Breastfeeding Is the Best Choice for Mother and Baby

“A baby nursing at a mother’s breast... is an undeniable affirmation of our rootedness in nature.”

D A V I D  S U Z U K I

H uman breast milk is made for the human baby to digest. Women’s breasts were made to produce milk for their babies. Human milk is perfect for the human baby’s digestive system, just as cow milk is perfect for the calf, and goat milk is perfect for the kid goat’s digestion. When animals suckle the milk of their own species, more energy is available for development of the offspring’s body and brain. Vegetarian animals provide an adequate supply of milk for their young. The horse, camel, bison, cow, rhinoceros, elephant, giraffe and gorilla are exclusively raw foodists, and as all raw vegetarians, provide plentiful amounts of milk.

My father told me he encouraged my mother to breastfeed me. She breastfed me for two weeks, but then her doctor discouraged her, and she discontinued. My father emphasized this was one of the most important things I could give my children, and I listened to him very carefully, nursing my own children for years until they decided to wean. My children never had pacifiers or blankets to suck on, because in addition to milk, their mother’s nipples provided them with security, relaxation and bonding.

There is a long list of benefits that come with providing baby with the most natural milk which the Creator so miraculously created. The presence of strontium 90, which is heavy radioactive material from nuclear explosion fallout, is reportedly more concentrated in bottled formulas and animal milks than in human milk. According to Dave Rietz, past webmaster of www.notmilk.com,
“Most cow milk has measurable quantities of herbicides, pesticides, dioxins (up to 200 times the safe levels), up to 52 powerful antibiotics (perhaps 53, with LS-50), blood, pus, feces, bacteria and viruses. (Cow milk can have traces of anything the cow ate...including such things as radioactive fallout from nuclear testing...the strontium-90 problem so widespread in the Fifties).”

Beth Montgomery, author of *Transitioning to Health: A Step by Step Guide for You and Your Child*, examined lacto-free formula. She found it is “98% corn syrup and oil, which is sugar and oil! It consists of less than 2% vitamins and minerals which are not in a natural form (They are synthetic, and sprayed into the powder)—and the doctors don’t prescribe vitamin and mineral supplements for babies under one year old!”

Breast milk enhances baby’s immune system and protects against infection. Dr. John McDougall points out the risk of influenza and spinal meningitis for bottle-fed babies is as much as sixteen times greater than the risk for breastfed babies.

The breastfeeding benefit to mothers includes a reduced risk of premenopausal breast cancer and release of stress-relieving hormones.

Gabriel Cousens, M.D., in his book *Rainbow Green Live –Food Cuisine*, claims infant formula inappropriate nutrition for infants: “The formulas do not contain the GLA and DHA (decosahexaenoic acid) which are so important. Breast milk is perfectly formulated for maximum neurological growth.” “DHA is the essential long-chain omega-3 fatty acid needed for brain development and the fatty acid found in highest concentration in the brain. A deficiency of DHA is associated with post-partum depression in women and lower IQ in DHA-deficient babies.”

Hygeia Halfmoon, author of *Primal Mothering in a Modern World*, in an article in the 1997 Fall-Winter “Living Nutrition Magazine,” expresses she produced an optimum milk supply for her three children as a fruitarian for more than 11 years. She says, “The nutritional composition of mother’s milk is nearly identical to that of fruit, and that explains why our children thrive so well on fruit as a transition food when they are nursing less and less. Many mothers are concerned that without dairy products in their diet they won’t have adequate protein and calcium in their milk supply, but all fruits contain predigested proteins that are quickly assimilated. Just one orange has more protein than a glass of cow’s milk, because calcium from cow’s milk is poorly assimilated.”

Calcium cannot be absorbed in the presence of high protein content, and the protein content of cow milk is significantly greater than that of human
milk. Nature meant for it to be used for calves so they could grow into a large 2000 pound animal—the cow.

In terms of total calories, mother’s milk is about 6% protein. Babies double in size in six months consuming nothing but mother’s milk. Fruit contains a similar percentage of protein, and vegetables and nuts have even more protein.
Cow milk is reportedly about 29% protein. We know a cow grows much more rapidly than a human, and grows to be much bigger. This is why the cow has a significantly greater protein requirement.

Tests have shown that by nine months of age, breastfed babies develop about 90% of their bone growth, whereas bottle-fed babies only have 50% of their bone growth by that time. In the article “Breastfeeding in Early Life and Bone Mass in Prepubertal Children: A Longitudinal Study,” by G. Jones, M. Riley and T. Dwyer, the aim was to determine whether breastfeeding in early life is associated with bone mass in 330 8-year old male and female children from Southern Tasmania. Breastfeeding intention and habit were assessed in both 1988 and 1996. The results demonstrated that children who were breastfed had higher bone mineral density at the femoral, neck, lumbar spine and total body compared with those who were bottle-fed.

