

The Benefits of Breastfeeding

By Amy Bentley



Dr. Christine E. Bixby
CHOC Neonatologist

Dr. Bixby is CHOC's medical director of lactation services. Dr. Bixby completed her fellowship in neonatology at Harbor UCLA Medical Center and also completed her residency and internship training in pediatrics at Harbor UCLA Medical Center. She completed a fellowship in neonatology in a joint program between CHOC and Harbor UCLA Medical Center. Dr. Bixby specializes in caring for premature infants and is involved in research studies focusing on issues related to breast milk, establishing a milk supply and using breast milk for premature babies.

Dr. Bixby's philosophy of care: "My philosophy of care is to bring in the parents and family as part of the healthcare team and making sure they are educated and comfortable with the care we are giving their children."

EDUCATION:

University of California, Davis,
School of Medicine

BOARD CERTIFICATIONS:

Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine

BREAST MILK BENEFITS FOR MOM AND BABY

"Breast milk is the ideal food for babies. It has the vitamins, protein and fat that a baby needs to grow. It's easy to digest, contains antibodies that help the baby fight off illnesses and lowers the baby's risk for having asthma, allergies and becoming obese," says Dr. Bixby, CHOC's medical director of lactation services. Babies exclusively breastfed for the first six months also tend to have fewer ear infections, respiratory illnesses and diarrhea, Dr. Bixby says. Plus, breastfeeding helps mom and baby bond. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the World Health Organization all strongly recommend breastfeeding. And, it's free!

BENEFITS OF DONOR MILK

In the case where a mom can't produce or sustain her own milk supply, for whatever reason, donor human milk is an excellent alternative to a mother's breast milk or formula, says Dr. Bixby. "Donor milk isn't as good as the mother's own milk but it's way better than formula, especially for preterm babies or those with gastrointestinal or digestive issues that make it harder for the baby to digest food. Breast milk is designed to help move the gut better. It is a limited resource so at CHOC, we mostly use donor milk for preterm babies under 32 weeks old and also at times for some of our surgical patients."



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PERCENTAGE OF INFANTS
NATIONWIDE WHO BEGAN
BREASTFEEDING AFTER BIRTH

LACTATION SERVICES AT CHOC

CHOC's Clinical Nutrition and Lactation Services department seeks to be a helpful source of nutrition and lactation information for patients, their families and the community. Individualized, family-centered and culturally sensitive lactation care is part of CHOC's interdisciplinary approach to healthcare and wellness. CHOC has board-certified lactation consultants on hand to help patients who are breastfeeding or receiving donor breast milk. For information about inpatient lactation services at CHOC, call (714) 509-8455.



Ranked Among the Nation's Top Children's Hospitals for Neonatology

Recognized as one of the leading neonatology programs in the nation, CHOC Children's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) combines the latest in life-saving technology and trained neonatal specialists to provide care for the tiniest patients — most often premature babies suffering from respiratory and circulatory problems. Our team is committed to providing family-centered care and is dedicated to listening to and honoring each family's perspectives, choices, values and culture.

Learn more at
choc.org/NICU

91.6

PERCENTAGE
OF INFANTS IN
CALIFORNIA WHO
WERE BREASTFED
IN 2013



49

PERCENTAGE OF INFANTS
NATIONWIDE BREASTFED AT
6 MONTHS (INFANTS BORN
IN 2010) - UP FROM 35% OF
INFANTS BORN IN 2000

