

# The Best 'Tonic' For Newborns

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**T**HE first week of August is celebrated as 'Breast Feeding Week'. This is to create awareness among women about breast feeding. Most women feel that breast feeding affects their beauty. In fact, breast feeding reduces the risk of cancer. Doctors and dietitians, in case of normal delivery, advocate breast milk to the infant after one hour of delivery and two days for a Caesarean operation.

## Advantages over Bottle Feeding

**Immunity:** Mother's milk has more resistance power, since it contains lysozymes, viral, bacterialicides and para amino benzoic acid components which fight against microbes. These components are present in large amount only in colostrum which is secreted from breast after the delivery and lasts up to three days. It is a light yellowish thick fluid.

## Digestion

It is easily digestible and contains fat splitting

enzyme lipase. This enhances the absorption of calcium and fatty acids which in turn helps in physical and mental development of infants. Therefore, deposition of fat is prevented and the baby is safe guarded from atherosclerosis in future.

## Low cost and easily available

Mother's milk is natural and readily available. Artificial milk formulations cost more and also the feeding bottles have to be periodically sterilised. Breast feeding, for more than a year, delays the next pregnancy.

## Adoption of a lactating mother

Just like a blood bank, a lactating mother can be

adopted for a period of six months. Some points to be considered before adoption:

- ❑ The mother should accept the lactating woman who is going to feed her baby.
- ❑ Due to insufficient milk secretion, the own mother and the lactating mother can arrive at a compromise to feed the infant only for a stipulated period.
- ❑ The lactating mother should undergo 'Aids negative test' and also for communicable diseases. She should be kept under observation for a period of six months.
- ❑ If the mother is very particular about the diet, (vegetarian and non-vegetarian), she can provide food for the lactating mother.
- ❑ The lactating mother has to feed her own baby also. So, she has to consume more food rather than the recommended allowances.
- ❑ The period of adoption should be discontinued after six months because the infant begins to identify the mother who feeds it.

Bearing these in mind, mothers and the mothers to be should try to understand the essential features of breast feeding. Breast feeding decreases the mortality rate and the children grow up to be mentally and physically strong.

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## Nutrients Composition of Mother's milk and Cow's milk

Milk	Energy (K.cal)	Protein gms.	Fat gms.	Carbohydrates gm.s.	Calcium gms.
Mother's Milk	71	1.2	3.8	7.0	33
Cow's Milk.	69	3.3	3.7	4.8	125