

**THE BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING FOR THE HEALTH OF THE CHILD:  
INTEGRATIVE REVIEW**

*OS BENEFÍCIOS DO ALEITAMENTO MATERNO PARA A SAÚDE DA CRIANÇA:  
REVISÃO INTEGRATIVA*

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**Abstract**

*The benefits of breastfeeding for mother and child have wide scientific recognition due to numerous positive aspects for the child's health in the short and long term. Thus, the present research has as main objective to carry out a bibliographic survey on the benefits of breastfeeding for the health of the child in the scientific literature of the last six years. The studies were found in the Scielo, Lilacs and PubMed databases, the following descriptors were used: Breastfeeding, Breastfeeding benefits, breastfeeding and child health. The analyzed literature indicates benefits for the child's oral health, favoring the healthy development of the stomatognathic and bone system in addition to preventing malocclusion, also promoting protection against infections and strengthening of the immune system and the development of the cognitive system, influencing intelligence and IQ, as well as acting in the prevention of diabetes and obesity. There is a gap in studies on the benefits in the psycho-emotional field, since only one analyzed study associates breastfeeding with the benefit of emotional strengthening between mother and child, this being a topic for future studies.*

**Keywords:** *Breastfeeding. Breastfeeding benefits. Breastfeeding and child health.*

**Resumo**

*Os benefícios da amamentação para mãe e filho possui amplo reconhecimento científico devido os inúmeros aspectos positivos para a saúde da criança em curto e longo prazo. Assim, a presente pesquisa possui como objetivo central realizar um levantamento bibliográfico sobre os benefícios da amamentação para a saúde da criança na literatura científica dos últimos seis anos. Os estudos foram encontrados nos bancos de dados Scielo, Lilacs e PubMed foram utilizados os seguintes descritores: Amamentação, Benefícios da amamentação, amamentação e saúde da*

*criança. A literatura analisada indica benefícios para a saúde bucal da criança, favorecendo o saudável desenvolvimento do sistema estomatognático e ósseo além de prevenção de maloclusão, promove também proteção contra infecções e fortalecimento do sistema imunológico e o desenvolvimento do sistema cognitivo tendo influência sobre inteligência e QI, assim como atua na prevenção de diabetes e obesidade. Há uma lacuna em estudos sobre os benefícios no campo psicoemocional, visto que apenas um estudo analisado associa a amamentação com o benefício de fortalecimento afetivo entre mãe e filho, sendo este um tema para estudos futuros.*

**Palavras-chave:** Amamentação. Benefícios da amamentação. Amamentação e saúde da criança.

## Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends exclusively feeding the newborn with breast milk in the first six months of life, and also recommends that the introduction of other more solid foods start only at six months of age, age at which that the child is already physiologically prepared for it. (WHO, 2001).

This recommendation is indicated, among other reasons, because research indicates that breast milk is the ideal and natural food for the infant, thanks to its nutritional and immunological properties that protect the newborn from infections, diarrhea and respiratory diseases, in addition to providing strengthening of the child's bond with the mother. (SILVA, CERVATO, PASSANHA 2010, p.252).

It is also recommended that breastfeeding should be maintained in association with other foods until the age of two, as advised by the Ministry of Health (MOH), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the *World Health Organization*. Exclusive breastfeeding for up to one year of life could prevent 22.2% of deaths per year in the world of children up to 12 months. (VENÂNCIO, 2003)

In this context and recognizing the benefits of breastfeeding, the Ministry of Health has been working on the implementation of programs that encourage the practice of breastfeeding, among them, the Hospital Amigo da Criança (BFHI) initiative in health units, the program was developed in Brazil from March 1992, however, despite all the governmental and institutional efforts, the rate of early weaning in Brazil remains high, with the average duration of breastfeeding being seven months, with only one month being exclusive and second. data from the National Survey of Demographics and Health of Children and Women, in 2006 the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding from zero to six months was 39.8%. (ALMEIDA, FERNANDES, ARAÚJO, 2004 p. 359).

