

[IMAGE]

Does Cow's Milk Contribute to Diabetes?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants be fed breast milk or iron-fortified formula during the first year of life. The rationale behind this recommendation is based in part upon the observation that cow's milk contains inadequate amounts of vitamin E, iron, and essential fatty acids and excessive amounts of protein, potassium and sodium. This recommendation is probably also based upon numerous studies documenting the benefits of exclusive breast-feeding.

Previous studies have suggested that infant consumption of cow's milk may also contribute to the development of diabetes. A study in the June 2000 issue of *Diabetes* examined this relationship by gathering data on infant feeding patterns and childhood diet using children who progressed to clinical diabetes during a followup period. Data collected included duration of overall breast-feeding and age of introduction of cow's milk products.

The authors concluded that high consumption of cow's milk may influence the development of diabetes, particularly in siblings of children with type I diabetes, and call for additional research to further clarify this relationship. Talk to your doctor about the potential dangers of cow's milk consumption, and the many potential benefits of exclusive breast-feeding, to ensure the healthy growth of your child.

Reference:

Virtanen SM, Laara E, Hypponen E, et al. Cow's milk consumption, HLA-DQB1 genotype, and type I diabetes: a nested case-control study of siblings of children with diabetes. *Diabetes*, June 2000: Vol. 49, pp912-17.

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