

Toddler Nursing.. Breastfeeding Longer than a Year

There is lots of research and support for long-term breastfeeding.

The Academy of Pediatrics policy states:

*“Breastfeeding should be continued for at least the first year of life and beyond as long as mutually desired by mother and child...increased duration of breastfeeding confers significant health and developmental benefits for the child and mother... There is no upper limit to the duration of breastfeeding and no evidence of psychological or developmental harm from breastfeeding into the third year of life.”*

**Breastfeeding a toddler**

- It is different from nursing a baby.
- By age one, children are getting most of their nutrition from solid foods and start drinking milk, such as cow’s milk, around their first birthday.
- Breastfeeding frequency will vary from one to several times a day. Variation of time from minutes to longer feedings at breast is normal.

**Child Benefits:**

- Studies show breastfeeding toddlers between one and three have fewer illnesses and illnesses of shorter duration, less colds, ear infections, diarrhea and other common ailments.
- Some immune factors in milk actually increase in concentration during the second year.
- Breastmilk continues to be an important source of vitamins A, C, folate and B12; calcium and increased energy from fats and proteins.
- Promotes independence.

**Mom Benefits:**

- Risk of breast, ovarian, uterine or endometrial cancer continues to be reduced.
- Breastfeeding protects against osteoporosis.

Breastfeeding beyond the first year is normal, healthy and common in many countries. However, some may take a dim view of the practice. So, long-term breastfeeding may mean putting up with comments and disapproving stares from friends, family and strangers.

There are emotional and physical benefits to long-term breastfeeding so do not let others pressure you to stop. We recommend you do what feels right for you and your child.

**Breastfeeding longer than a year is normal!**

**Your milk continues to be a valuable source of nutrition and disease protection for as long as breastfeeding continues!**

If you have any questions about toddler breastfeeding, call our Lactation Warm Line, 717-740-5423.