

Why Breastfeeding In The First Hour Of Life Is Important

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Today countries around the world start celebrating World Breastfeeding Week, which this year emphasizes the importance of breastfeeding in the first hour of life.

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) 2007 is encouraging breastfeeding in the first hour of life because research shows that early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding for six months can save lives. This is the reason behind this year's WBW catchphrase: "Breast Feeding the 1st Hour - Save One Million Babies".

World Breastfeeding Week is supported by a number of global and national organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), who are keen to promote awareness about the importance of breastfeeding soon after birth because of the lifelong health benefits of receiving a mother's first milk, colostrum, the "perfect food for every newborn".

A 2006 study published in the journal *Pediatrics* suggested that 41 per cent of newborns that die in the first month of life could be saved if breastfed in the first hour of life.

The WHO also says feeding colostrum in the first hour increases the likelihood babies will continue to be breastfed which gives them a head start in the "race against malnutrition". There are 170 million underweight children in the world and 3 million of them die every year.

Colostrum is a sticky yellow-white substance yielded by the mother's breast soon after birth. It is rich in antibodies and essential nutrients. Yet, in many cultures, ignorant of its health benefits, the custom is to throw it away. Giving newborns water or other liquids denies them a "good start in life" says the WHO, referring to the WHO Child Growth Standards and how babies fed colostrum within the first hour of being born measure up well against the standards.

Breastfeeding in the first hour or so after birth also confers benefits to the mother, such as improved lactation and less loss of blood.

This year, the theme "Breast Feeding the 1st Hour" is also linked with another phrase: "Welcome Baby Softly". The idea of this theme is to encourage health professionals to "protect" the first hour after birth and help mother and baby bond in a natural, uninterrupted way and maximise the chance the infant will latch onto the breast and stimulate lactation.

President of the International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA), Rebecca Mannel said that newborns are programmed to find the breast and will often find it by themselves when placed on the mother's chest, skin to skin.

"In the early moments after birth, babies are in a quiet, alert state and ready to learn", said Mannel in a prepared statement.

"Babies use all five senses to explore that world. They use their eyes to memorize their mothers' faces, their ears to associate her voice with her face, and their sense of smell to guide them in finding the breast", she added.

Newborns have a heightened sense of taste too, and this is particularly sensitive to the taste of breast milk. Mannel also said that "When mothers hold their babies skin-to-skin immediately after birth, their babies are kept warm, they regulate their heart, respiratory, and oxygen saturation rates, and they do not feel pain as acutely". Babies who have this experience cry less, and are calmer, she said.

United Nations (UN) agencies and the WHO have recently expressed concern that breastfeeding appears to be declining in the Asia-Pacific regions and this is making it harder for babies and childr

to survive. They want parents to become more aware of the risks of using breast milk substitutes.

At a conference in Manila in the Phillipines last month, experts told an assembly of doctors that breastfeeding reduces child mortality and they showed figures from Cambodia, where child mortality has decreased dramatically following a vigorous and successful breastfeeding campaign.

Between 2000 and 2005 the proportion of Cambodian mothers who were breastfeeding their babies until they were at least six months old jumped from 10 to 60 per cent, according to a BBC report from their correspondent in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This compares with about 30 to 40 per cent across Asia as a whole, according to the WHO.

Child deaths in Cambodia over the same timescale dropped by over 30 per cent, which the WHO credits to the dramatic increase in breastfeeding. The BBC correspondent said that large posters showing mothers breastfeeding were commonplace and the government had set up breastfeeding friendly sites in towns and villages.

A Unicef spokesperson told the BBC that the average family in the developing world believes bottle feeding is better for the baby than breast milk.

Breastfeeding is particularly protective for those babies born in towns and villages where water quality is unreliable and can make formula feeding unsafe.

Child development experts say that breastfeeding benefits all children, not just those in developing countries. It improves cognitive development and reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes, for example.

