

Ann Evans

28th February 2007.

The Secretary of the Committee on Breastfeeding
House of Representatives
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

I am a midwife and lactation consultant involved in care of breastfeeding mothers. I am writing this submission in the hope that the profile of breastfeeding can be raised so that the country can benefit from the advantages in better health of all.

Others have outlined the health benefits initially for mother and baby and research also supports the concept that obesity and diabetes later in life may be reduced when babies are breastfed for at least 6 months.

I have an issue with the advertising of breastmilk substitutes (toddler range) on television by a paediatrician, which portrays that formula later on is acceptable. This can then be interpreted that doctors support breastmilk substitutes at any time. Also most infants of 1 year and older will tolerate cows milk so this advertising is encouraging parents to spend money on formula unnecessarily. I believe there should be no advertising of breast milk substitutes in any media. It would be great to see the alternative – breastfeeding advertised on television.

The importance and benefits of breastfeeding at present has limited hours within education programs of medicine and childcare. Medicine in particular could increase their training around breastfeeding by utilising lactation consultants to give up to date and relevant information for the GPs of the future. We regularly have issues with GPs discouraging women from continuing breastfeeding when they develop an infection: quite erroneous information. The suggestion elsewhere for education within high schools by ABA also has merit.

Thanks for the opportunity to contribute to your inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Ann Evans