

# Making an informed choice about breastfeeding your baby

What you feed your baby is one of the first important decisions you will make as a parent. This information will help you make an informed choice.

Health experts\* and doctors recommend giving only breast milk for the first six months of your baby's life. After that, continue to feed breast milk while your baby is learning to take solid foods.

## Why should my baby get only breast milk?

**Breast milk has everything your baby needs to grow**

- Breast milk gives your baby nutrients and infection-fighting antibodies not found in formula.
- Your baby may have fewer problems with spitting up and constipation.
- Breastfed children do better in reading, math and learning test scores.

## Does breastfeeding benefit me?

**Yes, breastfeeding:**

- Could lessen bleeding and infection risk after delivery.
- Saves you thousands of dollars compared to formula.
- Leads to less newborn illness and work disruption.
- Reduces your risk for chronic disease later in life.

\*These health experts include: American Academy of Pediatrics, American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecologists, World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and the U.S. Surgeon General.



**Ask your prenatal care provider if there is any medical reason you should not breastfeed.**



**Visit [MercyOne.org](https://www.mercyone.org) to sign up for breastfeeding classes and learn about lactation care.**



## What if I don't make enough milk?

**Parents choose human donor milk because:**

- Supplementing with donor milk instead of formula helps babies receive the health benefits of breast milk.
- Donor breast milk is screened for safety.
- You can feed your baby donated milk in the birth center if your breast milk comes in slowly.
- Your doctor can prescribe donor milk to take home while your breastmilk supply increases.
- Formula manufacturing issues do not affect donor milk.
- Donor milk is conveniently available in the MercyOne Waterloo Birth Center.

## Are there health risks to not feeding my baby breast milk?

**Infants who are fed formula have higher rates of:**

- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Obesity as a child or an adult.
- Serious illness needing hospital care.
- Infections of the lung, ear, throat, kidneys and bowels.
- Lifetime diseases, such as asthma, diabetes, childhood cancers and bowel diseases.
- Heart disease and high blood pressure.
- Allergies.
- Eczema.