

[IMAGE]

Breast-Feeding Protects against Heart Disease?

Breast-feeding protects against infant infections and allergies, while also promoting optimal neurodevelopment. Limited research has addressed the potential benefits beyond the first years of life, although those few studies did suggest an association between breast-feeding and the biological risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

Further evidence of this potential association comes from a recent issue of *Archives of Disease in Childhood*. A study examined breast-feeding at infancy and its influence on various factors (glucose tolerance, plasma lipid profiles, blood pressure and body mass) in 625 subjects now 48-53 years old. Hospital records provided data on method of infant feeding (exclusive breast-feeding, partial bottle feeding, or exclusive bottle feeding) at time of discharge; maternal characteristics and infant birth weight were also collected.

The authors analyzed the data and concluded: "Exclusive breast-feeding seems to have a protective effect against some risk factors for cardiovascular disease in later life." Ask your doctor about the many established benefits of breast-feeding, and find out what you can do before, during and after pregnancy to maximize the health of your child.

Reference:

Ravelli ACJ, van der Meulen JHP, Osmond C, et al. Infant feeding and adult glucose tolerance, lipid profile, blood pressure and obesity. *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 2000; Vol. 82, pp248-52.

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