When mothers do not breastfeed they use infant formulas. It is advised by the World Health Organization that parents are told about the health risks of using formula. This handout has evidence from research that shows the risks of formula feeding to help you make a more informed decision about feeding your baby.

**Higher risk of death from diseases**
Babies who are formula fed have a higher risk of death due to illnesses such as diarrhea and lung infections.

**Higher risk of SIDS**
Babies who are fed formula are twice as likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

**Higher risk of obesity**
Children who are formula fed are nearly 40 percent more likely to be obese than children who are breastfed - even after looking at other things that may explain why a person may be overweight.

**Higher risk of diabetes**
Formula feeding increases the risk of getting diabetes later in life.

**Higher risk of childhood cancers**
Children who have not been breastfed are more likely to get leukemia and other cancers than children who were given only breastmilk.

**Higher risk of heart disease**
Breastfeeding may help to reduce the risk of heart disease by keeping cholesterol levels low later in life. It also showed that 13- to 16-year-olds who were formula fed have higher blood pressures than children who had received breastmilk.

**Risk of lower intelligence**
Children who are breastfed do better on intelligence tests than children who were formula fed.

**Higher risk of chronic diseases**
Formula feeding is linked to higher risk for Type 1 diabetes and bowel diseases such as celiac disease and inflammatory bowel disease.

**Higher risk of ear infections**
Infants who are formula fed are 50 percent more likely to have ear infections than babies who receive only breastmilk.

**Higher risk of allergy**
Formula feeding is linked to higher rates of eczema, allergies to food, inherited allergies and allergies which affect breathing such as hay fever.

**Higher risk of asthma**
Babies who are fed formula are 40 to 50 percent more likely to have asthma or wheezing.

**Higher risk of lung infections**
Children who are formula fed are 17 times more likely to have pneumonia than children who were given only breastmilk as infants.

**Higher risk of diarrhea**
Babies who are formula fed are twice as likely to have diarrhea than breastfed babies.

**Higher risk of infection from unclean formula**
Babies have become very sick and some have died because of harmful germs in formula. Some formulas cannot be sterilized.

**Higher risk of effects of poisons in the environment**
Breastfeeding lowers the harmful effects on a child’s health from poisons in the environment.