



## **Informed choice means knowing both sides - what may happen if you do breastfeed and what may happen if you do not breastfeed.**

### ***Breastfeeding's proven advantages***

Breast milk is for human babies. It has been used for thousands of years. It cannot be duplicated. It contains a blend of the right ingredients in the right amounts and changes to meet the baby's needs.

Breast milk contains factors that help the baby to absorb nutrients to help the baby grow.

Factors in the breast milk and the extra contact help the baby to develop a higher IQ than if not breastfed.

Immune factors help protect from disease both as a baby and as an adult. A healthy baby means less days off work for parents.

Breast milk helps the gut of a premature baby to develop and reduces the risk of serious diseases.

Breastfeeding uses up the mother's fat stored in pregnancy. It helps the mother to adjust to motherhood.

Breastfeeding reduces the risk of some cancers in the mother.

Family costs are lower with no formula to buy and lower medical costs.



### ***Possible disadvantages of breastfeeding***

In the beginning, you may have some discomfort while you both are learners.

In the first few weeks your baby may feed more often than a formula fed baby because breast milk is so easy to digest.

You may spend more time with your baby— some mothers learn to express their milk so others can feed their baby.

Some mothers may feel uncomfortable feeding away from home until they gain confidence.

There are rare diseases (such as HIV) when breastfeeding may not be recommended.

### ***Questions to ask:***

**What help is available for women who breastfeed, before and after hospital discharge?**



Please read both sides →

Adapted from the leaflet jointly produced by Australian College of Midwives, Australian Lactation Consultants' Association and Nursing Mothers Association of Australia



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### ***What is formula?***

Formula is artificial milks for a baby, made from mixtures including cow's milk and vegetable proteins, oils from fish, animals, and plants, with various sugars and starches, with added trace nutrients. All infant formula sold in Ireland must meet a government standard, so no company can claim their formula is 'best'.

### ***Possible advantages of artificial feeding***

Other people can prepare formula and feed the baby. The baby may feed less often as it takes longer to digest the formula. However some babies may be unsettled if they find formula hard to digest.

### ***Proven disadvantages of artificial feeding***

Artificially fed babies are more likely to suffer diarrhoea, chest infections, ear infections, and kidney infections. They are more likely to develop eczema or wheeze if they come from a family with allergies.

They are more likely to develop diabetes as a child and to develop orthodontic problems. Premature babies are more likely to suffer a rare but potentially fatal condition called necrotising enterocolitis.

Women who do not breastfeed are at higher risk of some cancers, hip fractures and perhaps mood disorders.

Other people may take over the care of the baby, leaving the mother to do the housework. The mother cannot lie down and rest while feeding a bottle to the baby.

It is difficult to make up the feed exactly as it should be. Formula that is contaminated, too weak, too strong or too hot, can harm the baby.

The baby is more likely to cry as a result of illness, reflux, allergies, and constipation and need medical care.

The water used for making up the feeds needs to be safe, free of contaminants such as lead, excess chemicals such as chlorine and fluoride, and free of bacteria. It can cost over £600 to artificially feed a baby for the first six months plus the cost of extra medical attention.

Artificial feeding is more work because of shopping, washing, sterilising and making up feeds.



### ***Questions to ask:***

**How do I choose an infant formula and suitable equipment? How much will this cost over a year?**

**How can I find out if my water is safe for making up feeds? If it isn't safe, what water can I use?**

**Who will teach me how to prepare and feed formula and how to sterilise equipment?**

**What help is available to dry up my milk and for how long will my breasts be painful?**

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