

# Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

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## For immediate release

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### **“Misleading reports on breastfeeding study undermine mothers and babies”**

New Rochelle, NY, January 13, 2010 – Multiple media outlets are missing the facts in reports that breastfeeding “isn’t as beneficial as once thought.”

Reporters are parroting a press release from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology that begins, “Feeling guilty that you didn’t breastfeed your children enough – or at all? Relax. New research shows that breast milk is not as important for either the mother or the child’s health.”

In fact, the study did not measure the effect of breastfeeding on the health of the mother or the child nor did it compare breastfed infants to those who were formula fed. The study merely found an inconsistent link between hormone levels during pregnancy and breastfeeding rates and duration.

“The press release and the statements by study author Sven M. Carlsen are outrageous, and irresponsible,” says Arthur Eidelman, MD, vice president of the *Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine* and Professor of Pediatrics at the Hebrew University. “To distribute a statement ostensibly based on research data that are not related in any way to what was published violates the basic standards of responsible science. One cannot state that breast milk affords no health advantages when no measure of health was studied.”

Gerald Calnen, MD, president of the *Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine*, is concerned that inaccurate reporting will undermine mothers who want to breastfeed. “Mothers who want to breastfeed face a litany of ‘booby traps,’ including poor quality maternity care, no paid leave, harassment for breastfeeding in public, and prohibitions against expressing milk at work,” Calnen says. “Carlsen’s unfounded claim that ‘Baby formula is as good as breast milk’ legitimizes policy makers, indignant strangers and employers to continue undermining mothers who want to breastfeed their babies.”

According to a recent US government review, babies who are not breastfed are twice as likely to develop ear infections, almost four times as likely to develop pneumonia, and twice as likely to suffer from diarrhea. Mothers who do not breastfeed face increased risks of diabetes, metabolic syndrome, and breast and ovarian cancers. “Breastfeeding is good for mothers and good for babies,” Calnen says. “Mothers who want to breastfeed deserve support.”

The *Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine* is a worldwide organization of physicians dedicated to the promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding and human lactation through education, research, and advocacy. An independent, self-sustaining, international physician organization and the only organization of its kind, ABM’s mission is to unite members of various medical specialties through physician education,

expansion of knowledge in breastfeeding science and human lactation, facilitation of optimal breastfeeding practices, and encouragement of the exchange of information among organizations.

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