Benefits of Breastfeeding

Benefits for Moms
- Breastfeeding burns calories making it easier to lose pregnancy weight.
- Breastfeeding helps the uterus go back to pre-pregnancy size quicker and lessens any bleeding that may occur after birth.
- Breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding, delays the onset of normal menstrual cycles and ovulation.
- Breastfeeding may lower the risk of breast and ovarian cancers.
- May also lower the risk of hip fractures and osteoporosis after menopause.
- Breastfeeding can make your life easier because there is no formula to mix or bottles to warm.
- Breastfeeding is the most complete form of nutrition for infants with the right amount of nutrients for growth and development.
- Provides immediate satisfaction for your baby when he/she is hungry.
- Breastfeeding allows the mother to relax and you can even fall asleep while breastfeeding your baby!
- Breastfeeding allows for the mother and child to bond.
- Can make the baby feel more secure and comforted.
- Increase confidence in mothers.
- Breastfeeding reduces risk of anemia.

Benefits for Babies
- Breastfeeding is the most complete form of nutrition for infants with the right amount of nutrients for growth and development.
- Breastmilk is easier to digest than formula.
- Breastfed infants gain less unnecessary weight.
- May lead to being decreased risk of being overweight in adulthood.
- Premature babies react to breast milk feeding better than formula feeding.
- Breastfed babies score higher on IQ tests.
- Breastfed babies are less likely to become ill.
- Protects against ear infections, diarrhea, rashes and allergies.
- Protects against pneumonia, botulism, bronchitis, influenza and serious illnesses.
- Breastfed babies are hospitalized 10 times less than non-breastfed babies in the first year of life.
- Mother’s contains antibodies that fight whatever disease/infection may be present.
- Antibodies are fed to baby and protect him/her from infection as well.
- Sucking helps the infant produce a strong jaw bone and straight healthy teeth because sucking at the breast is more difficult than sucking from a bottle.
- Risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) dramatically decreases.
- Nursing promotes facial structure development, enhances vision and enhances speech.

Benefits for Society
- Breastfeeding helps overall health care costs decrease because breastfeeding babies need fewer sick visits, prescriptions and hospitalizations.
- Breastfeeding contributes to a more productive workforce with less absenteeism.
- Lower medical costs to employers.
- Breastfeeding benefits the environment with less trash and plastic waste.

Adapted from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ publication “Your Guide to Breastfeeding.”

Healthy Carolina  
www.sc.edu/HealthyCarolina  
803.777.1650