

Effect of Breast Milk Substitutes and Artificial Nipples on Breastfeeding

Research shows exclusive breastfeeding is good for you and your baby. The use of breast milk substitutes or artificial nipples in the early weeks of breastfeeding is not desirable. The following information can help you make an informed decision about their use.

These are the main reasons our staff does not routinely supplement breast fed babies with artificial formulas or pacifiers:

- Your breast fed baby first needs to learn the best way to suckle from the breast so your baby does not develop a preference for an artificial nipple, or have difficulty latching to the breast properly. This process of learning takes 2-3 weeks. Suckling from the breast is different from sucking on a bottle nipple or pacifier.
- Frequent breast feeding of your baby will encourage early milk production, will increase your breast feeding success, decrease your baby's risk of jaundice and provide better weight gain. Breast milk substitutes are not digested as easily as human milk. If used, your baby will not nurse as often and your milk supply will decrease.
- Breast milk produced in the first days after birth is called *colostrum*. *Colostrum* is the high in calories and small in volume food that helps your baby's stomach get ready for mature milk. It comes in just the right amount for baby's stomach, which is only about the size of a marble! Healthy babies have extra fluid stored at birth and only need the amount of colostrum and breast milk provided by you. Colostrum has antibodies to protect your baby against diseases. Breastfeeding gives your baby many health benefits and is all that is necessary to meet your baby's needs for 6 months!
- 24 hour rooming-in helps you to learn when your baby is ready to eat, and makes frequent feeding easier. Research also shows that a mother gets more sleep when her infant stays with her at all times.
- Research shows that baby's who receive only their mother's milk (exclusive breastfeeding) may decrease the risk of food allergies. Introducing other foods or formulas before 6 months of age may trigger allergy symptoms.