Mother’s uterus normally contracts more rapidly when breastfeeding her baby. Baby needs less burping from a breastfeeding mom because he or she won’t swallow as much air. When nursing, a woman has more time and lower costs because she will not be making frequent purchases of formula. Psychological tests have shown breastfed babies are better adjusted. They are held very near to mother in her arms. Baby hears mother’s breathing and heartbeat as in the womb, and mom relaxes and gets to know her baby. The frequent feedings breastfed babies require will assure babies get the nourishment and the attention they need from their mothers. Mothers who breastfeed have a significantly lower risk of breast cancer later in life as do the young who receive their milk, as reported by numerous studies.

Because human milk proteins are digested more quickly and efficiently than formula proteins, breastfed babies begin to get hungry more quickly than formula-fed babies. Well-meaning advisors had recommended I nurse my infants every three hours, emphasizing the importance of keeping baby on a strict schedule. When I very briefly attempted these strictly timed intervals, it caused tremendous stress to my baby and me, and I found the baby could not nurse properly or relax under this pressured situation. Mother needs to recognize that baby knows when nutrition or comfort is needed—nursing on demand must be the only choice.

It takes much more energy to digest formula than the little energy required to digest human breast milk. If the stools of formula-fed infants are big and bulky, it’s because excess protein that cannot be assimilated will come out in the stool. On the contrary, breastfed infants are able to absorb all of the protein in human milk.
Another surprising benefit to breastfeeding: My children’s bowel movements did not have the awful smell typical of bottle-fed babies’ excrement. And breastfed babies have even better smelling feces when their mothers are living the raw foods lifestyle. Even our raw fed dogs’ bowel movements were easy to clean up because of their lack of foul odor.

I teach a class called “Creating Healthy Children.” Sometimes, an adoptive mother gets upset when I talk about the many benefits of breastfeeding. Lactation consultants can help the adoptive mother get a flow of milk. There is also the practice of infant massage, which can facilitate wonderful bonding behavior between mother and baby. A book I recommend is Infant Massage: A Handbook for Loving Parents, 3rd edition, by Vilmala Schneider McClure, Bantam Books. Another option for adoptive parents is breast milk banks which have sprouted up in different places around the country. In his article, “Donating Mother’s Milk: The Gift of Life,” Charles Downey writes, “According to Sony Riviera, M.D., president of the Mother’s Milk Bank and medical director of Newborn Nurseries at St. David’s Medical Center in Austin, Texas, ‘Human milk is incredibly complex. Science is discovering more nutrients, immunities, essential fats and proteins that can only be found in human milk. The July 1999 issue of the British Medical Journal reported a study in which German children nourished exclusively with breast milk during the first three to five months of life were less likely to suffer from obesity when they reached school age than those raised on other foods. Human breast milk is also used to help heal babies with infectious diseases, severe diarrhea and pneumonia. Children with renal failure, cardiac problems and burns may also benefit from mother’s milk.’” Most of these problems would never have arisen in the first place had the mothers been nourished on raw plant foods and nursed their babies.

The milk obtained from milk banks is pasteurized to kill bacteria. Pasteurization destroys the enzymes, but it is still preferable to formulas. Milk banks attempt to match the donors with the ages of the receiving baby since the composition of breast milk changes as baby grows. There are eleven breast milk banks across North America. It might be difficult to obtain the milk since there is a great shortage, and ill children would most likely have priority in receiving this milk. Other countries are more progressive. Brazil has 300 breast milk banks. A higher quality option is to find a local wet nurse and pay for milk that is not pasteurized. A woman should be willing to undergo a health screening before being paid for her milk. There are facilities in Europe where mothers can donate or sell their milk to those who cannot breastfeed.
A small percentage of mothers fail to have sufficient milk and can’t find a wet nurse. In this dire situation, if mother’s milk is not available either through nursing, a wet nurse, or a milk bank, a last resort would be to use raw organic goat milk. Goat milk, originating from a smaller animal than a cow, contains a smaller percentage of protein than cow milk. This smaller protein percentage more closely resembles that of mother’s milk. Finding raw organic goat milk is not easy, but it is still better than giving formula to baby. However, mother’s milk contains everything the baby needs and will always remain the best choice. Some mothers just don’t want to nurse their children—an unfortunate circumstance for mother and child.

Use of medications and an unnatural diet can negatively affect mother’s milk supply. Alcohol and caffeine can be responsible for infertility, miscarriages, and may also negatively affect mother’s milk supply.

