



BREASTFEEDING v. BOTTLE FEEDING: THE EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY

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Introduction:

More and more breastfeeding has become a practice recommended by doctors all around the country. It has been linked to decreasing infant mortality rate as well as helping the mother fight off diseases like breast and ovarian cancer. The benefits are not only health related, but also economically.



Thesis and Rationale:

Not only is breastfeeding the most beneficial form of early nutrition for an infant, but also helps save money. On average \$3.4 billion are spent on formula and other bottle feeding accessories. What I want to show is how each feeding style impacts the economy of the United States as well as a household.

Table 1: Approximate annual costs of bottle feeding.

Bottle Feeding Costs					
Item	Quantity	Num. per yr.	Individual Price Range	Minimum Cost	Maximum Cost
Bottles	6 a month	72	\$12.59-\$34.49	\$906.48	\$2,483.28
Nipples	1 3.5months	4	\$3.99-\$4.89	\$15.96	\$19.56
Pacifiers	1 2 months	6	\$3.39-\$5.99	\$20.34	\$35.94
Bottle drying rack	1 per year	1	\$9.99-\$12.99	\$9.99	\$12.99
Bottle brush	1 6 months	2	\$6.99-\$14.99	\$13.98	\$29.98
Bottle warmer	1 per year	1	\$24.99-\$69.99	\$24.99	\$69.99
Purified water	8 per month	48	\$0.89-\$3.09	\$42.72	\$148.32
Burp cloth	2 per year	2	\$6.99-\$11.99	\$13.98	\$23.98
Bottle cooler bag	1 per year	1	\$10.99-\$14.19	\$10.99	\$14.19
Enfamil	1 can a week	52	\$25.99-\$36.99	\$1,351.48	\$1,923.48
Total Costs:				\$2,410.91	\$4,761.71

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Background:

Many mothers physically can not breast feed because of pain or are recommended not to because of possible disease transmission through bodily fluids and there are others that just take the choice not to breast feed. These mothers are given the alternative to bottle feed instead. Within the last hundred years breastmilk replacement formulas have advanced in their likeness to breast milk, but sometimes the cost can be too great for some families to sustain a purely formula based diet.

In 1996 a survey found that less than half of women that lived in households making less than \$100,000 chose to breast feed. Out of that half, a quarter breastfed for the recommended 6 months or more.

Methods

The study consists of a breakdown of costs based on annual spending on basic products used in both bottle and breast feeding. Also information collected from previous studies adds to the comparison.

Special attention is placed on how government programs like WIC affect the economy of the U.S.

Future:

Later a short survey will be done with the help of the nursing staff in the Mother Baby ward of Emanuel Medical Center in Turlock California. The survey will bring a local perspective to the study.



Findings:

Many Americans have attributed the increasing debt to the misuse of government funded programs like WIC. WIC is the largest consumer of infant formula accounting for 40% of all formula bulk purchases. The formula is bought using tax dollars amounting to \$567 million annually after taxes. One study suggested that WIC should push more towards breastfeeding, saving the program \$750,000 annually. Formula alone, using one can a week, can cost almost \$1,500 annually (see Table 2). Along with formula other extra items must be purchased to support a formula based diet. All the extras adding to the increasing cost of using formula.

Table 2: Approximate annual costs of breast feeding.

Breastfeeding Costs					
Item	Quantity	Number per yr.	Individual Price	Minimum Cost	Maximum Cost
Electric Breast Pump	1 per year	1	\$70.99-\$324.99	\$70.99	\$324.99
Breast Pump Accessories	1 per year	1	\$16.99-\$27.99	\$16.99	\$27.99
Bottle drying rack	1 per year	1	\$9.99-\$12.99	\$9.99	\$12.99
Burp cloth	2 per year	2	\$6.99-\$11.99	\$13.98	\$23.98
Bottle brush	1 per year	1	\$6.99-\$14.99	\$6.99	\$14.99
Storage bags	21 per week	1092	\$9.59-\$13.39	\$209.45	\$292.44
Nursing pillow	1 per year	1	\$10.99-\$59.99	\$19.99	\$59.99
Nursing breast pads	12 a month	144	\$6.59-\$24.99	\$237.24	\$899.64
Nursing cover	1 per year	1	\$11.39-\$51.99	\$36.99	\$51.99
Pacifier	1 2 months	6	\$3.39-\$5.99	\$20.34	\$35.94
Total Costs				\$642.95	\$1,744.94

Breast milk not only increases immune system tolerance to outside environment, but also is more cost effective. Since breast milk changes as the child gets older, providing the necessary nutrients at a slow pace, breast fed infants tend to go to the doctor less because of illness. On average a hospital bill can be around \$5,000 per visit adding up to almost \$450 million per year. Though formulas have high nutrient levels, their sugar levels are also as high. Because of the high sugar content, many infants have become insulin dependent at a young age adding to hospital bills and equipment necessary to maintain a good quality of life for the child.

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