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## Breastfeeding In Public: Social Shaming

The topic we have chosen is Breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is important because it provides babies with the essential nutrients needed for growth and development. Breastfeeding also creates a strong bond between the mother and child. This is why babies who are breastfed are usually calmer because they feel a great deal of safety and security when nursed. Lastly, breastfed babies are less likely to develop certain illnesses that formula fed babies develop. This is because breast milk contains antibodies that are not present in formula. Breastfeeding is an issue of gender because when a woman is seen breastfeeding in public or not, she is usually shamed and accused of showing too much.. This is because our society sees the breast as sexual objects as well as a lack of educating about the breast.

Breastfeeding also grants global environmental benefits because human milk is natural renewable food that gives complete nutrition for the first six months of the baby's life.

### Summary

We are interested in breastfeeding because as future public health workers, we want to encourage more women to breastfeed. We both know the basics of breastfeeding and how it is done. However, we want to learn more about breastfeeding. A few goals of ours is to learn the specific illnesses that breastfeeding can help protect against, long-term benefits, and disadvantages if there are any.

### Key epidemiologic facts

Some key facts related to breastfeeding are infants who are breastfed have reduced risks of: Asthma, Obesity, Type 1 diabetes, Severe lower respiratory disease, Acute otitis media (ear infections), Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and Gastrointestinal infections (diarrhea/vomiting). Breastfeeding can help lower a mother's risk of: High blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, Ovarian cancer and Breast cancer. According to CDC "In the United States, the percentage of babies who start out breastfeeding increased from 73% in 2004 to 84% in 2016". According to The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding, "In general, exclusive breastfeeding and longer durations of breastfeeding are associated with better maternal health outcomes"(1). Many women may cite that the reason they breastfeed is because of health advantages for herself and her child but also a hope to experience a sense of bonding with their newborn.

According to The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding "There are economic benefits associated with breastfeeding that can be realized by families, employers, private and government insurers, and the nation as a whole. For example, a study conducted more than a decade ago estimated that families who followed optimal breastfeeding practices could save more than \$1,200–\$1,500 in expenditures for infant formula in the first year alone.<sup>20</sup> In addition, better infant health means fewer health insurance claims, less employee time off to care for sick children, and higher productivity, all of which concern employers"(1). In Addition, another important factor to breastfeeding is that increasing rates of breastfeeding can help reduce illnesses which in result medical costs may be lower and infants that are being breastfed

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have less hospitalization or feeling sick. According to Women's Health " Breastfeeding also helps make a more productive workforce. Mothers who breastfeed may miss less work to care for sick infants than mothers who feed their infants formula. Employer medical costs may also be lower.<sup>6</sup>

Breastfeeding is better for the environment. Formula cans and bottle supplies create more trash and plastic waste. Your milk is a renewable resource that comes packaged and warmed"(1).

## **Conclusion**

Breastfeeding is beneficial to a child because it is the most natural way of providing food for infants and it is a natural way of providing food to infants because of the nutrients. It is an important part of motherhood, and it is the first major decision that is made when it comes to feeding a child. What I hope to learn about breastfeeding is where the idea of breastfeeding infants came from, how it started, and which race of women breastfeed more and why some choose to not breastfeed.

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