

Breastfeeding

Beyond
Six
Months



Why is breastfeeding beyond 6 months important?

Breastfeeding beyond 6 months can help improve the long-term health and well-being of both you and your baby.

Health Benefits

Breastmilk continues to provide protection against illnesses for as long as breastfeeding continues.

The longer your child breastfeeds, the less likely he is to become overweight or develop diabetes later in life.

The longer you breastfeed, the lower your risk of breast cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.



Emotional Benefits

Nursing can be a great way to comfort your older baby or toddler when he is ill, tired, upset, or hurt. Many moms will tell you this is one of the greatest benefits of nursing beyond 6 months.

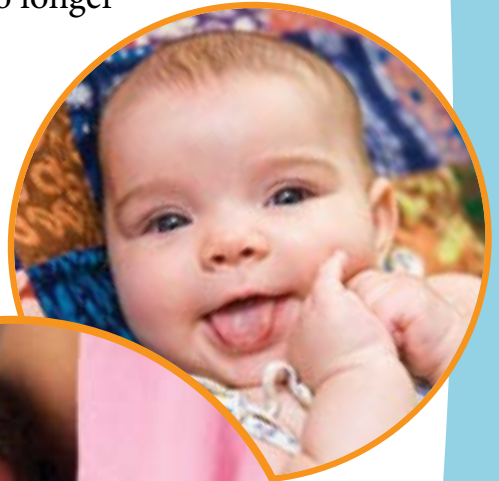
These are just a few of the reasons that the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommend breastfeeding for the first year of your baby's life and after that for as long as mutually desired.

What if my baby is teething?

Breastfeeding can continue even when your baby is teething. Physically, it is impossible to bite and nurse at the same time. This is because your baby's tongue is between the bottom teeth and your breast. However, teething can cause your baby's gums to hurt and itch. Some babies may try rubbing their gums on mom's breast to soothe this soreness.

Here are some tips to avoid this:

- Take your baby off the breast when he is no longer actively nursing.
- If you feel your baby begin to bite down, quickly bring him in close to you. This will cause him to open his mouth.
- If baby does not open his mouth insert your finger into the corner of his mouth to break the suction.
- Gently but firmly say, "No" and wait a few minutes before offering to breastfeed again.



How do I introduce solid foods?

Breastmilk is all your baby needs for the first 6 months of life. Beyond 6 months, babies need breastmilk and solid foods to get the perfect amount of calories, protein, iron, and zinc.

When your baby is around 6 months old you can begin introducing solid foods in any order. Here are some general guidelines for healthy, full-term infants:

- Protect your milk supply by nursing first; then offer a small amount of solid food.
- Introduce solids slowly and gradually. Start with a small amount, about one to two teaspoons.
- Start with single ingredient foods. For example, chicken, carrots *or* peaches.
- Wait three to five days before offering a new food. This way if your baby has an allergic reaction to a certain food, it is easy to identify which one it is.
- Let your baby guide you on how much food to feed.



Your breastmilk will continue to provide the majority of your baby's calories as well as the protection needed to stay healthy and grow.

Can I nurse my older infant or toddler in public?

Breastfeeding in public is protected by law in the state of Texas. This means that in Texas you can breastfeed anywhere you and your baby have the right to be.

Nursing an older baby or toddler privately in public can be a little trickier than nursing a younger baby. Older infants and toddlers are easily distracted, do not like things covering their heads, and tend to move around a lot when they are nursing.

As your baby gets older, it is easier to predict his nursing schedule. If you do not feel comfortable with nursing in public try the following:

- Breastfeed right before you leave your home or a comfortable nursing location.
- Offer expressed milk in a cup or bottle.
- Offer a healthy snack.
- Distract your child with a toy, a book, or magazine; he may just want to be held close to you.



Remember, Texas law supports your right to breastfeed in public.

Should I continue nursing if I become pregnant?

You do not need to quit nursing during a healthy pregnancy. Breastfeeding does not take any nutrients away from your unborn baby.

At the time of delivery, breastmilk turns back to colostrum for the new baby. Colostrum is a natural laxative so you may notice a difference in your toddler's diapers. Don't worry — this is completely natural.

Changes in the taste and amount of breastmilk may cause older infants and toddlers to wean; but many moms continue to nurse their older children even after the new baby is born.

If you have any medical problems with your pregnancy, talk to your doctor about whether you should continue breastfeeding.



When does weaning occur?

The process of weaning begins naturally around 6 months of age, when solid foods are introduced, and continues as your child becomes interested in activities other than nursing. By the time your toddler is one year of age, he is often only nursing a few times a day.

Many toddlers will lose interest in nursing and wean themselves between the ages of one and two. Others may nurse longer, and most will only nurse a few times a day — like in the morning, at nap time, or before bed. This is perfectly normal.

There is no set time to wean from breastfeeding. The World Health Organization recognizes breastmilk as the best nourishment for infants and young children. If someone recommends weaning before you and your child are ready, be honest and explain how important breastfeeding is to both of you.

For help with questions or breastfeeding support

Call your WIC office at

Your Local WIC Office

Breastfeeding Specialist

Get more information at **BreastmilkCounts.com** or call the Texas Lactation Support Hotline at **1-855-550-6667**.

Find out how WIC can help you make amazing kids.
Visit TexasWIC.org to learn more and find your nearest WIC clinic.



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