The II Survey of Prevalence of Breastfeeding in Brazilian Capitals and the Federal District (PPAM/Capitals and DF) of 2008, funded by the Ministry of Health and carried out by researchers from the Health Institute of SES/SP, (State Secretariat of Health of São Paulo ) from the Child Health Technical Area of the Ministry of Health points out that in the Capitals and DF, only 67.7% of the children surveyed were breastfed in the first hours after birth, with regard to exclusive breastfeeding, the

research shows that the national average is 41, 0%%. (PEREIRA, 2010 p. 7).

In the most recent study carried out by the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro-UFRJ and funded by the Ministry of Health, the National Study of Child Food and Nutrition ( Enani ), carried out between February 2019 and March 2020, there is a considerable improvement in the rate of exclusive breastfeeding is compared to the 2008 survey. According to Enani , 53% of children in Brazil are breastfed in the first year of life, and the rate of exclusive breastfeeding and from zero to six months is 45.7% (UFRJ, 2020). ).

Given this scenario, the importance of nursing during the pregnancy-puerperal cycle is highlighted, considering that the nurse is the professional who is closest to the mother during this cycle, he has the vital role of guiding, instructing and advising, presenting himself as an information diffuser, ensuring that the pregnant woman knows the importance of breastfeeding and acquires the conviction that she is fully capable of exclusively breastfeeding the newborn (MESQUITA *et al.* 2016).

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The integrative review has as its main characteristic the synthesis of knowledge and the incorporation of the applicability of results of significant studies in practice. It is a broader methodological approach to review that allows the inclusion of experimental and non-experimental studies in a more complete analysis of the phenomenon studied. (SOUZA; SILVA; CARVALHO; 2010).

As defended by Ercole , Melo and Alcoforado (2014, p14),

The integrative literature review is a method that aims to synthesize results obtained in research on a topic or issue, in a systematic, orderly and comprehensive manner. It is called integrative because it provides broader information about a subject/problem, thus constituting a body of knowledge.

It is important to highlight that the integrative review is not to be confused with the systematic review, although both methods use Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) as an investigation approach, the systematic review uses experimental research studies as a source of data, that is, it is aimed at the analysis of randomized controlled trials that portray strong evidence and seeks to exhaust the studies on the investigated topic with the inclusion of published and unpublished material. (MENDES; SILVEIRA; GALVÃO, 2008, p.759).

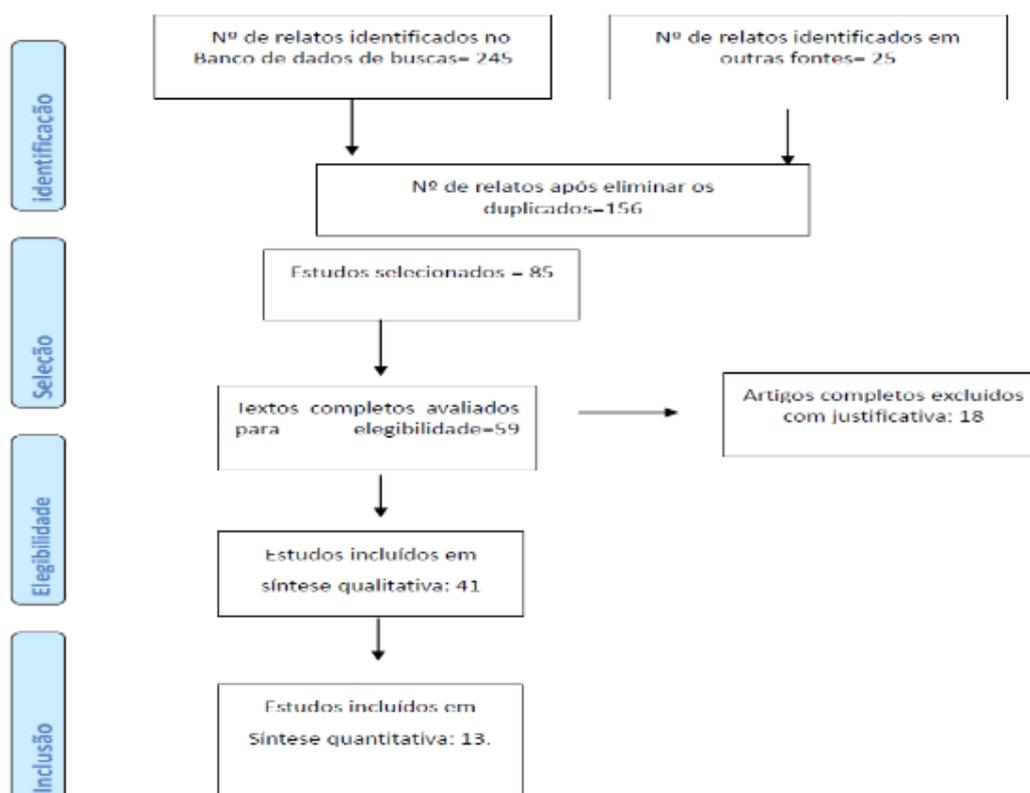
On the other hand, the integrative review “The integrative review includes the analysis of relevant research that supports decision-making and the improvement of clinical practice”, in addition, it allows the verification of the “state of knowledge of a given subject, in addition to to point out knowledge gaps that need to be filled with new studies” (ERCOLE; MELO; ALCOFORADO; 2014 p.18).

