

MOTHERS AND BABIES

Breastfeeding—Best For Baby, Best For Mom

(NASPA)—While breastfeeding is not the only option for feeding a baby, Federal government experts say that breastfeeding provides several health benefits for both baby and mother.



Breast milk is best for baby, say experts at the National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC). A mother's milk has just the right amount of calories (in the form of milk sugars), protein, fat, and water needed for a baby's growth.

Call NWHIC's new Breastfeeding Helpline at 1-800-994-9662 (TDD: 1-888-220-5446) to speak to a trained specialist about breastfeeding, and to receive free, reliable breastfeeding publications. Both English and Spanish-speaking Call Center specialists are available. Or obtain similar information from the Breastfeeding section of NWHIC's web site at www.4woman.gov/Breastfeeding.

Most babies find it easier to digest breast milk than they do formula. Breast milk also has antibodies to help protect infants from bacteria and viruses. Breastfed babies are more able to fight off infection and disease, such as diarrhea, ear infections, allergies, and asthma. They are sick less often and have fewer visits to health care providers.

Breastfeeding is also considered best for mom as it lowers a mother's risk of breast cancer and may lower her risk of ovarian cancer.

NWHIC is a project of the Office on Women's Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.