When I changed to a raw food diet and natural lifestyle, my milk supply became so much more abundant, I felt I could have fed many more babies. Mammals that take the longest to mature also have the longest breastfeeding periods. Since humans take longer to mature than any other mammal, their nursing phase needs to be longer than that of any other mammal, ranging from three to five years and longer. Women who nurse for at least two years are providing breast cancer prevention for themselves as well as future immunity for their young. I nurses my daughter for four and a half years and my son for almost six years. The earlier nursing years provided nutrition and emotional bonding, and as the years progressed, and their nutritional needs were filled by eating solid foods, nursing became less frequent albeit always available for emotional needs. The child should decide when to wean, not the mother. I always instinctively felt my children were protected by the long-term nursing. The perfect amounts of fat and protein and the many vitamins and minerals (many probably still unknown) and the excellent bonding it provides are the key to forming strong, healthy children. And a mother eating 100% raw, or mainly raw foods, will be giving her fortunate child the gift of abundant health. The components in human milk can never be duplicated. When bottled formula was being developed, there was a formula lacking in Vitamin B6. No one knew B6 was present in human milk. Many babies had convulsions and died. There are many nutrients not yet identified in mother’s milk. Until we realize the Creator made only mother’s milk to be consumed in the child’s early life, we will see all kinds of deficiencies deriving from the early feeding of food or formula. A mother who is experiencing difficulty in nursing her baby should contact a lactation consultant from La Leche League. La Leche
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League can be reached at 800-LA-LECHE. Nursing is extremely important for the nutrients as well as for the emotional bonding. La Leche League can also be contacted at www.lalecheleague.org. To get support for nursing as a first-time mother, I had attended monthly La Leche League meetings in my area. I recommend these meetings to all parents for the support given for longterm breastfeeding. Women who need help with breastfeeding, especially parents of multiple babies, premature babies and adoptive parents, should seek the help of a board certified lactation consultant or La Leche League.

In his book *Spontaneous Creation: 101 Reasons Not to Have Your Baby in a Hospital*, Volume 1 (www.spontaneouscreation.org), Jock Doubleday cites the following studies linking breastfeeding with intelligence and higher IQ:

“Many studies demonstrate the superiority of breastfeeding to bottle-feeding in relation to infant and child intelligence. Studies consistently show breastfed children have higher IQs and perform better academically than formula-fed children. One study, published in *Pediatrics* in January 1998, followed more than 1,000 children over an 18-year period. The authors concluded: ‘There were small but consistent tendencies for increasing duration of breastfeeding to be associated with increased IQ, increased performance on standardized tests, higher teacher ratings of classroom performance, and better high school achievement.’ Another study found, after controlling for family, social, and economic variables, early breastfeeding was associated with better picture intelligence at eight years of age, and better scores in mathematics and better sentence completion at 15 years of age.

No need to take just two studies’ word for it. Studies published in 1982, 1988, 1994, and 1996 also concluded breastfeeding enhances cognitive development in preschool children. Studies published in 1978, 1982, 1984, 1992, 1993, and 1994 concluded breastfeeding enhances cognitive development of children in their early school years. (The 1993 study above tested both preschool and school-age children.) Researchers found breastfed children scored higher on both the Bayley and McCarthy scales, and the longer infants breastfed the higher were their intelligence scores. A March 2003 study published in *Acta Paediatrica* found that full-term infants who are born smaller than normal scored an average of 11 points higher on I.Q. tests if they were breastfed exclusively.”

Although the protein content of human breast milk is relatively low, the types of amino acids that form these proteins are crucial. One of these amino acids, called Taurine, is abundant in human milk. Studies have shown taurine is important in the development of the brain and the eyes.
Breast milk is the only food baby should receive during much of the first year of life. It contains the important fat and protein that cannot ever be replaced by other foods or formulas. Even loving, well-meaning parents cannot use raw foods to replace breast milk. Many infants are unable to properly digest almond milk or avocados at so young an age, and may not increase in weight because of their inability to absorb these fats and proteins. These infants risk malnourishment. Many children are allergic to nuts, specifically because they were introduced too early in life. Many years ago, I attended a class on healthy foods for the young child in which recipes were given for almond milk, and it was stated this alternative milk could replace mother’s milk completely if the mother were absolutely unable to nurse. I believe this to be totally untrue. Almond milk and avocados are high in fats that are more difficult to digest than those in breast milk. It would be best not to introduce them until at least the second year, and to wait even longer before feeding whole nuts and seeds. Although some success has been reported with almond milk in Germany when babies were found to be allergic to cow milk, I strongly feel mothers have got to find a way to feed their babies with mother’s milk—if not their own, from another mother.

