

Policy on Breast-feeding

Originating Committee

Clinical Affairs Committee – Oral Health and Prevention in Children Subcommittee

Review Council

Council on Clinical Affairs

Adopted

1983

Revised

1990, 1994, 2000, 2003

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) endorses the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) policy statement on breast-feeding and the use of human milk.¹ The AAP identifies breast-feeding as the ideal method of feeding and nurturing infants. Epidemiological research shows that human milk and breast-feeding of infants provide advantages with regard to general health, growth, and development while significantly decreasing risk for a large number of acute and chronic diseases.¹ The AAP statement concludes "breast-feeding ensures the best possible health as well as the best development and psychosocial outcomes for the infant".

Although breast-feeding is essential in providing the best possible nutrition to infants, the AAPD cautions that frequent breast-feeding at night and on demand after eruption of teeth may be implicated in contributing to the development of early childhood caries (ECC).²

The potential for ECC is related to extended and repetitive feeding times with prolonged exposure of teeth to fermentable carbohydrate without appropriate oral hygiene measures.

The AAPD recognizes the need for further scientific research regarding the effects of breast-feeding and the consumption of human milk on dentofacial growth and oral health.

References

1. American Academy of Pediatrics. Breast-feeding and the use of human milk. *Pediatrics*. 1997;100:1035-1039.
2. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. Policy on early childhood caries: Classifications, consequences, and preventive strategies. *Pediatr Dent*. 2003;25(7):24-26.

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