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Nutrition, Lifestyle, and Breastfeeding: Potential Benefits for Maternal and Offspring Health

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Message from the Guest Editors

Human milk offers health benefits to children, including a lower risk of cardiometabolic disease and immune system development. These benefits have been attributed to the composition of human milk, which provides not only the optimal nutrients but also an array of bioactive substances. Milk composition is known to be influenced by maternal health status and behaviors. Early feeding exposures can be important in infant development, including the function and the modulation of the infant gastrointestinal system and infant metabolism, therefore offering the future potential for intervening the developmental trajectories. However, limited longitudinal data are available on how child development is influenced by early feeding exposures, including breastfeeding exclusivity and introduction to solids in addition to milk composition. Further, breastfeeding has short-term and long-term health consequences for lactating mothers. Based on limited data, women who breastfeed recover postpartum body weight and metabolism more rapidly. Growing evidence indicates that women with longer lifetime lactation duration have a lower risk for developing several chronic diseases later in life.



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