This method is essential in the health area, as it “promotes the synthesis of multiple published studies and allows general conclusions about a particular area of study”, which facilitates the reading of the health professional who seeks an objective reading that helps the practice clinic of the profession (MENDES; SILVEIRA; GALVÃO, 2008, p.759).

The procedure of the present research was as follows, first the choice of theme, then the guiding question of the research was delimited, the keywords of the research were defined, the selection of articles, analysis of the material, and soon after, the research was carried out. discussion of the knowledge gathered.

The selection of works was based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. The exclusion criteria were: incomplete works, which did not contribute to the elucidation of the research question, published more than 5 years ago and not fully available. The inclusion criteria were: complete and available works, published in the last five years, contributing to the discussion of the topic, works with a descriptive, quantitative and qualitative, quasi-experimental and experimental design. The research of the works took place between March 12 and March 15, 2021.

The table below presents the results of the research in the selection of articles Figure 1Prism Diagram of Article Selection.



Source: Prepared by the author.

Scielo , Lilacs and PubMed databases , the following descriptors were used: Breastfeeding, Benefits of breastfeeding, breastfeeding and child health. A filter was also used for articles in Portuguese published between 2016 and 2021.

## BENEFITS INHERENT TO BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding is the most natural way of feeding the newborn, it is considered the only food capable of meeting the physiological needs of the metabolism of children under six months of age, being essential for the healthy development of the child in the

short and long term. Complementing Pereira (2010 p.10) states that,

Breastfeeding is the safest and most efficient way to feed the child in the first six months of life, and no other single strategy achieves the impact that breastfeeding has in reducing deaths and hospitalizations of children under five years of age, especially in low-income children. socioeconomic.

The benefits of breastfeeding have been treated mainly from a nutritional, psychosocial and immunological point of view, and it is a subject of a comprehensive approach, requiring the concern of the entire health team, and in the meantime, the role of the nurse stands out, who must have this function incorporated in their attributions (ANTUNES, *et al.*, 2008 p.104).

It is important to mention the definition of breastfeeding used by the World Health Organization (WHO) in which it defines,

- Exclusive breastfeeding – when the child receives only breast milk, directly from the breast or expressed, or human milk from another source, with no other liquids or solids, with the exception of drops or syrups containing vitamins, oral rehydration salts, mineral supplements or medications.
- Predominant breastfeeding – when the child receives, in addition to breast milk, water or water-based drinks (sweetened water, teas, infusions), fruit juices and ritual fluids.
- Breastfeeding – when the child receives breast milk (directly from the breast or expressed), regardless of whether or not they receive other foods.
- Complemented breastfeeding – when the child receives, in addition to breast milk, any solid or semi-solid food with the purpose of complementing, and not replacing it. In this category, the child can receive, in addition to breast milk, another type of milk, but this is not considered complementary food.
- Mixed or partial breastfeeding – when the child receives breast milk and other types of milk (WHO, 2007).

