

For Immediate Release

August 26, 2008

Breast vs Bottle: the Risks of Formula Feeding

When it comes to nutrition, the best first food for babies is breastmilk.

Breastmilk has over 300 ingredients, including living cells, hormones, active enzymes, immunoglobulins and compounds with unique structures that cannot be replicated in infant formula. About 80 percent of the cells in breastmilk are macrophages, cells that kill bacteria, fungi and viruses. Furthermore, mothers produce antibodies to whatever disease is present in their environment, making their milk custom-designed to fight the diseases their babies are exposed to as well.

In comparison, formula has only 40 ingredients. Cow's milk formula (the most commonly used formula) contains a different type of protein than breastmilk. This is good for calves, but human infants can have difficulty digesting it. Formula also comes with its own set of risks, and every mother needs to be aware of those in order to make a truly informed decision on whether or not to use it. The use of formula can, and often does, sabotage and/or shorten the nursing relationship, not to mention the various health risks.

Infants and Children fed formula have increased risks of:

1. **asthma** - 50% higher risk of recurrent wheezing
2. **allergies** - including atopy, eczema, food allergy and respiratory allergies
3. **lower intelligence** - breastfed infants tested 5.2 IQ points higher than formula fed infants. Breastfeeding also has psychological benefits for the infant as well, creating an early emotional attachment between mother and child. At birth, infants see only 12 to 15 inches, the distance between a breastfeeding baby and its mother's face
4. **acute respiratory disease** - children who are formula fed are 16.7

- times more likely to have pneumonia than children who were given only breastmilk as infants
5. **infection from contaminated formula** – powdered formula is not sterile and when mixed may increase risk of illness for some babies. There have been 22 "significant" recalls of formula for potentially life-threatening situations
 6. **nutrient deficiencies** - babies can absorb 67% of the calcium in breast milk, compared to only 25% of the calcium in cow's milk. Similarly, babies can absorb 50% of the iron available in breast milk, but only 10% of the iron in cow's milk and only 4% in iron-fortified formulas
 7. **childhood cancers** - children who have not been breastfed are more likely to get leukemia and other cancers than children who were given only breastmilk
 8. **chronic disease** - formula feeding is linked to higher risk for Type 1 diabetes and bowel diseases such as celiac disease and inflammatory bowel disease
 9. **heart disease** - breastfeeding may help to reduce the risk of heart disease by keeping cholesterol levels low later in life. Studies also show that 13 to 16 year olds who were formula fed have higher blood pressures than children who had received breastmilk
 10. **obesity** - children who are formula fed are nearly 40% more likely to be obese than children who are breastfed – even after looking at other things that may explain why a person may be overweight
 11. **ear aches and ear infections** - infants who are formula fed are 50% more likely to have ear infections than babies who receive only breastmilk
 12. **side effects of environmental contaminates** - artificial baby milks contain high levels of aluminum and lead and many of their other ingredients may be contaminated with dioxins. There have been several cases of contamination of baby milks by dioxins, bacteria, other toxins and radioactivity!

Mothers who do not breastfeed have increased risks of:

1. Breast cancer
2. being overweight
3. ovarian cancer and endometrial cancer
4. osteoporosis
5. rheumatoid arthritis

The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding (only breastmilk) for the first six months, and gradually introducing other nutritious foods at six months along with continued breastfeeding for two years and beyond.

Let's celebrate the families who choose to breastfeed at the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge! The purpose of the event is to celebrate breastfeeding and show support for breastfeeding women and their families. It's a chance for education and peer support in a fun, social way.

Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge 2008

SilverCity Victoria at Tillicum Centre

October 11, 2008

Doors Open: 10 am

Latch-on count: 11 am sharp!

Admission is free. There will be live demonstrations, displays, special guest speakers and many great door prizes for moms and babies. Every child participating will receive a certificate commemorating the event. Breastfeeding moms won't want to miss this opportunity for the baby book!

For a complete listing of the risks of formula feeding, visit

<http://www.infactcanada.ca/RisksofFormulaFeeding.pdf>

For more information about the challenge visit www.breastfeedingmatters.ca

Media Contact: Julie McCracken

Phone # (250) 598-4196

Email – HYPERLINK jules_mccracken@hotmail.com