

## Does Breastfeeding Cause Cavities?

Breast milk is the most nutritious food for a baby. Breastfeeding is also advantageous to the mother, and helps her to get back to her pre-pregnancy weight faster, and also reduces the chances of breast and ovarian cancer. Breastfed babies are at a much lesser risk than formula-fed babies for obesity, illnesses, allergies, and heart diseases. Then how can something that is so highly nutritious and widely propagated cause cavities? The truth is, breastfeeding **does not** cause cavities. Then why do people say it does? Well, read the explanation below.

### How Breastfeeding Can Cause Cavities in Babies

A lot of women say that the doctor or pediatrician told them that their baby developed a cavity because he is being breastfed, and were advised against night time feeding. Babies, whether they are breastfed or bottle-fed can sometimes face the risk of tooth cavities. The reason behind it is: during nights, whenever you feed the baby, whether it's formula or breast milk, it tends to pool inside the baby's mouth. That's because at night, the cleansing action of saliva is not optimal because supply of saliva diminishes at night. As a result, sugars from the milk cling to the baby's teeth and gums, and along with the bacteria already present in the mouth, act together to form an acid, which can erode the delicate surface of a baby's tooth, causing decay and cavities.

### Prevention and Care of Tooth Decay in Babies

If you find that your baby is showing any sign of tooth decay and cavity, or if dental cavities run in your family, you can gradually reduce night time feedings. This does not mean completely stopping them. As soon as your baby grows his first tooth, you can very gradually decrease the frequency of feeding him at nights. Starting a good dental hygiene even before the baby's first tooth emerges can prevent the formation of cavity. After every feed, even at night, take a clean and very soft cloth, wet it, and gently rub it all over his gums. As soon as the first tooth shows up, buy an infant toothbrush that has a very small head and extra-soft bristles. You can start using a toothpaste at a later stage, but continue brushing the baby's teeth using plain water, at least twice a day.

If your baby has started solid food, include fruits and vegetables like strawberries, carrots, avocados, and plums. These are known to possess anti-cavity substances that will help in fighting tooth decay. Keep in mind that when you breastfeed, the baby's mouth should not contain any solid food particles. Breast milk is sticky, which means it will adhere to the tiny particles lodged in the mouth and that puts your baby at a great risk for cavity and decay. So the best practice would be to clean the baby's mouth after every feed, be it solid foods or just milk, so you steer clear from dental problems.

containing many of the substances needed for life and growth

write-up (*n*)    KRITIKA

a report or article which makes a judgment about something, such as a play or film

advantageous (*adj*)    UGODEN

giving advantages or helping to make you more successful

saliva (*n*)    SLINA

the liquid produced in your mouth to keep the mouth wet and to help to prepare food for digestion

diminish (*v*)    ZMANJŠATI (*SE*)

to reduce or be reduced in size or importance

erode (*v*)    RAZŽIRATI

to rub or be rubbed away gradually

delicate (*adj*)    OBČUTLJIV

needing careful treatment, especially because easily damaged

decay (*v*)    PROPADATI

to (cause something to) become gradually damaged, worse or less

emerge (*v*)    POJAVITI SE

to appear by coming out of something or out from behind something

infant (*n*)    MALČEK

a baby or a very young child

bristle (*n*)    ŠČETINA

The bristles of a brush are the stiff hairs or pieces of plastic which are connected to it

plain (*adj*)    PREPROST

not decorated in any way; with nothing added

adhere (*v*)    LEPITI SE

to stick firmly

lodge (*v*)    ZAGOZDITI

to (cause to) become fixed in a place or position

widely (*adv*)    OBŠIREN

including a lot of different places, people, subjects, etc

cavity (n) LUKNJA

a hole in a tooth

pediatrician (n) PEDIATER

a doctor who has special training in medical care for children

tend (v) NAGIBATI SE

to be likely to behave in a particular way or have a particular characteristic

pool (n) MLAKA

a small amount of liquid on a surface

cleansing (adj) ČISTILNI

describes something that cleans or is used for cleaning

## WORD FORMATION

nutritious (adj) - nutrition (n)

advantageous (adj) - advantage(n) - advantageously (adv)

erode (v) - erosion (n)

widely (adv) - wide (adj) - width (n)

saliva (n) - salivate (v)

cleansing (adj) - cleanser (n) - cleanse (v)

delicate (adj) - delicacy (n)

adhere (v) - adherence (n) - adherent (adj)

emerge (v) - emergence (n)

infant (n) - infant (adj) - infantilize (v)