An Easy Way to Keep Your Baby’s Stress Levels Low

By Editorial Staff

What’s a great way to bond with your baby, create a nurturing environment conducive to their development – and keep their stress levels low? Breastfeed them. While research supports various physical health benefits for both mother and child, including a reduced risk of ear and respiratory infections, sudden infant death syndrome, allergies, obesity and diabetes, as well as a stronger immune system, the emotional / psychological benefits of breastfeeding are less understood. That is until now.

According to recent research published in *Pediatrics*, babies who are breastfed respond better in stressful situations compared to babies not breastfed. Specifically, when faced with a "fight or flight" situation (their mothers ignoring them), breastfed babies displayed less cortisol stress reactivity (cortisol is known as the "stress hormone" because it is elevated during times of stress) and less hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal stress response. In other words, breastfed babies were less "stressed out" than non-breastfed babies. The study featured 5-month-old babies – 21 who had been breastfed for the first five months and 21 who had not been breastfed.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, which disseminates the *Pediatrics* research journal in which this study appears, provides a resource page that includes a list of benefits attributable to breastfeeding, as well as other information for new mothers to ensure the breastfeeding process goes smoothly.

http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=2578&no_paginate=true?no_b=true