Top Ten Reasons for Breastfeeding beyond Nutrition

1. **Skin to Skin connection**. This plays a valuable role with oxytocin and calming releases which promote optimal feel of safety.
2. **Bilaterality**. Baby switches sides on a regular basis, creating flexible and efficient ways of latching and also ensures optimal head and neck mobility
3. **Optimizes Oral and Airway Development**. Breastfeeding is integral in development and shape of the hard palate and airway. The breast requires gape, full, unrestricted tongue mobility and effective latch.
4. **Focus off volume.** We typically don't measure or assess how much baby takes from the breast, unless there are extenuating circumstances. This allows baby to eat more when actually hungry and to take less when just needing a snack or comfort.
5. **Mom and baby's smell**. Baby relies heavily on scent to identify mom, mom's breastmilk in order to let down defenses in order to eat. Mother's scent is a motivating factor, not only from her armpits and neck, but from the glands around the nipple, which express specific odor for baby
6. **Mom and baby's touch.** Baby gets to nuzzle into mom's body and feel the touch throughout entire body, in turn baby's body and little wiggles/nuzzles etc, stimulate her body, which helps make feel good hormones and milk.
7. **Mom and baby in close proximity**. Moms are likely to cosleep or sleep next to baby (cosleeper, bassinet) and hold babies more frequently.
8. **Bidirectional and Reciprocal**. Breastfeeding is back and forth and goes both ways, requires effort from both mom and baby, benefits both
9. **Ease and convenience**. There is less to prepare, clean, warm up and do, etc when breastfeeding.
10. **Gastrointestinal Function**. Breastfed babies often have less gas, constipation, colic and have more regular bowel movements which is healthy for baby.

Breastfeeding is best for both mom and baby, for Nutrition AND Development!

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