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“Myth: ‘I’ll get saggy breasts.’ This is the number one reason women don’t breastfeed.”

Six Breastfeeding Myths Debunked

Everybody knows that breastmilk is the very best food for babies, but many people still have second thoughts. Most worries are the result of old wives’ tales and other misconceptions. So let’s take a look at some of them.

Myth: “I’ll get saggy breasts.” This is the number one reason many women don’t breastfeed their babies. But breast tissue doesn’t suddenly succumb to the effects of gravity when you are breastfeeding. On the contrary, breast tissue is filled with lactation tissues and ducts, and breasts that have fed children are generally more firm as a result.

Myth: “Formula is better.” This is simply nonsense. Breastmilk is custom-made for a baby, and not just any baby—only yours. Formula, on the other hand, is mass-produced and loaded with sugar. It is the first “junk food” a baby comes into contact with.

Myth: “Breastfeeding is ‘messy.’” Not so. It is extremely convenient and available anytime. There is no preparation time and it is at the exact temperature your baby needs. What a godsend!

Myth: “Breastfeeding isn’t socially acceptable.” This is the oldest method of feeding babies on the planet. All societies and cultures accept this as the first and foremost method of nourishing a baby. Most of this skepticism is the result of a general North American cultural taboo of exposing the breast in

public. Only by feeding your baby in the eye of the public will these limited attitudes change. If anyone you know feels “strange” about feeding her baby in public places, then I have three words for her...get over it! Baby’s needs come first!

Myth: “I’ll gain weight.” This is not the case. A mom’s body uses a tremendous amount of energy and nutritional reserves to formulate and produce milk for an infant. This translates into a huge amount of calories being converted into breastmilk manufacture. This also means that these same calories are being expended, and the net result is that breastfeeding moms can actually lose weight much more easily.

Myth: “I don’t have enough milk. My baby is starving.” If you think of this from a logical, holistic perspective,

it really doesn’t make much sense. Nature will not provide an environment that would not support the growth and development of your child. When a mother tells me that her baby is not getting enough milk, it generally means that her milk production has fallen below the needs of the baby. There are a number of reasons for this.

Around the third month of life, infants can experience an increased growth spurt. This is also about the time when many women think of eventually returning to work. There is a mental shift and a subconscious reduction in the milk supply in preparation for returning to the pre-birth lifestyle. Many women also begin to think seriously about regaining their figures and start skipping or skimping on their meals in preparation for dieting and weight loss.

But remember, a breastfeeding mom eats for two, and the nourishment a lactating mom consumes performs two important functions. First, it fulfills the physiological needs of the mother. Second, some of that food is converted into breastmilk to feed the infant. When a lactating woman skips meals or “diets,” she actually reduces her milk production. In these cases, the myth is actually true: the baby is not getting enough. And so some women find this rationale an easy out for the formula-and-bottle option.

The formula for handling this last myth is actually quite simple: the more you breastfeed, the more milk your body will produce for the infant. That is a fact. You are welcome to visit my Web site or contact the La Leche League for more information. Main office phone: 613-448-1842. Web site <lalecheleaguecanada.ca>.

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