Some of the benefits of breastfeeding are:

* your breast milk meets all of your baby’s nutritional needs
* breast milk protects your baby from infections and diseases
* breastfeeding provides health benefits for you
* breast milk is available for your baby whenever your baby needs it
* breastfeeding can build a strong emotional bond between you and your baby

Formula milk does not provide the same protection from illness and does not give you any health benefits.

Breastfeeding has long-term benefits for your baby, lasting right into adulthood.

Any amount of breast milk has a positive effect. The longer you breastfeed, the longer the protection lasts and the greater the benefits.

Breastfeeding can help to reduce your baby's risk of:

* infections, with fewer visits to hospital as a result
* [diarrhoea and vomiting](https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/diarrhoea-and-vomiting/), with fewer visits to hospital as a result
* [sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sudden-infant-death-syndrome-sids/)
* [obesity](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/obesity/)
* [cardiovascular disease](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cardiovascular-disease/) in adulthood

Giving nothing but breast milk is recommended for about the first 6 months (26 weeks) of your baby's life.

After that, giving your baby breast milk alongside solid foods for as long as you and your baby want will help them grow and develop healthily.

Breast milk adapts as your baby grows to meet your baby's changing needs.

Breastfeeding and making breast milk also has health benefits for you. The more you breastfeed, the greater the benefits.

Breastfeeding lowers your risk of:

* [breast cancer](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-cancer/)
* [ovarian cancer](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ovarian-cancer/)
* [osteoporosis (weak bones)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/osteoporosis/)
* [cardiovascular disease](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cardiovascular-disease/)
* [obesity](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/obesity/)