The 6% protein content of mother’s milk is perfect for the infant’s digestion. I nursed my son exclusively until toward the end of his first year of life, giving him no other nutrients, and he had no problem with calories and adequate weight gain. Later, when I transitioned to a raw food diet, I was amazed at how my milk supply dramatically increased. I also drank a lot of water. The combination of the increased amounts of water and the water-rich diet while still lactating made for a plentiful supply of mother’s milk.

After the weaning stage, there is no need for any kind of milk. The advertisements focusing on the benefits of animal milk are only for commercial gain since the dairy industry makes a huge profit from the sale of milk. Dairy products actually rob us of our calcium. Studies point to dairy as the prime cause of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

Matthew Grace, author of *A Way Out: Dis-ease Deception and the Truth About Health*, points out the women of the Bantu tribe don’t drink milk, and they have 7 to 9 babies all with strong teeth and bones.

Milk from another mammal, especially cow milk, may cause asthma, mucus, colds, allergies, ear infections and even worse problems down the road. Robert Cohen, scientist and author of *Milk: The Deadly Poison* and *Milk: A-Z*, provides documented illnesses that can occur as an outcome of dairy consumption, including breast cancer, Crohn’s disease, diabetes, heart disease,
iron deficiency, osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, sudden infant death syndrome, tuberculosis, uterine cancer, vitamin D-deficiency, and many others.

I sometimes presented the following situation to my children so they would fully understand why we don’t eat animals or animal products.

“If you were driving past a farm and were hungry and saw a cow grazing in the pasture with a nearby orchard of apple trees, would you run to suck the cow’s udders, or would you pick an apple from the apple tree?” Which do you think my children answered?

MILK BENEFITS ONLY THE YOUNG OF THE SPECIES FOR WHICH IT WAS INTENDED.

Many baby food manufacturers proclaim the importance of getting baby to eat solids as early as possible when in reality this is detrimental to baby’s growth and development. Women who nurse their babies long-term are often ridiculed or made to feel they’re doing something inappropriate. I recall neighbors and some family members telling me it was wrong to nurse my two year old son, and there was plenty of food for him to eat instead. My son needed to nurse for a long time, perhaps because of the insecurity he felt by being separated from me when he was hospitalized, but also because many children require a lengthier bonding time. It’s normal for a child to nurse exclusively for two to three years and to begin solid foods when ready. And as solid foods are introduced, nursing continues to provide valuable nutrients and plays an important part in the development of the emotional bond between mother and child. At the end of the first year of life, only if the infant is ready, fruit can be introduced with continued breastfeeding. Sweet fruit is similar to breast milk and will be warmly accepted when the child develops some teeth for chewing and shows the desire to eat.

In the December 2007 issue of Pear Magazine (http://www.PearMagazine.com): “According to new research, breastfed babies typically won’t have to be deceived into eating fruits and veggies like recent popular cookbooks encourage. Instead, if their mom regularly eats fruits and vegetables, the baby will acquire a taste for healthy foods. Flavors from the mother’s diet are transmitted through amniotic fluid and mother’s milk. So, a baby learns to like a food’s taste when the mother eats that food on a regular basis.”

In the article “The Weaning of Babies” for Living Nutrition Magazine, Volume 18, Professor Rozalind Graham states the implications of premature weaning: “Weaning an infant prematurely can result in a multitude of serious
and potentially life-long health problems such as obesity, dyspepsia, leaky gut syndrome and consequent auto-immune problems, such as rheumatoid arthritis. Psychological problems, such as insecurity, can also result from premature weaning."

Professor Graham’s daughter, Faychesca, received the majority of her nutrients directly from her mother’s milk at 21 months of age. At that age, she ate three meals a day, and sometimes four, but they were quite small: one banana, or a half a mango, or several tomatoes and some pineapple. At this age, approaching two years old, about 80% or more of her calories were still coming from mother’s breast milk. Rozalind Graham, a well-nourished mother living on a healthy raw food diet, provides her child with superior nutrients and long-term emotional bonding necessary for self-assurance and esteem.

Even when my children had begun to walk, talk and eat solid food, they still sometimes wanted to nurse when we were out in public. Since the public frowned on a mother nursing her toddlers, not to mention four and five year olds, I felt the atmosphere of general disapproval. Our solution was a secret code we called, “Come mommy!” Whenever either of my children wanted to nurse in public, he or she would say, “Come mommy!” People would think they just wanted to be picked up and held. This worked well for us in that I knew when they wanted me to create a private space for nursing, away from people who wouldn’t understand their need.