As for exclusive breastfeeding, this should be maintained up to six months and together with other foods up to two years, this practice ensures the child's quality of life, less risk of hospitalization, as well as a strengthening of the bond with the mother. For women, studies show that breastfeeding reduces the risk of postpartum complications, breast and ovarian cancer. (PEREIRA, 2010 p.12)

Breastfeeding is also related to the development of the individual's personality. Children who are breastfed naturally tend to be calmer, because the physical contact between mother and child during breastfeeding helps to alleviate the emptiness of the sudden and abrupt separation of childbirth. (ANTUNES *et al.*, 2008 p.104)

Breastfeeding is also important for the development of the oral muscles and bones, providing the healthy development of important structures “such as the

maxillary sinus for breathing, phonation, development of muscle tone, anteroposterior growth of the mandibular ramus, canceling mandibular retrognathism ” (ANTUNES *et al . al .* , 2008 p.104).

In addition, “Breastfeeding provides the child with correct breathing, maintaining a good relationship between the hard and soft structures of the stomatognathic system and provides adequate tongue posture and lip sealing ” (ANTUNES *et. al.*, 2008 p.105)

However, the benefits of breastfeeding are not limited to the child and the woman, but families, health professionals, as well as the State also benefit from the reduction of early weaning. Encouraging breastfeeding stimulates the development of health professionals, who, seeing the positive result, seek more knowledge, seeking and improving methods to promote breastfeeding. The State, in the same way, benefits from less expenditure on public health, since there is a considerable decrease in hospitalizations of children and women, in addition to a healthier population, better indicators of infant and maternal mortality, as well as greater appreciation of the life. (PEREIRA, 2010 p.12)

Guidance on breastfeeding should include the importance of breastfeeding soon after delivery, studies indicate that breastfeeding in the first hours of birth is crucial for the healthy development of the child and reduction in neonatal and infant morbidity and mortality rates (UNICEF 2006; WHO 2007). ).

The Ministry of Health's technical manual for qualified and humanized care exposes the benefits of breastfeeding for the mother, such as strengthening the mother/child affective bond, favoring uterine involution and reducing the risk of hemorrhage, contributing to the normalization of the mother's body weight. mother, contributes to the increase in the interval between births, prevention of osteoporosis, and for the child, the manual states that breast milk is a complete food, does not need any addition until six months of age, facilitates the elimination of meconium, decreases the risk of jaundice, protects against infections and allergies. For families, breastfeeding presents itself as more economical, clean and always at the right temperature, and finally, for the state, exclusive breastfeeding means a decrease in hospitalizations, which results in less costs, in addition to a healthier society (BRASIL, 2005). , p 64).

Some atypical situations, such as mothers who smoke, alcoholic, use medication or other drugs, should be analyzed individually.

In prenatal care, in the cases mentioned, the professional's guidance should encourage the mother to give up alcohol and nicotine during pregnancy and postpartum, however moderate alcohol consumption (about 0.5g of alcohol per kilogram of the mother's weight per day), which corresponds to approximately one glass of wine or two cans of beer, does not affect breastfeeding. Mothers who smoke should be clarified that, despite the benefit of breastfeeding outweighing the harm of cigarettes to the child, the decrease in milk production and ejection may be linked to the use of nicotine. (PEREIRA, 2010)

In this way, it is a unanimous conception, in the researched literature, that breast milk is the most nutritious and safe food for the child, and the encouragement of the practice of breastfeeding is a global issue and has real impacts on the reduction of

infant mortality.

### Causes of early weaning

To establish strategies and promote the encouragement of breastfeeding, a study is needed on the reasons why mothers decide not to breastfeed or abandon it before the period recommended by the WHO. For Takushi (2008, p.492) "The practice of breastfeeding is not instinctive and, therefore, requires to be learned by the woman and protected by society".

According to King (2001, p.71) the belief of "insufficient milk" is one of the main allegations made by mothers to abandon exclusive breastfeeding. However, the vast majority of women are able to produce enough milk, since breast milk production occurs according to demand, lacking only the mother's confidence in her ability to feed her baby. (KING, 2001 p.71).

The same author recommends that the health professional check the reasons that lead the mother to believe that she does not have enough milk, according to him, this may occur because some mothers find the breast empty as soon as the child is born, or observe that the child cries, sucks more than expected or breastfeeding takes a long time, reasons that may be associated with hunger (KING, 2001 p.71). However, if the child's development is normal, the professional must help the mother to trust her ability to produce enough milk for the child, one of the strategies is doing the dry diaper test, which, according to the author, establishes that,

If the child receives only breast milk and if he urinates six times a day, he will be getting enough milk. If the mother is giving water or any other liquid, this test cannot help. The water will produce urine even if the child does not get enough milk. (KING, 2001 p.71).

