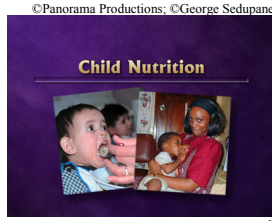


Child Nutrition

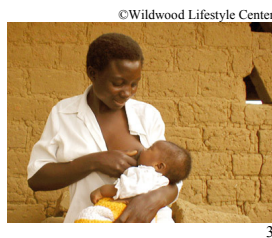


Today we are going to learn which foods are best to help growing children keep strong.



The birth of a baby is a busy time. There are many things to do, like choosing a name, getting the baby's clothes ready, and deciding how you can best care for the baby.

One of the most important decisions to be made is how the baby is going to be fed.



For the first several months it's important to give the baby breast milk and nothing else. It is better than any baby foods or milks you can buy.



Why is breast milk the best milk?



- (It's) Balanced for babies

Breast milk is very different from powdered or canned milk for babies. Breast milk contains just what the baby needs. It is also much cheaper than powdered milks for babies.



- (It) Digests better

Babies use the milk from the mother so well that they don't spit up as often as bottle-fed babies and they don't have as many loose stools.

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- (It) Protects against diarrhea

Breast milk is clean. It doesn't use water that might be dirty and cause diarrhea.



- (It) Protects from colds and earaches

Babies who are breast-fed don't have as many colds, and other breathing problems. Breast milk also helps to prevent earaches.



- (It) Protects against cancer

Doctors also say that babies who are breast-fed have less cancer and other deadly diseases, even after they become adults.



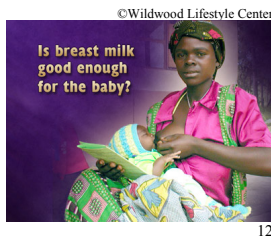
- (It) Protects from skin problems

Many babies who drink milk from animals have skin problems like eczema and other rashes. Breastfed babies don't have so many of these problems.



- (In addition, breastfeeding) Gives the baby close contact with mother
-

This makes babies feel happier and may help them to get along better with others, as they grow older.



Is breast milk good enough for the baby?

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Some mothers stop breastfeeding early because they think that their milk is not good enough for their baby, or that their breasts are not making enough milk.

- A mother's milk is always very good for her baby, even if the mother is thin and weak.



Before the baby is born the mother starts to make the “first milk.” This special milk is a different color and it looks a little bit like yellow water.



This “first milk” is just what the baby needs in the first few days. It is not too strong and it is not too weak. It has many good things that protect the baby against disease.



When the baby is born it should be put to the mother's breast within 30 minutes. When it sucks it receives the yellow-colored “first milk” that protects it from disease. The sucking causes the mother's body to respond by tightening up her womb to help stop the after birth bleeding.



After a few days the “first milk” will end and the regular breast milk will flow. This is the most perfect food a baby can have. God made it especially to make the baby grow and protect it from disease.

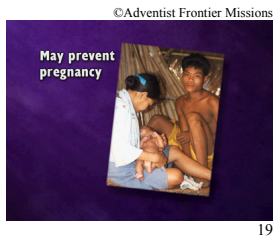
That doesn't mean that children who are breastfed will never have illnesses, but they have a much better chance of being healthy than a baby fed with babies' special powdered milk or even cow's or goat's milk.

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What about the mother's health?

Breastfeeding helps the mother as well. Women who breastfeed their babies do not suffer as much from terrible killer diseases such as cancer. They also lose weight and gain their body shape back faster than mothers who don't breastfeed.



Breastfeeding often protects from having another pregnancy right away, especially if the mother only breastfeeds and does not give any milk from the bottle.



Fathers also gain. They save money! Breastfeeding is the cheapest way of feeding a baby. There is no shopping, bottles, cans, and trash to worry about. No one has to wake up in the middle of the night to fix a bottle, because breast milk is always ready.



The father may feel a little left out, but the baby needs him too. Babies enjoy getting to know the touch and the smell of their fathers and other family members. A father should find time each day to care for his baby so they can learn to know and to love each other.



Many times it is the father's opinion that decides whether the mother is going to continue to breastfeed the baby. Some men get jealous or tired of their wives being busy with a baby. They forget that it is the best plan for the whole family, and especially for the child. Men need to encourage and help their wives.



