Human Milk Supports Health and Growth for Babies

Josie Cooper

The Alliance for Patient Access (allianceforpatientaccess.org), founded in 2006, is a national network of physicians dedicated to ensuring patient access to approved therapies and appropriate clinical care. AfPA accomplishes this mission by recruiting, training and mobilizing policy-minded physicians to be effective advocates for patient access. AfPA is organized as a non-profit 501(c)(4) corporation and headed by an independent board of directors. Its physician leadership is supported by policy advocacy management and public affairs consultants. In 2012, AfPA established the Institute for Patient Access (IfPA), a related 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. In keeping with its mission to promote a better understanding of the benefits of the physician-patient relationship in the provision of quality healthcare, IfPA sponsors policy research and educational programming.

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The wholesome sufficiency of "mother's milk" is not just a turn of phrase; it is a biomedical reality. Access to human milk, whether through mothers or donors, can majorly support neonatal health.

According to a new study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, breastfed babies are 33% less likely to die during the post-perinatal period than infants who were not breastfed. The study included 10 million US infants born between 2016 and 2018. The new data joins a growing body of research supporting breastmilk's health benefits. Infants born preterm or with health challenges in particular, benefit from breastmilk.

Human milk supports health and growth for preterm babies.

In particular, babies born preterm or with health challenges benefit from consuming human milk, whether from their mother or a screened donor.

Recent research on infants with congenital heart conditions affirms that a diet rich in human milk can have a life-changing impact on health and development. These babies typically struggle to gain the healthy weight associated with normal growth. Human milk-derived fortifiers supply nutrients, prebiotics, and immunological components to support infants' growth. It is also better tolerated than milk products from other mammals.

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Human milk also offers other benefits.

In addition to providing nutrition and immunological protection, human milk may confer other benefits. Human milk has been shown to protect against diabetes, obesity, asthma, cardiovascular diseases, and autoimmune disorders.

Some cultures even value other "milk therapies," including topical applications to treat everything from pink eye to diaper rash. Scientists have made treatments directly from compounds in human milk, and many alternative and folk remedies show signs of having health benefits.

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fits. Increased understanding can, in turn, encourage full use and equal access to the wonder drug produced by the human body.

Reference:

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