

Risks and Costs of Formula Feeding

Breastmilk or formula?

Breastfeeding is the normal way of providing infants with the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development. It's your right to make an informed decision about how you feed your baby and we will support the decision that you make. It's important to have all the information including the risks and costs before you decide how to feed your baby. Many people do not know that there are risks when using a breastmilk substitute like formula.

What could happen if my baby is fed formula?

Mothers who want to breastfeed usually find that they have trouble establishing their milk supply if they give their newborn infant formula. Mothers who have an established milk supply find that their milk supply decreases once they introduce infant formula to their baby. Most mothers find it difficult to return to breastfeeding if they switch to formula feeding and decide they want to start breastfeeding again.

If you feed your newborn baby formula, he has a higher risk of getting sick and being hospitalized during childhood and as an adult. This is because formula changes the lining in your baby's stomach and does not provide any immune protection for your baby.

Babies who are fed infant formula are at a higher risk for:

- Allergies
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Childhood cancers
- Obesity
- Lower IQ scores
- Diarrhea
- Ear infections
- SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)
- Gastrointestinal problems (colitis/celiac disease)
- Infections from contaminated formula
- Side effects from environmental toxins

What are the risks for women?

Women who do not breastfeed are at a higher risk for:

- Breast, ovarian, and endometrial cancer
- Hemorrhaging (bleeding too much)
- Slow return to pre-pregnancy weight
- Reduced spacing between births
- Arthritis
- Diabetes
- Osteoporosis (weak bones)

What does it cost to feed my baby formula?

You can expect to spend about \$1,595.74 to formula feed your baby for one year. This does not include the cost of bottles, nipples, and other supplies.

* Based on powdered formula costs in Wellington, Dufferin, and Guelph in 2011



Public Health

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