**Why Breastfeeding? What are the Benefits?**

Breastfeeding is the best choice for mom and baby. Breastfeeding not only sets baby up for a healthy start, it helps mom and baby form a loving and nurturing bond between each other. There are numerous benefits from breastfeeding for both mom and baby that help make breastfeeding an easy choice. Breast milk is the perfect food for baby; it is loaded with nutrients and antibodies that will transfer to baby during feedings to help fight off infections, build immunity, and grow strong. Breast milk is easy for baby to digest causing less upset stomachs, diarrhea, constipation or spit ups. Immune factors found in breast milk help protect your baby from developing allergies and certain illnesses. There have been studies that have found that breastfed babies have higher IQs than formula fed babies and fewer occurrences of SIDS, certain cancers and diabetes.

Some of the most attractive benefits of breastfeeding for mom are that it is convenient as there is no preparation or cleaning time, breast milk is readily available, breast milk is always the right temperature, and last but not least it is free. Breastfeeding burns over 500 calories a day which will help mom lose her pregnancy weight faster as well as helping mom’s uterus contract back to its pre-pregnancy size quicker than mom’s that don’t breastfeed. Studies have shown that mothers who breastfeed lower their risk of developing breast and ovarian cancers, diabetes, osteoporosis and post partum depression.

Mom and baby build a strong emotional and physical bond with each other during breastfeeding.

***Helpful Resources:***

[**It’s Only Natural: Mothers Love, Mothers Milk**](http://www.womenshealth.gov/ItsOnlyNatural/pdfs/HHS_BFA_ItsOnlyNatural_GeneralFactsheet_V9_X1a_508%20copy.pdf)

[**Kids Health (Nemours): Breast or Bottle**](http://kidshealth.org/parent/growth/feeding/breast_bottle_feeding.html?tracking=P_RelatedArticle)

[**Women’s Health: Your Guide to Breastfeeding**](http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/breastfeeding-guide/BreastfeedingGuide-General-English.pdf)

[**Women’s Health: Why Breastfeeding is Important**](http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/why-breastfeeding-is-important/)