

Another Reason to Breast-Feed

An 18-year study in New Zealand showed an association between breast feeding and childhood academic achievement. The subjects were divided into the number of months each child was breast-fed (less than 4 months; 4 to 7 months; greater than 8 months). The researchers found a proportional increase in the number of months of breast-feeding and IQ, performances on standardized tests, higher teacher ratings of classroom performance, and better high school achievement. Christchurch Health and Development Study, Christchurch School of Medicine, New Zealand, 1997.

Babies who are exclusively breast-fed for at least the first 15 weeks of life have less risk of childhood respiratory illness according to a January 3, 1998 British Medical Journal article.

The children tended to have lower blood pressure and less body fat than those started on solid food before four months of age. Breast-feeding and delaying the introduction of solids until after 15 weeks may have a beneficial effect on childhood health and subsequent disease.