Another common reason reported in research that makes breastfeeding difficult is the myth that "the baby did not want to take the breast", this may happen due to the difficulty that the newborn has in the first few days to suck properly. (MARQUES, 2009). Another reason related to early weaning is the presence of inverted nipples (TAKUSHI et al., 2008), explains that "When breastfeeding is a mother's option, inverted nipples tend to normalize with specific exercises since pregnancy or with insistent sucking of the baby." baby in correct latch". (TAKUSHI et al., 2008)

It is also noteworthy that some mothers introduce water and tea in their children's diet because they believe that milk does not "quench thirst", however breast milk has enough water for the child's hydration. (MARQUES, 2009)

In the research, other factors related to early weaning were reported, such as Mastitis, breast engorgement and fissures, pain when breastfeeding, and in these cases the health team can take educational measures clarifying the correct way to breastfeed, recommend cold compress and hydration of the nipple with the milk itself. (FILHO et al. , 2011)

Another point reported in the analyzed bibliography is the introduction of food before the child is six months old, as a way of preparing him for the mother's return to work, they are worried about the fact that returning to work means suffering. for the

child. (AMORIM, ANDRADE, 2009)

However, the mother must be informed that the Federal Constitution of 1988 guarantees her the right to maternity leave of 120 days, and in some states and municipalities, of 180 days, to favor exclusive breastfeeding, being also guaranteed by law the right of the nursing mother, after returning to work, one hour to breastfeed, which can be divided into two thirty-minute breaks. However, as it is not possible to breastfeed in the workplace, the mother should be instructed to express the milk, and the nurse must be instructed on the correct way to do it. (AMORIM, ANDRADE, 2009)

Thus, the factors that motivate early weaning may represent the mother's lack of information and experience, and it is important that nursing promotes educational actions that encourage mothers to breastfeed.

## RESULTS

The table below presents the summary of the articles selected for analysis.

AUTHOR/TITLE/YEAR	METHODOLOGY	RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	RESULTS
VICTORA, Cesar G. et. al. Breastfeeding in the 21st century: epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effects. 2016	Systematic review.	To develop a meta-analysis of the benefits of breastfeeding in the 21st century literature.	Our meta -analyses indicate that breastfeeding provides protection against childhood infections and malocclusion , increases intelligence, and likely reduces the occurrence of overweight and diabetes. No associations were found with allergic disorders such as asthma, or with blood pressure or cholesterol, and an increase in the occurrence of dental caries was observed with longer duration of breastfeeding.
MARQUES, Victor Guilherme Pereira da Silva. Breastfeeding: importance and benefits of breastfeeding. 2020	integrative review	Conduct a bibliographic survey about the importance and benefits of breastfeeding.	It is concluded that breast milk is the appropriate food for the child both from a nutritional and immunological point of view, as well as from a psychological point of view, because in addition to favoring the mother-child bond, it offers the nutrients that the child needs to start a healthy life, It is important that health professionals encourage and guide mothers regarding their practice.
ALVES, Yamê Regina et. al.. Breastfeeding under the aegis of support networks: a facilitating strategy. 2020	Qualitative research.	Knowing aspects related to breastfeeding from the perspective of women in a city in the interior of Rio de Janeiro and discussing the family support network built as a	Breastfeeding is an action based on subjectivity, on the experience of women and among the members of the social network. The need for effective participation of the nurse in prenatal care is highlighted, promoting breastfeeding and the inclusion of the father for better participation in the entire process of breastfeeding and family members, where both have a fundamental role in promoting

