

# Breastfeeding and risks of allergies and asthma

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In an *Acta Paediatrica* study, exclusive breastfeeding for the first 3 months was linked with a lower risk of respiratory allergies and asthma when children reached 6 years of age.

In the study of 1,177 mother-infant pairs, a third of the [children](#) were

exclusively breastfed until the age of 3 [months](#). By the age of 6 years, 20.8% of children had been diagnosed with respiratory allergies and 11.3% with asthma.

Exclusive breastfeeding for 3 months was associated with a 23% lower relative risk of respiratory allergies at the age of 6 years. It was also associated with a 34% lower relative risk of asthma, but only if the children did not have a family history of asthma.

Breastfeeding for 3 months, but not exclusively, was insufficient to reduce the risk of respiratory allergies or asthma.

"Airway disorders such as respiratory allergies and some [asthma](#) may be prevented in some [cases](#) by encouraging exclusive breastfeeding for at least 3 months, as human milk was potentially beneficial in reducing the risk of airway disorders among children," said author Galya Bigman, Ph.D., of the University of Maryland, Institute of Human Virology, School of Medicine.

**More information:** Galya Bigman, Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 3 months of life may reduce the risk of respiratory allergies and some asthma in children at the age of 6 years, *Acta Paediatrica* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/apa.15162](https://doi.org/10.1111/apa.15162)

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