

# **SMoms who choose to breastfeed older babies motivated by health, nutrition benefits**

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Mothers who decide to breastfeed their children beyond 1 year of age consider their child's physical and social development to be most important, while the advice of health care professionals, family and friends are least important, according to a study to be presented Monday, Oct. 13 at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference & Exhibition in San Diego.

To find out why some moms choose to continue nursing after a child's first birthday, researchers surveyed more than 50,000 U.S. women ages 18-50.

"The three most important reasons that [mothers](#) gave for extended nursing were the nutritional benefits of breast milk, the other health benefits of breast milk and the opportunity to build a stronger social bond with their baby," said principal investigator Alexis Tchaconas, research assistant, developmental and behavioral pediatrics at the Steven and Alexandra Cohen Children's Medical Center of New York.

The investigators designed an online survey that asked mothers to rank 15 factors related to extended breastfeeding as "very important," "important," "somewhat important" or "not important." Surveys were sent to mothers via email lists from La Leche League, an international breastfeeding support organization, as well as Facebook groups and online chat rooms dedicated to breastfeeding support.

Besides health benefits and bonding with their child, other top factors

that influenced mothers to breastfeed beyond one year included enjoyment, support from spouse or partner, La Leche League support and not having to pay for formula.

"Although most women felt comfortable discussing their decision to nurse their baby beyond 1 year of age with their child's pediatrician and with their own health care providers, the recommendations of these [health care professionals](#) were not identified as being important in terms of the mother's decision to extend nursing," said senior investigator Andrew Adesman, MD, FAAP, chief of developmental and behavioral [pediatrics](#) at the Steven and Alexandra Cohen Children's Medical Center of New York.

**More information:** Dr. Adesman and Ms. Tchaconas will discuss the study, "Maternal Ratings of Factors that Influenced Their Decision to Breastfeed Beyond 1 Year of Age," at 12:15 p.m. PDT Oct. 13 in Marriott Hall 1 of the San Diego Marriott Marquis. To view the abstract, visit [aap.confex.com/aap/2014/webpro ... nary/Paper26398.html](http://aap.confex.com/aap/2014/webpro...nary/Paper26398.html) .

They also will present two related studies: "Support for Mothers' Decision to Breastfeed Beyond One Year of Age: Healthcare Providers, Family, and Friends," [aap.confex.com/aap/2014/webpro ... nary/Paper26380.html](http://aap.confex.com/aap/2014/webpro...nary/Paper26380.html) , and "Breastfeeding Toddlers & Preschoolers: Is It More Common with Boys or Does the Mass Media Sensationalize Nursing?" [aap.confex.com/aap/2014/webpro ... nary/Paper26406.html](http://aap.confex.com/aap/2014/webpro...nary/Paper26406.html) .

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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