		facilitating strategy for women to breastfeed their children.	and continuity of exclusive breastfeeding.
CAMPOS, Paola Melo et. al. Skin-to-skin contact and breastfeeding of newborns in a university hospital. 2020	Quantitative cross-section.	To determine the prevalence of skin-to-skin contact (SPC) and encouragement of Breastfeeding (BF) and reasons for not performing these practices; identify whether women received information about these practices during prenatal care.	We believe that there is an opportunity for improvements in CPP and AM rates, given the benefits of these practices.
SOUZA, Jéssica Caroline Alves de; OLIVEIRA, Lucilene Fátima; PERUZZO, Silvia Aparecida. Knowledge of postpartum women about the benefits of breastfeeding in a hospital environment. 2019	Cross-sectional, qualitative, quantitative, nvestigative study.	To evaluate the knowledge of postpartum women during the hospital phase about the importance and benefits of breastfeeding.	The puerperal women showed knowledge about the benefits of breastfeeding, despite the vast majority having acquired this knowledge through reading and research on the subject and not by the guidance of health professionals. The role of the physical therapist is essential in preparing these women for childbirth and postpartum, offering support for breastfeeding.
SUAREZ-COTELO, Maria del Carmen et al. Knowledge about breastfeeding and the relationship with its prevalence. 2019	Prospective descriptive study.	To determine the level of knowledge about breastfeeding of pregnant women and to analyze to what extent it influences the intention to breastfeed after the introduction of infant feeding at the 6th and 16th weeks and at 6 months postpartum.	The level of knowledge of pregnant women about breastfeeding is regular and influences the choice of food for their babies and the duration of exclusive breastfeeding. Strategies must be implemented to increase knowledge and improve breastfeeding rates.
SAMPAIO. Renata Correia Teles, et. al. Association between pacifier use and breastfeeding interruption: A literature review. 2020	Literature review.	To verify, through a literature review, the association between pacifier use and interruption of breastfeeding or early weaning.	The analyzed articles demonstrate that the use of pacifiers can interfere with the duration of breastfeeding, causing early weaning.

<p>, Samylla Maira Costa, et. al.. Breastfeeding as a protective factor for cow's milk protein allergy in childhood: what does the scientific evidence say?. 2020</p>	<p>Integrative literature review.</p>	<p>Investigate what the scientific evidence says about breastfeeding as a protective factor for cow's milk protein allergy (CMPA) in childhood.</p>	<p>Considering that cow's milk protein allergy (CMPA) is the most common allergy in childhood, with several manifestations that compromise the child's health and quality of life, it is important to encourage the practice of breastfeeding as a way to promote the child's health.</p>
<p>EUGENIO, Alex de Brito; NAZARI, Weder Fernando. Breastfeeding and the act of breastfeeding as influencing factors in children's neurodevelopment and cognition : A systematic review of the literature. 2020</p>	<p>Systematic review of the literature.</p>	<p>To analyze what primary studies point out as factors that influence breastfeeding and the act of breastfeeding on children's neurodevelopment and cognition</p>	<p>There are still divergences in the literature regarding the influence of other cofactors on the positive results found in the association of breastfeeding and infant-juvenile neurodevelopment and cognition, requiring more robust studies on the subject.</p>
<p>HARTWIG, Fernando Pires. VICTORA, Cesar Gomes. Genetic and epigenetic aspects of breastfeeding. 2018</p>	<p>Literature review.</p>	<p>To investigate the relationship between breastfeeding and infant DNA methylation through a systematic review of the literature and an original study, assessing DNA methylation levels in hundreds of thousands of regions across the genome.</p>	<p>The results of the three articles indicate that breastfeeding is associated with persistent epigenetic changes , and that breastfeeding is positively associated with IQ in all genotypes for the polymorphs studied.</p>
<p>MESSIAS, Agnes Martins, et. al. Natural, artificial breastfeeding and malocclusion : is there a correlation?.2019.</p>	<p>Cross-sectional, qualitative, quantitative study.</p>	<p>To verify the possible correlation between type and duration of breastfeeding and the development of malocclusions .</p>	<p>There was no correlation between a greater chance of developing malocclusion and a longer duration of natural (p=0.359) or artificial (p=0.244) breastfeeding. A longer period of breastfeeding will not necessarily indicate a greater tendency to malocclusion .</p>
<p>REINAS, Cátia Marisa Monteiro. Breastfeeding and osteoporosis. 2016</p>	<p>Literature review</p>	<p>Literature review in order to assess the risk and risk factors associated with osteoporosis in breastfed women.</p>	<p>In breastfeeding women, osteoporosis is expected to be associated with preventable risk factors.</p>

CASSIMIRO, Isadora Gonçalves Vilela et al. The importance of breastfeeding for the stomatognathic system.2019.	Literature review	Arguing with enlightening information, the benefits of breastfeeding on the stomatognathic system as well as the disadvantages of non-nutritive sucking.	It is concluded that breastfeeding provides a harmony of the occlusal plane , preventing mouth breathing, atypical swallowing and deleterious habits.
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Source: Prepared by the author

### DATA DISCUSSION

The research presented a vast amount of material about breastfeeding, most of the studies found are centered on the mother/child binomial and emphasize the importance of breastfeeding, emphasizing the benefits of breastfeeding.

