

CDC backs breast-feeding, despite false story

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A widely shared story that U.S. health officials are recommending a delay in breast-feeding to improve vaccine effectiveness is false.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the agency named in the false reports, encourages breast-feeding . The CDC says breast

milk is best for all infants except in rare cases such as when a mother has active, untreated tuberculosis.

"There is no recommendation from the CDC or the (American Academy of Pediatrics) that mothers delay breast-feeding to enhance [vaccine efficacy](#)," said Dr. Joan Younger Meek, a Tallahassee, Florida, physician who chairs a breast-feeding panel for the pediatricians group.

"Breast milk contains multiple immune protective factors, including whole cells which fight infection," Meek said.

All breast-fed infants should receive vaccines according to the regular schedule, and there is no need to interrupt or delay breastfeeding, Meek said. Breast-fed babies sometimes respond better to immunizations than do infants on formula, she said.

Versions of the false story posted by [healthywildandfree.com](#) and [foodrenegade.com](#) link to a 2010 study published in the *Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal*. Researchers were looking into why a vaccine against rotavirus wasn't working as well in developing countries as in industrialized countries. Rotaviruses cause half a million deaths each year in children worldwide, so improving a vaccine's effectiveness would save lives.

The small study, published in 2010, looked at how the vaccine interacted with breast milk samples in a test tube or culture dish. Based on results on tests of [breast milk](#) from women in India and other countries, researchers suggested it was possible that the [milk](#) could make the [vaccine](#) less effective.

But the study wasn't the final word. Later studies showed no reason to restrict breast-feeding in the hours before and after rotavirus vaccination.

The World Health Organization has said that breastfeeding doesn't significantly impair the response to the rotavirus vaccines.

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