

# SAMHS INFO BULLETIN



Compiled by Corporate Communication

## WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 01-07 AUGUST 2012

Breastfeeding is the feeding of an infant or young child with breast milk directly from female human breasts. It is recommended that mothers breastfeed for six months or more, without the addition of infant formula or solid food. After the addition of infant solid food, mothers are advised to continue breastfeeding for at least a year, and continue for two years or more.

Human breast milk is the healthiest form of milk for babies. There are some exceptions, such as when the mother is taking certain drugs or is infected by HIV, or has active untreated tuberculosis. Breastfeeding promotes health and helps to prevent disease.

Mothers who breastfeed also benefit. They have a reduced risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer. In addition, they will return to their pre-pregnancy weight more easily, and the likelihood of falling pregnant again while breastfeeding is reduced. All babies should be breastfed for at least six months of their lives. Babies of HIV-positive mothers should also be exclusively breastfed for the first six months. It is also recommended that both mother and infant undergo antiretroviral therapy throughout the breastfeeding period.

### **Importance of breastfeeding for baby**

Babies who are fed breast milk have a lower risk of:

- Gastro-intestinal (gut) illness
- Allergies
- Asthma

- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Some childhood cancers
- Respiratory tract (chest) infections
- Urinary tract infections
- SIDS (cot death).
- Breastfed babies are less likely to be hospitalised

### **Importance of breastfeeding for mother**

- Assists the uterus return to its pre-pregnant state faster
- Can help women to lose weight after baby's birth
- Reduces the risk of ovarian cancer and pre-menopausal breast cancer
- Reduces the risk of osteoporosis
- Reduces the risk of mothers with gestational diabetes developing Type 2 diabetes

### **Perfect Food**

Breast milk has important ingredients that are not found in any infant formula, to build the baby's immune system. It also changes from feed to feed to suit each baby's unique needs, making it the perfect food to promote healthy growth and development.

### **More easily digested**

Breast milk is more easily digested than infant formula. Breastfed babies are rarely constipated and are less likely to get diarrhoea.

Approved by: D Med (SAMHS)