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Breastfeeding: Is society catching up with a miracle of nature?

Breastfeeding is the perfect feeding method for newborns due to its perfect fat and protein composition, the passive maternal antibodies, increased maternal bonding, the newborn's decreased occurrence of allergies, asthma, obesity, SIDS and otitis media, and the ongoing alteration of nutrients coinciding with the newborn's nutritional needs. Science is just starting to discover the details of milk composition, and breast milk's roles in immunology and building the infant's gut microbiome. Although breastfeeding has been the oldest method of feeding, society has just recently started to adapt to be a more breastfeeding friendly culture. The Affordable Care Act has expanded coverage to include breastfeeding counseling, pumps, and supplies, and also mandates employers to provide nursing mothers a location and work breaks to pump, and the U.S. Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding encourages a national shift. Recent literature has provided further evidence on the importance of breastfeeding, milk banks and breastfeeding clinics are expanding, and some state legislation has been passed to further protect breastfeeding rights.

Biography

Kristen Altdoerffer DNP, CRNP, CPNP-PC is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Nursing at Drexel University and a pediatric nurse practitioner working with Advocate Newborn Network. She has completed her Doctorate of Nurse Practice at the University of Maryland in 2015. She is board certified as a pediatric nurse practitioner and enjoys practicing with newborns, adolescents, and the underserved population. Her passion is education, especially pertaining to breastfeeding. She is a member of NAPNAP, active on the Delaware Valley Chapter's Legislative Committee and the Grants Chair, and on The Pennsylvania's Coalition of Nurse Practitioners's Campaign Committee.

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