

# Lactation

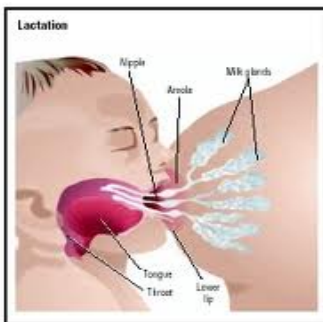
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## What is Lactation?

Lactation describes the secretion of milk from the [mammary glands](#), the process of providing that milk to the young, and the period of time that a mother lactates to feed her young.

## Breast Feeding

It occurs in all female mammals, and in human females it is commonly referred to as [breastfeeding](#) or nursing. In most species milk comes out of the mother's [nipples](#).



### Is Milk production only for females?

In only one [species](#) of mammal, (the Dayak fruit bat) is milk production a normal male function. Hormone imbalance may create male milking.

## Purpose of Lactation

To provide [nutrition](#) and immune protection to the young after birth.

### Human lactation

Milk secretion starts when a baby sucks its mother's breast. Oxytocin compels the milk to flow from the alveoli, through the milk canals into the sacs behind the areola and then into the baby's mouth

## Hormonal Influences

From the fourth month of [pregnancy](#) (the second and third [trimesters](#)), a woman's body produces [hormones](#) that stimulate the growth of the [milk duct](#) system in the [breasts](#):

- [Progesterone](#)—This triggers the onset of copious milk production.
- [Oestrogen](#)—stimulates the milk duct system to grow and become specific. Oestrogen levels also drop at delivery and remain low for the first several months of breastfeeding.
- [Prolactin](#)—contributes to the increased growth of the alveoli during pregnancy.
- [Oxytocin](#)—Oxytocin is necessary for the milk ejection reflex, or let-down to occur.
- [Human placental lactogen](#) (HPL)—From the second month of pregnancy, the [placenta](#) releases large amounts of HPL. This hormone appears to be instrumental in breast, nipple, and areola growth before birth.
- By the fifth or sixth month of pregnancy, the breasts are ready to produce milk. It is also possible to [induce lactation](#) without pregnancy.

Breast milk is pure highly nutritious and provide complete nutrition and health to child. Some modern mothers may feel bad of giving milk to their baby through breast feeding. The common myth on breast feeding is “it will loosens the mother’s breast and the breast will lack its shape”. It is absolutely wrong and breast feeding not only helps the child to get nutritious complete food but also help mother to get rid of breast cancer. Even though they don’t feed their child the secretion may happen in frequent intervals and the will be hardened because of not releasing the milk. It will be highly painful to mother. So educating expected mothers about breast feeding is very important.

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## Reference Links

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lactation>

- <http://www.kosmix.com/topic/lactation>
- <http://www.csecduac.in/viewtopic.php?p=7844&sid=825dfe58c4ce71f6face191772b88dbf>

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