to feed infants. Then science thought it could out do nature and formulas were developed. However, there have been many scientific studies concluding that, for most moms and most babies, breastfeeding is more beneficial than bottle-feeding with formula. The American Academy of Pediatrics currently recommends that mothers breast-feed infants for the first year of life. Human breast milk is an amazing substance. It contains everything an infant needs to grow healthy and strong: fat, carbohydrates, protein, calcium, iron, water, vitamins, and other substances that are not included in formulas. Right after birth, a mother's breasts produce "colostrum" a deep lemon yellow colored milk ( sometimes called "pre-milk"). Colostrum is impossible to reproduce. It contains a lot of antibodies - proteins which protect the baby from infections of all kinds. After a few days, mom's breasts begin to produce regular breast milk, and as the baby grows, the exact ingredients of the milk change to meet the infants changing needs. Some parents worry that a breast-fed infant is not getting enough milk, and switch to formula so they can measure how much milk the baby drinks. However, there are a number of simple ways to make sure a baby is well-nourished: you can check how much weight the baby is gaining, and you can count the number of wet diapers

and bowel movements the baby has every day. Nursing moms do not need to stop breastfeeding when they return to work, because there are ways to continue nursing even when you are separated from your infant for part of the day. Many types of pumps are available - both hand operated and electric. The electric pumps work best and can often be rented at reasonable prices. Mom can pump during work hours and freeze the milk for later use. Yet another benefit of breastfeeding is that nursing moms tend to get back into shape after pregnancy quicker than those who don't nurse. Breastfeeding burns calories and helps the body expel excess fluids and tissue, resulting in a gradual weight loss over the first few months after giving birth. Breastfeeding is not only nutritional better for baby, it is psychologically and emotionally healthier for mom and baby. The physical closeness leads to better bonding and attachment, and substances released during breastfeeding cause relaxation and feelings of contentment in the mother. And don't worry dads, once mom's breast milk is coming in well (after a few weeks), mom can pump the milk from her breasts, put it in a bottle, and join you in on the bonding with your baby! If you are interested in reading more about breastfeeding, here are a few goods: *Breastfeeding Your Baby* by Sheila Kitzinger *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* by

Gwen Gotch, Judy Torgus and La Leche League International *Nursing Mother, Working Mother: The Essential Guide for Breastfeeding* by Gayle Pryor.



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