



AAP RELEASES REVISED BREASTFEEDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a news release on a policy statement appearing in the the February issue of [Pediatrics](#), the peer-reviewed, scientific journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

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CHICAGO - A long-time advocate of breastfeeding, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is issuing a revised policy statement on "[Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk](#)" to replace its existing policy developed in 1997. The new recommendations reflect new research on the importance of breastfeeding.

Studies on infants provide evidence that breastfeeding can decrease the incidence or severity of conditions such as diarrhea, ear infections and bacterial meningitis. Some studies also suggest that breastfeeding may offer protection against sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), diabetes, obesity and asthma among others.

Research indicates that breastfeeding can reduce a mother's risk of several medical conditions, including ovarian and breast cancer, and possibly a decreased risk of hip fractures and osteoporosis in the postmenopausal period. Increased breastfeeding also has the potential for decreasing annual health costs in the U.S. by \$3.6 billion and decreasing parental employee absenteeism, the environmental burden for disposal of formula cans and bottles, and energy demands for production and transport of formula.

Although breastfeeding initiation rates have increased steadily since 1990, exclusive (no water, juice, nonhuman milk or food) breastfeeding rates have shown little or no increase over the same period of time. Similarly, the proportion of infants who are exclusively breastfed until about six months of age has increased at a much slower rate than that of infants who received mixed feedings (breast milk plus infant formula).

The policy recommendations include:

- Exclusive breastfeeding for approximately the first six months and support for breastfeeding for the first year and beyond as long as mutually desired by mother and child.
- Mother and infant should sleep in proximity to each other to facilitate breastfeeding;
- Self-examination of mother's breasts for lumps is recommended throughout lactation, not just after weaning;
- Support efforts of parents and the courts to ensure continuation of breastfeeding in cases of separation, custody and visitation;
- Pediatricians should counsel adoptive mothers on the benefits of induced lactation through hormonal therapy or mechanical stimulation.
- Recognize and work with cultural diversity in breastfeeding practices
- A pediatrician or other knowledgeable and experienced health care professional should evaluate a newborn breastfed infant at 3 to 5 days of age and again at 2 to 3 weeks of age to be sure the infant is feeding and growing well.

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.

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