

Mother's Milk is Magic

Each mother produces milk special to her own baby. If your baby is born early, your milk has more protein, energy, and minerals such as iron and sodium than the milk you would produce if your baby was born full-term. If you have twins you produce twice as much milk.

You do not need to eat special food to make good milk. Mother's milk will be of good quality no matter what you eat. All mothers need to take care of themselves because being a mother is hard work.

At the beginning of a feed your milk is more watery to satisfy your baby's thirst. The rest of the feed has more fat in it and this helps your baby to feel full.

Human milk is for human babies. It helps baby's brain to develop quickly and the rest of the body to grow slowly. Cows' milk helps a calf to grow long bones and develop muscles quickly because a calf reaches full adult size in two years. We do not develop full adult size for at least 16 years! Most infant formula is based on cows' milk.



Colostrum is the first milk you produce. It is thick and gold coloured because it is rich in everything your baby needs. Your baby's tummy is only the size of baby's fist. Colostrum comes in very small amounts because there is not room for large amounts of milk in this small tummy.

This first milk is full of protection from the germs and illness around the baby. It is the baby's first immunisation. Giving water or formula can reduce the protection from mother's milk.

Babies grow fine with only mother's milk for the first 6 months. They do not need water, juice, spoon feeds or formula to replace mother's milk.



A mother's own milk is best for her own baby, either from the breast or expressed milk. If a mother's own milk is not available, then donor milk from a milk bank is the next best choice. A milk bank is a bit like a blood bank. Mothers donate their extra milk, it is tested and pasteurised to kill any germs, and then given to babies who need it. Human milk is very valuable for ill babies.