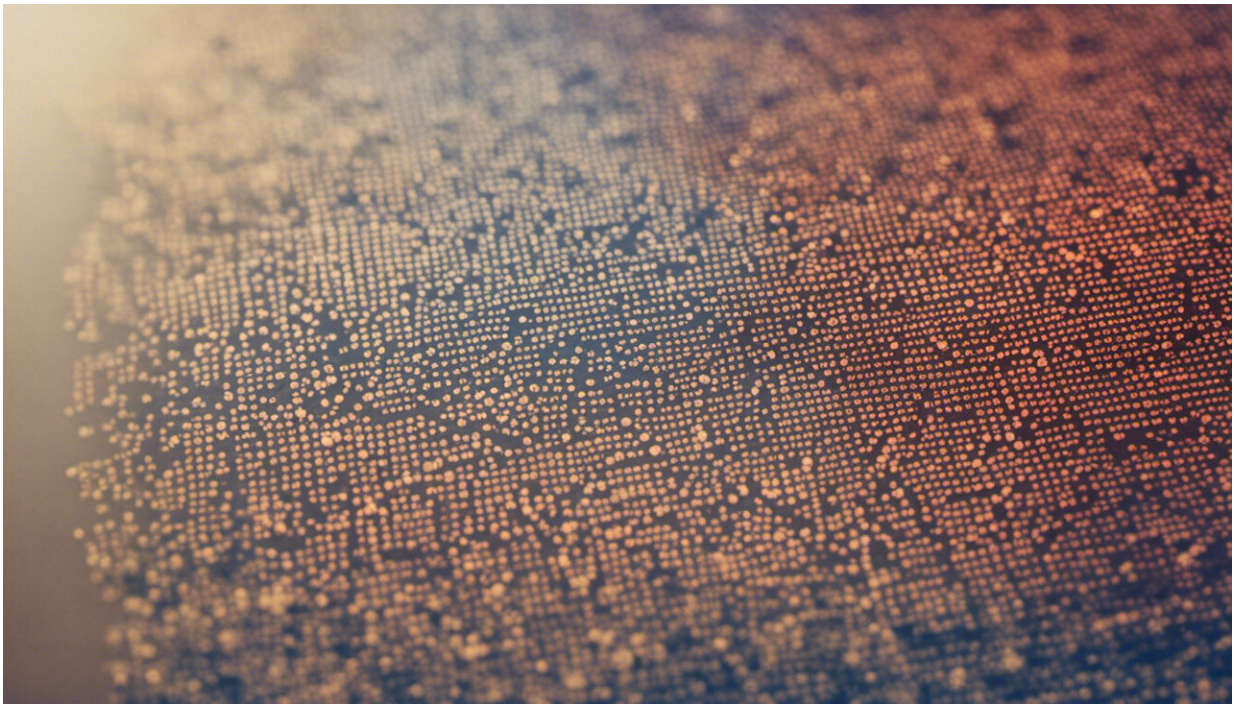


New tool to calculate the value of breastfeeding

May 5 2022



Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

A simple new tool developed by researchers at The Australian National University (ANU) will tally the volume and monetary value of breastmilk produced in Australia and around the globe.

The [Mothers' Milk Tool](#), created in partnership with Alive and Thrive

and FHI Solutions, also allows individual mothers to add their own data and calculate the value of the [milk](#) they have produced for their child.

The researchers behind the free, downloadable tool hope it will make the value of [breastfeeding](#) more visible to policymakers. "The tool is important in enabling women and children around the world and making sure they have better support," Dr. Julie Smith, from ANU, said.

"The value of breastfeeding is poorly recognized. Counting [human milk](#) is a way to value and recognize how much women add to the food system, economy and society through the care of infants and [young children](#)."

Dr. Smith said visibility is key. "What is measured matters the most," she said. "When countries do not count breastfeeding or human milk in production statistics, the extent of [women](#)'s productivity and contributions to society goes unnoticed.

"If it is not visible, it is harder to make a case for funding the policies and programs to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. We want more than statements that mothers 'should' breastfeed. We are calling for better funding and policy that will make the entire process a lot easier for mums. We hope this tool will help achieve this."

One anonymous mother who used the tool said she felt its benefits before even seeing her individual data. "I felt a huge sense of value in myself and all the mothers out there who might be contributing, without any true recognition to date," she said.

The tool is being launched in the lead up to Mothers' Day to acknowledge the contribution of [mothers](#) to society through all unpaid care work, including breastfeeding.

Provided by Australian National University

Citation: New tool to calculate the value of breastfeeding (2022, May 5) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-05-tool-breastfeeding.html>

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