

Note on Breastfeeding

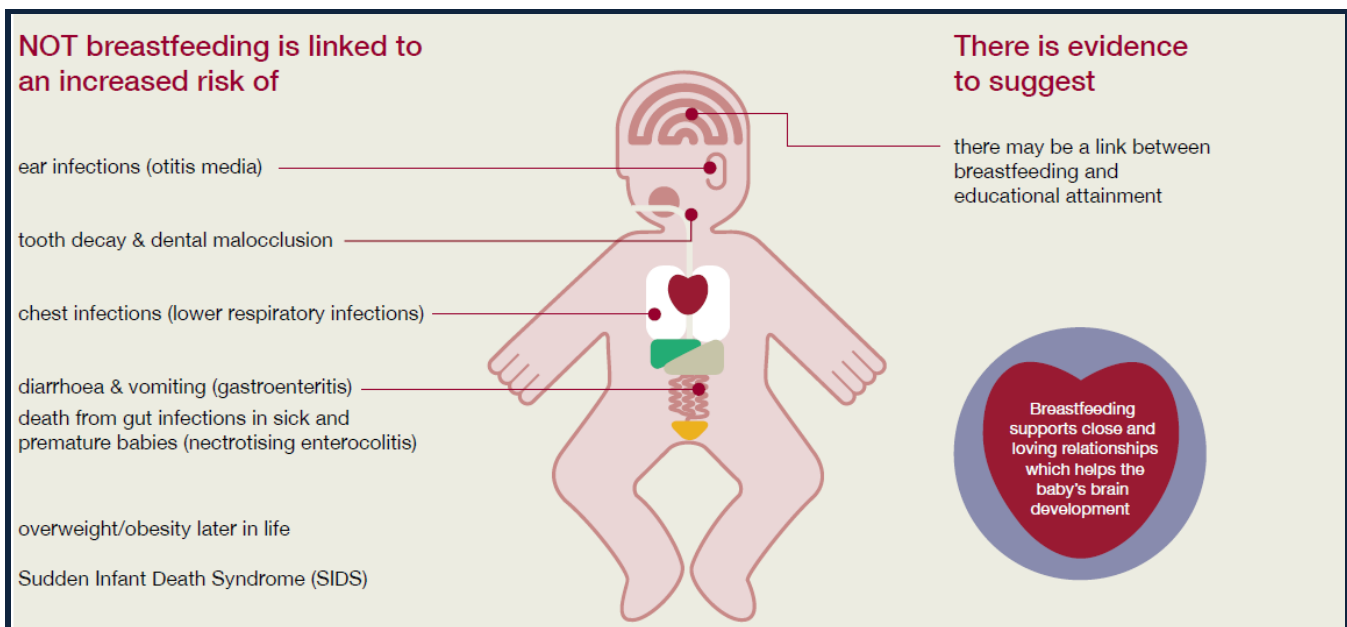
“Breastfeeding has profoundly beneficial effects on the lives of infants, children and their mothers, and is an arena where the interests of mothers and babies align with those of the health service and wider society” Professor Mike Kelly, Director of the Centre for Public Health Excellence. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed babies but almost everyone needs **help and support** to achieve this.

The language we use and the way we present information is vitally important:

‘Breast is best’ can be seen as idealistic, and for many mothers, choosing a formula is simply good enough. Moreover if breastfeeding is not achieved/not possible, mothers may feel a sense of failure.

So, rather than listing the benefits of breastfeeding, here is an infographic showing the risks associated with **not** breastfeeding:



Source: Public Health England, July 2016 Commissioning Infant feeding services: [Infographics](#)

In the UK, the Millennium Cohort Study suggests that each month, an estimated 53% of hospitalisation for diarrhoea and 27% for lower respiratory tract infections could have been prevented by exclusive breastfeeding (Quigley et al., 2007).

Advice on the correct preparation method and storage of infant formula is therefore essential to prevent some contamination.

The incidence of food allergy is increased if the duration of concurrent breastfeeding at the introduction of other food proteins (including milk) is decreased (Grimshaw et al., 2013). The prevalence of cow's milk allergy in formula fed babies is 2-3% vs 0.5% in breastfed babies (i.e. a fourfold increase risk) (Høst, 2002).

Only 17% of UK women manage to exclusively breastfeed to 17 weeks ([HSCI](#), 2010). In Wessex the breastfeeding initiation rate remains stable at just below 80%. However, only around 40% of babies are fully or partially breastfed at 6-8 weeks (Government statistics, 2017 data).

All Health Visitors in Wessex are [BFI](#) accredited but further work is needed to encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.