[Click here for more information on World Breastfeeding Week.](#)

[Click here for the International Lactation Consultant Association \(ILCA\).](#)

[Click here for WHO Child Growth Standards.](#)

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Infant Formula Fortification Protocol

http://www.mercola.com/2000/oct/22/infant_formula.htm

A mother's breast milk is nature's perfect and complete food for babies and can't even come close to being reproduced. With so many substances known to be present in breastmilk, but unable to be replicated in breastmilk substitutes (formula), plus all of the as-yet unidentified constituents, it should come as no great surprise that children today are suffering from a vast myriad of illnesses and disorders.

The human brain is infinitely more sophisticated than the world's fastest computer, yet many people naively think that this wondrous organ can be perfectly constructed without any regard to the "raw materials" required. Building a properly functioning brain requires the right materials, just as building a computer would. Imagine trying to build a computer from scratch, without any microchips. Or trying to build a house without any lumber, bricks, steel, or other materials.

However, while there is no way to create a formula equal to breastmilk, there are steps that can be taken to improve somewhat upon the standard formulas that are available.

One of the nutritional areas that are woefully inadequate with formulas is in regards to their fatty acid content. With all of the anti-fat propaganda going on these days, most people don't realize the critical importance of fat, especially with infants. Not only is the quantity important, but the quality and breakdown of the types of fat supplied as well.

After all, **the brain is 60% lipid (fat).** Of this fat, approximately 12 % is arachidonic acid (AA) and 17% is docosahexaenoic acid (DHA).

Many people have heard about the benefits and importance of the omega-3 fatty acids DHA and EPA, found primarily in fish.

The importance of DHA in the infants' diet recently prompted many countries (not including the US) to allow formula producers to fortify their products with DHA, as well as AA. Currently, DHA/AA enhanced formulas are available, although not mandatory, throughout most of Europe.

Unfortunately, this small step still does not provide infants the nutrients they desperately require, due to several problems.

First of all, **the DHA added to the formulas, obtained from microalgae, is highly oxidized (approximately 30%).**

Additionally, **DHA and AA are not the sole fat constituents of breastmilk.** Fortifying with them is a

step in the right direction, but still leaves out plenty of important substances.

In an effort to help people provide their infants with the best possible nutrition, we often instruct mothers to "create" fortified formulas. But of course we insist that mothers breastfeed if at all possible or even obtain fresh breastmilk from a lactating friend or relative, if they have adopted a baby, or can't breastfeed for some reason.

For the infant to remain as healthy as possible, he must obtain a proper balance of all the essential fats, which is difficult to impossible, especially when you are changing mother nature and trying to create a formula.

However, below is a basic fat fortification protocol, which attempts to come as close as possible to "the real thing":

- **Carlson's Cod Liver Oil** - one cc per ten pounds of body weight
- **Organic egg yolk** - 1 yolk daily added at four months of age
- **Organic cream** ideally non-pasteurized and non-homogenized -- If you are unable to find a local dairy farmer who will cooperate with you please try this link: <http://www.realmilk.com/where.html>.
- **Omega Nutrition pure sesame, walnut, safflower, sunflower, oils (rotate with above)** - 1 teaspoon daily
- **One teaspoon high quality coconut oil.** This oil needs to be heated to 76 degrees to become a liquid.

Supplemental oils like fish oils can't be added to bottles because they will adhere to the sides, so it is necessary to administer directly into the mouth. But base oils as safflower, sunflower and sesame can be blended into the formula.

It is important, if not breastfeeding, to use one of the commercially available formulas as a "base" from which to fortify the infant's diet. Although some people might be tempted to create their own homemade formula, I don't recommend this approach, as it is just too dangerous that something could be inadvertently left out or added in too great a quantity. A mistake could cost an infant his life.

Nutramagen or **Alimentum** can be used as a base infant formula and 'doctored up' with nutritional perks. Both of these formulas are acceptable in regard to the 'allergic' aspect, and are the ones usually used when children cannot tolerate anything. Of course, they are also the most expensive.

FORTIFIED COMMERCIAL FORMULA

Makes about 35 ounces

This stopgap formula can be used in emergencies, or when the ingredients for homemade formula are unavailable.

