



LA LECHE LEAGUE  
CANADA

## **Breastfeeding Beyond Infancy: *Recommendations and Perspectives***

### **Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants: Recommendations from Six to 24 Months**

A joint statement of Health Canada, Canadian Paediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada, and Breastfeeding Committee for Canada. 2015

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canada-food-guide/resources/infant-feeding/nutrition-healthy-term-infants-recommendations-birth-six-months/6-24-months.html>

*“Breastfeeding - exclusively for the first six months, and continued for up to two years or longer with appropriate complementary feeding - is important for the nutrition, immunologic protection, growth, and development of infants and toddlers.”*

“Breastfeeding is an important source of nutrition for older infants and young children as complementary foods are introduced.

\* Support breastfeeding for up to two years or beyond, as long as mother and child want to continue.”

### **Breastfeed a Toddler – Why on Earth?**

**Dr Jack Newman, International Breastfeeding Centre, Toronto, Ontario**

<https://ibconline.ca/information-sheets/breastfeed-a-toddler-why-on-earth/>

“The child who breastfeeds until he weans himself (usually from 2 to 4 years), is usually more independent, and, perhaps, more importantly, more secure in his independence. He has received comfort and security from the breast, until he is ready to make the step himself to stop. And when a child makes that step himself, he knows he has achieved something, he knows he has moved ahead. It is a milestone in his life of which he is proud.”

### **Continuing Breastfeeding Beyond the First Year**

**American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)**

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Continuing-Breastfeeding-Beyond-the-First-Year.aspx>

“There is not a particular age before which breastfeeding must end. Depending on how you and your child feel, experts agree that you should continue to breastfeed for as long as you find that it works for you. Provided that you begin to add complementary foods to your child's diet as she grows, breastfeeding can continue for 2 years, 3 years, or even longer.”

### **Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk**

**American Academy of Pediatrics, Policy Statement**

<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/115/2/496.full.pdf>

“There is no upper limit to the duration of breastfeeding and no evidence of psychological or developmental harm from breastfeeding into the third year of life or longer.” (AAP 2012, AAP 2005)

## ABM affirms breastfeeding beyond infancy as the biological norm

### Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

<https://bfmed.wordpress.com/2012/05/15/abm-affirms-breastfeeding-beyond-infancy-as-the-biological-norm/>

“The average age at weaning ranges anywhere from six months to five years,” says Arthur Eidelman, MD, president of the [Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine](http://www.academyofbreastfeedingmedicine.org).

“Claims that breastfeeding beyond infancy is harmful to mother or infant have absolutely no medical or scientific basis,” says Dr. Eidelman. “Indeed, the more salient issue is the damage caused by modern practices of premature weaning.”

“...multiple studies have demonstrated that sensitive parenting and secure attachment are major predictors of long-term mental health and well-being...”

### Weaning: What does it Mean?

Dr Sears. <https://www.askdrsears.com/about-us/meet-the-sears>

<https://www.askdrsears.com/topics/feeding-eating/breastfeeding/faqs/weaning>

“We urge mothers to think in terms of years, not months, when contemplating how long to nurse. Breastfeeding is a long-term investment in your child. You want to give your baby the best emotional, physical, and mental start. Extended breastfeeding is nature’s way of filling your baby’s need for intimacy and appropriate dependency on other people. If these needs are met early on, your child will grow up to be a sensitive and independent adult.”

### Everybody Weans

The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, Chapter 16, La Leche League International.

“If your child weans when she is ready...you can feel confident that you have met your baby’s physical and emotional needs in a very normal, healthy way. In cultures where there is no pressure to wean, children tend to breastfeed for *at least* two years. The World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the Canadian Paediatric Society strongly encourage breastfeeding through toddlerhood. Your child’s biology seems geared to weaning somewhere between two and a half and seven years; it makes sense to build his brain and bones from the milk that was designed for the job.”



[www.lllc.ca](http://www.lllc.ca)

### How Long Should I Breastfeed?

<https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/length-of-time/>

“How long you nurse for is highly personal, and some parents find they need additional support if their baby is nursing longer than their friends and family expected them to nurse. A great place to find support for nursing little ones of any age is La Leche League meetings! There, like-minded people will support your decision to nurse as long as you and your baby choose.”