

BREASTFEEDING FOR BREAST HEALTH

BREASTFEEDING REDUCES YOUR RISK OF BREAST CANCER¹

- » For each year a woman breastfeeds, her risk of developing breast cancer is reduced by 4.3%
- » Each birth reduces a woman's risk of breast cancer by 7%
- » If women in developed countries breastfed their children for just 6 months longer than they do now, 25,000 cases of breast cancer could be prevented worldwide each year
- » If women who do not breastfeed or who breastfeed for less than three months were to do so for 4 to 12 months, premenopausal breast cancer could be reduced by 11%
- » If all women with children breastfed for 24 months or longer, the incidence of breast cancer could be reduced by nearly 25%
- » If women had larger family sizes and longer lifetime duration of breastfeeding, typical of developing countries, the incidence of breast cancer in developed countries could be reduced by more than half

BREASTFEEDING REDUCES YOUR BABY'S RISK OF BREAST CANCER²

- » Women who are breastfed as infants have a 25% lower risk of developing breast cancer than non-breastfed women
- » Breastfeeding as an infant has been associated with a 20-35% reduction in risk for premenopausal breast cancer

BREASTFEEDING AFTER BREAST CANCER & BREAST SURGERY

Breastfeeding is possible—and safe—after breast cancer if you have a breast.

After lumpectomy or radiation:

- » The untreated breast will almost always make enough milk to feed a baby³
- » The untreated breast will probably get significantly bigger during pregnancy and breastfeeding³
- » In most cases, if one breast was treated with radiation, it will produce little to no milk; however, the effect on the treated breast varies
- » If too many of the milk ducts of the breast were severed during breast surgery, breastfeeding on that breast may not be possible⁴
- » There is no risk to the baby associated with breastfeeding after breast cancer or breast surgery⁴

¹ Collaborative group on hormonal factors in breast cancer. [Breast cancer and breastfeeding: collaborative reanalysis of individual data from 47 epidemiological studies in 30 countries, including 50302 women with breast cancer and 96973 women without the disease](#). *Lancet*. 2002 Jul 20;360(9328): 187-95.

² Freudenheim, J. [Exposure to breast milk in infancy and the risk of breast cancer](#). *Epidemiology*. 1994;5:324-331.

³ www.breastfeeding.org/breastfeeding_safe.html

⁴ Helewa, M et al. [Breast cancer, pregnancy, and breastfeeding](#). SOGC clinical practice guidelines. 2002 Feb;111:1-7.