- 1 cup Mead Johnson low-iron, milk-based powdered formula, Nutramigen or Alimentum are best and better tolerated but are more expensive
- 29 ounces filtered water (3 5/8 cups)
- 1 large egg yolk from an organic egg uncooked. Do not give to infant unless older than four months of age
- 1 teaspoon cod liver oil

Place all ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend thoroughly. Place 6-8 ounces in a very clean glass bottle. (Store the rest in a very clean glass jar in the refrigerator for the next feedings.) Attach a clean nipple to the bottle and set in a pan of simmering water until formula is warm but not hot to the touch, shake well and feed to baby. (Never heat formula in a microwave oven!)

If your baby is premature, one additional area of fortification is in the area of free amino acids, most notably [taurine](#). This nutrient is also critical for infant development and is found in human milk but not in cow's milk. Although many formulas add some taurine, it has been shown that formula-fed infants have lower levels of taurine in their blood than breastfed infants do, even when the formula has added taurine.

Contrary to the advice given by some, **soy milk, almond milk, or carrot juice, even if organic and homemade, are most definitely NOT ACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTES FOR BREASTMILK**, or even for formula.

For those [mothers who are breastfeeding](#), it is important to realize that the essential fatty acid content of her breast milk coincides with what she eats. Therefore, her diet is very important for the health of her baby. One of the most important things that a breastfed mother can do is to avoid foods containing trans fats, such as margarine and anything with hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils.

While one can't guarantee that taking the steps outlined above will completely eliminate problems such as ADD/ADHD and other behavioral problems, developmental problems, autism, visual difficulties, and others, I believe it is a strong possibility that it could help to reduce their incidence, although it is important to always remember that **BREAST IS BEST**.

Please recognize that [soy formula is an unmitigated disaster for infants](#) and should never be used. Fact is, it can harm your baby, as it is high in:

- Manganese
- Aluminum
- Phytoestrogens that will harm your baby

(For more information please read the links below.)

Alternatively a raw milk formula can be made:

MILK-BASED FORMULA From [Weston Price Foundation](#)

Makes 36 ounces

Our milk-based formula takes account of the fact that human milk is richer in whey, lactose, vitamin C, niacin, and long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids compared to cow's milk but leaner in casein (milk protein). Use only truly expeller-expressed oils in the formula recipes, otherwise they may lack vitamin E.

The ideal milk for baby, if he cannot be breastfed, is clean, whole raw milk from goats. If goats are not available, then milk from cows certified free of disease, that feed on green pasture would be a second best choice. For sources of good quality milk, see www.realmilk.com or contact a local chapter of the Weston A. Price Foundation.

If the only choice available to you is commercial milk, choose whole milk, preferably organic and unhomogenized, and culture it with a piima or [Kefir Culture](#) to restore enzymes.

- 2 cups whole milk, raw (non-pasteurized) milk from pasture-fed cows
- 1/4 cup homemade liquid whey ([See recipe for whey](#))
- 4 tablespoons lactose (available from The Apothecary 301-530-1112)
- 1 teaspoon bifidobacterium infantis
- 2 or more tablespoons good quality cream raw (non-pasteurized), more if you are using milk from Holstein cows
- 1 teaspoon [cod liver oil](#)
- 1 teaspoon expeller-expressed sunflower oil
- 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons [coconut oil](#)
- 2 teaspoons Frontier brand nutritional yeast flakes
- 2 teaspoons gelatin
- 1 7/8 cups filtered water
- 1/4 teaspoon acerola powder

Add gelatin to water and heat gently until gelatin is dissolved. Place all ingredients in a

very clean glass or stainless steel container and mix well. To serve, pour 6 to 8 ounces into a very clean glass bottle, attach nipple and set in a pan of simmering water. Heat until warm but not hot to the touch, shake bottle well and feed baby. (Never, never heat formula in a microwave oven!) Note: If you are using the Lact-Aid, mix all ingredients well in a blender.)

Variation: Goat Milk Formula

Although goat milk is rich in fat, it must be used with caution in infant feeding as it lacks folic acid and is low in vitamin B12, both of which are essential to the growth and development of the infant. Inclusion of nutritional yeast to provide folic acid is essential. To compensate for low levels of vitamin B12, add 2 teaspoons frozen organic raw chicken liver, finely grated to the batch of formula. Be sure to begin egg-yolk feeding at four months.

Related Articles:

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