Some studies emphasize the importance of nursing guidance to the mother during the gestational and postnatal process, as a fundamental factor in encouraging breastfeeding (SUAREZ-COTELO, 2019; SOUZA, OLIVEIRA, PERUZZO, 2019) while other studies present data about the difficulties encountered by the mother in this process, considering that breastfeeding is a practice that involves psychosocial, cultural and physiological factors, there is still social resistance to breastfeeding, difficulties arising from socioeconomic changes, since many women have a double workday, have there are still legal obstacles regarding the practice of breastfeeding in the workplace, which despite being expressed in law, many mothers renounce this right due to ignorance or fear of reprisals from the employer (ALVES, 2020; MARQUES, 2020).

As for the benefits to children's health, many studies point out that breastfeeding can contribute to the healthy development of the stomatognathic system (CASSIMIRO, 2019 ; ) ).

In this sense, the findings of the studies by Messias (2019) are in line with the aforementioned studies and point out that with regard to malocclusion , 91% of the children in the study who were artificially breastfed had the dysfunction, while among 70% of those who were naturally breastfed , 85% of the total sample had malocclusion , that is, the type of breastfeeding did not influence the development of malocclusion and longer breastfeeding time is not necessarily indicative of malocclusion development .

Studies by Messias (2019) also point to a higher prevalence of caries in children breastfed for more than 12 months.

Some studies point out that breastfeeding can have a strong influence on the child's cognitive development (VICTORA, 2016; HARTWIG, 2018). The findings of Eugênio and Nazari (2020) point out that there is a lot of divergence in studies that associate cognitive development with breastfeeding, in this context, the author argues that the ongoing debate whether breastfeeding confers a direct advantage on infant cognition, or if it is just an association with favorable socioeconomic status and family cognition is not purely theoretical. From a public health point of view, if breastfeeding

has biological effects on IQ, this will be one of the few economic means to significantly improve a child's neurodevelopment (EUGENIO, NAZARI, 2020).

Studies were also found that point to breastfeeding as a preventive practice for diabetes and obesity (MARQUES, 2020; VICTORA, 2016), and it also benefits the psychological plan as it strengthens the mother-child bond (MARQUES, 2020).

Another point discussed in the literature is the relationship between the child's immune system and breastfeeding, in this sense many authors argue that breastfeeding strengthens the immune system and provides protection against infections (VICTORA, 2016; MARQUES, 2020; CAMPOS, 2020; SAMPAIO, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Breastfeeding is unanimously considered as the most complete food for the child, its importance is advocated globally by the WHO, UNICEF and in Brazil by the Ministry of Health and other organizations. In recent years, there has been an effort by health institutions in Brazil to promote breastfeeding, and in this scenario, the role of health professionals is essential.

Breastfeeding is a practice of great importance for the health of the child, in the short and long term, and involves multidisciplinary factors and should be seen as a complex, biological, but not instinctive process, and influenced by several psychosocial, cultural, economic, historical etc.

Thus, the research presented vast material on the study of breastfeeding, highlighting mainly the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding, factors that favor early weaning and the encouragement of breastfeeding in the public health network. The themes are found in great majority in studies in the area of nursing, dentistry and medicine.

As for the benefits of breastfeeding, the analyzed literature indicates benefits for the child's oral health, favoring the healthy development of the stomatognathic and bone system in addition to malocclusion prevention, it also promotes protection against infections and strengthening of the immune system and the development of the cognitive system having influences intelligence and IQ, as well as preventing diabetes and obesity. There is a gap in studies on the benefits in the psycho-emotional field, since only one analyzed study associates breastfeeding with the benefit of emotional strengthening between mother and child, which is a topic for future studies.

Another important point is the need for more in-depth studies on the relationship between breastfeeding and the cognitive system, being necessary to evaluate cofactors linked to cognitive development such as economic, social, cultural factors, etc.

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