Can all mothers breastfeed?

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Nearly all mothers can produce all the breast milk their babies need. The best way for a mother to keep making enough milk is to:



Breastfeed the baby often,



Eat well, and



Drink lots of liquids, especially water.

If a mother produces little milk, she should let the baby drink many times. This frequent sucking stimulates the milk flow.

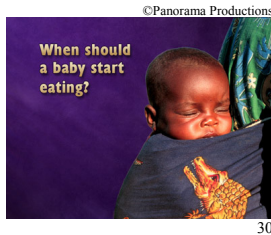


If the breasts still do not produce enough milk, after each breastfeeding, give the baby, by cup or spoon, some other type of milk – like soy milk, boiled cow's or goat's milk or powdered milk. You should add a little sugar or vegetable oil to any of these milks. If you are using a special baby's powdered milk, you don't need to add the sugar or the oil.



If you are feeding the baby with other milk, it is much safer to use a cup or spoon instead of a bottle to give milk to the baby. It is very difficult to keep a baby's bottle clean, and because of that the baby may get diarrhea.

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When should a baby start eating?



Babies should be breastfed 4-6 months without any other food or water.



When the baby is between 4 and 6 months old, start giving other foods together with breast milk. If the baby still **only** drinks breast milk after 6 or 8 months of age, he may not grow properly.

When you feed the baby, always give breast milk first and then the other foods. Try using a little porridge made from the main food people eat, like cornmeal or rice.



After a week, start adding other foods like vegetables, beans or fruits. Always give one food at a time and try only one new food every week. If the baby doesn't like it try again later. Remember that cooked foods should be well cooked and mashed.

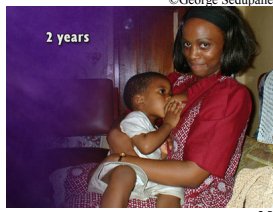
The baby should continue to breastfeed even when he is eating other food.

After a child is one year old, he can eat the same food as adults, but should still continue to breastfeed.



As children grow it is very important that they have fruits, vegetables, breads and cereals in their diet. Every day, try to give your child plenty of the main food that people eat, especially healthful foods like beans, fruits, vegetables and cereals.

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Doctors recommend that mothers should breastfeed their babies until they are two years old. The longer the baby is breastfed, the greater the benefits to both the baby and its mother.



A very big mistake is made when babies are given a bottle with juice, soda pop, tea, coffee, wine, or sugar water. These are harmful to the child, and also waste money. They can cause the baby to have gas, diarrhea and stomach aches. They can also rot and destroy the child's teeth.



Anytime children are allowed to eat candy, or crackers and other sticky foods, they don't want to eat the good foods they need.

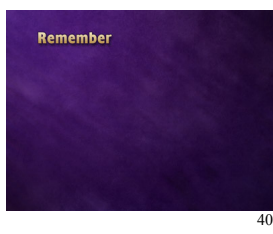


How can you know if your child is getting enough food?



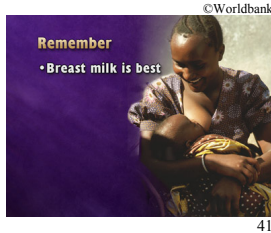
Children who eat well also grow well. It is very important to take your child to the health worker regularly. The health worker can weigh your child and give you good advice.

If your child is not growing well, maybe he is not getting enough food. Or there could be a disease causing the poor growth.



In conclusion, remember...

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...that breast milk is the best milk your child can have.



Start feeding your child solid foods after 4-6 months, along with breast milk.



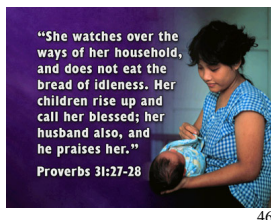
Give your child plenty of good food like fruits and vegetables, together with breast milk, until the child gets too old to drink from the breast.



Try to continue breastfeeding your child until he is two years old.



Being a parent is not easy at times but the rewards are well worth all the effort. Even the Bible describes the value of a faithful mother. It says,



“She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.” Proverbs 31:27-28

“She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.” Proverbs 31:27-28 NKJV

Children are precious in God’s eyes. God is ready to help you raise your children in a way that will bring joy to Him and to you.