

# Breastfeeding and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

## What are the health advantages of breastfeeding?

The simple act of breastfeeding has numerous health advantages to both mothers and their babies: in terms of NCD prevention, breastfeeding has long-term benefits in the form of reduced risk of chronic illness. The World Health Organization recommends early initiation of breastfeeding (within the first hour of birth) and exclusive breastfeeding (no water, other fluids or foods) for 6 months, followed by continued breastfeeding for 2 years or more with appropriate addition of complementary foods.<sup>1</sup>

### Benefits for the breastfed baby:

- As adults, breastfed infants have lower blood pressure, serum cholesterol, and type-2 diabetes.<sup>2</sup>
- Many – though not all – studies show a reduced risk of overweight and obesity in adults who were breastfed as infants.<sup>2</sup>

### Benefits for breastfeeding mothers:

- Reduce their risks of ovarian and premenopausal breast cancers.<sup>3,4</sup>
- Reduces their risk of Type 2 diabetes. This could be due to improving glucose hormones.<sup>5</sup>
- Helps them to lose weight, especially while their infants are being exclusively breastfed.<sup>6</sup>



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#### References:

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