

# Breastfeeding after 9 months may be risky

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A study by a Finland hospital has said babies fed exclusively on breast milk for more than nine months may have an increased risk of allergies.

Previous studies had found that babies fed only on breast milk for the first six months of their lives had a decreased risk of allergies including eczema and asthma, but the Helsinki Skin and Allergy Hospital study suggests that feeding babies only breast milk for nine months or longer could increase those risks, the Independent reported Thursday.

Researchers studied the children of 200 mothers, assessing them for allergies at the ages of 5 years, 11 years and 20 years. More than half of the children exclusively breast fed for nine months or more developed symptoms of allergies by age 5, while less than one-fifth of children breast fed for two to six months showed signs of developing conditions.

A separate study at Stockholm's Karolinska Institute said babies who are breastfed may be better able to cope with stress later in life than babies who are fed from a bottle, The Telegraph reported.

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