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Breast or Bottle

Expecting mothers always have to ask themselves whether they should breastfeed or bottle-feed. Over the years, researchers have questioned which is healthier for the mothers and their children. There have been many debates over which is a better life choice for the mother and the new baby. Breastfeeding and bottle-feeding have many similarities and differences.

There are many advantages to breastfeeding. It helps the baby because it provides key nutrition and amino acid proteins and reduces sickness and extreme weight gain in babies (Insel and Roth 230). Breastfeeding can be helpful to the mothers as well. It is less time consuming because the milk is already made. Breast milk can decrease the mother's worry about what ingredients are in the formula that can be harmful to the baby. It helps the uterus shrink to normal size quicker than if the mother is bottle-feeding her infant (Eisenberg et al. 255). Because the baby is feeding on the mother's milk, this feeding method will help the mother to burn fat which has been stored during her pregnancy. Breastfeeding can reduce a woman's risk of developing breast cancer before she reaches menopause (Marshall 70). Breastfeeding also provides time to bond with the new bundle of joy. Bottle-feeding requires two hands; however, breastfeeding requires only one hand, and the other hand is free to hug the baby or the mother's other children. Breastfeeding helps with postpartum depression (Insel and Roth 230). Breastfeeding provides an emotional gratification, intimacy, love, and a sense of fulfillment between the mother and baby (Eisenberg et al. 252).

Breastfeeding does have its disadvantages. The mother will have to breastfeed in public,

or she will have to pump her breast before leaving her home or her car. Breastfeeding can be very painful. The baby's sucking on the mother's nipples can make them sore, dry, and cracked. Sometimes it can even make the mother's nipples bleed. Due to having to feed the baby approximately every three hours, the mother will have to wake up and feed her baby. Since the mother breastfeeds her baby, her spouse or partner cannot help with the feedings. Mothers can develop an infection from breastfeeding called mastitis, which has to be treated with antibiotics (Marshall 70). Breastfeeding can sometimes make the vaginal area dry, which makes having sex painful. Breastfeeding might cause problems if the couple desires to continue having sex after the birth of the child because breastfeeding can also cause the breast to leak during sex (Eisenberg et al. 253).

Bottle-feeding is another choice for mothers. Bottle-feeding has several advantages, such as it is easier on mothers who have to continue to work outside the home. The mothers will be able to continue the diet of their choice without having to cut out certain foods, such as chocolate, garlic, onions, beans, and all spicy foods which can not be eaten while breastfeeding (Eisenberg et al. 253). Many times, sharing the responsibility of feeding the infant can be most helpful. Fathers can get up in the night for feedings if the mothers are too exhausted to care for the infant. Bottle-feeding can also provide a bonding experience for the father and baby.

Bottle-feeding disadvantages include the cost of formula, the preparation time of the bottle, and allergy problems, which may include colic, colds, constipation, and diarrhea. Also, the baby's weight can double in fourteen to sixteen weeks, causing the baby to weigh too much (Marshall 71).

The goal of breastfeeding and bottle-feeding is the same, to feed the baby. However, the choice of breastfeeding or bottle-feeding should be left up to the mother and father because each method is different in advantages and disadvantages.

Works Cited

Eisenberg, Arlene, et al. *What to Expect When You're Expecting*. Workman Publishing, 1996.

Insel, Paul M., and Walton T. Roth. *Core Concepts in Health*. McGraw-Hill, 2006.

Marshall, Connie. *From Here to Maternity*. Conmar Publishing, 2000.