

AMAZING BREASTFEEDING FACTS

By Karen Temple and Lucia Leyfield (Breastfeeding Counsellors)

- Premature babies who were breastfed for the first 4-5 weeks had an average of 8.3 points higher on IQ tests 7.5 years later.
- The nutrients in breastmilk are specifically designed for the human infant and therefore are more easily absorbed by the baby's system. For example, between 50-75% of the iron in breastmilk is absorbed whereas only about 4% of the iron in formula is. Since less nutrients are absorbed from formula, the nutrients are passed through your baby's digestive system as waste (explaining why the stools of formula fed babies smell while those of breastfed babies do not) and may over-tax the waste-disposal system of formula-fed babies. The stools of breastfed babies are non-offensive because there is less waste from breastmilk.
- Breastmilk composition changes according to the time of day, and changes as your baby grows, giving him exactly what he needs.
- Colostrum contains an antibody (IgA) only available to the baby by breastmilk (it is not passed through the placenta) which protects the baby from germs which enter the baby from the throat, lungs, and intestines. These germs are only a problem after delivery and therefore the mother provides this for the infant at its time of need (delivery) through colostrum. These antibodies are most plentiful a few hours after birth so it is important to feed the baby during this time.
- Mother can make antibodies on demand for germs encountered by baby. If a baby is infected by a germ for which an antibody is not present in the mother, the germ is passed from the baby to the mother by sucking at the breast (through those little bumps in the nipple). The breast in turn produces an antibody for the germ and passes it back to the baby.