

Breastfed kids enjoy greater social mobility than bottle-fed children

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Children who are breastfed climb higher up the social ladder than bottle-fed children according to a large, long term study by Dr Richard Martin of Bristol University's Department of Social Medicine and colleagues, published in the *Archives of Disease in Childhood*.

Over 3000 children from 16 rural and urban areas across England and Scotland were monitored from birth as part of the Boyd Orr Study of Diet and Health in Pre-War Britain (1937-1939).

The study results are based on 1414 people for whom information on breastfeeding in infancy and social mobility (movement up the social class hierarchy) between childhood and adulthood was available.

The prevalence of breastfeeding varied from 45 per cent to 85 per cent, but was not dependent on household income, expenditure on food, number of siblings, birth order, or parental social class in childhood.

But those who had been breastfed as babies were 41 per cent more likely to move up the social class hierarchy as adults than those who had been bottle fed.

The longer a child was breastfed, the greater were their chances of upward mobility, the results showed.

The authors suggest that the findings might be explained by the suggested benefits of breastfeeding on brain development, which might

then lead to better exam and job prospects, and greater earning potential. However, the possibility remains that other social and economic factors related to having been breastfed may explain the apparent benefits.

Source: University of Bristol

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