

# The Need for Human Milk Research

Human milk is a complex biological system with many components and functions. Despite its importance, there is still a lot we don't know about it. A deeper understanding of human milk biology is essential for addressing ongoing and emerging questions about infant feeding practices.



## Why it matters

- A deeper understanding of the biology of human milk is essential to address **ongoing and emerging questions** about infant feeding practices.
- NICHD's research will have **important implications** for global policy, nutritional guidance, and interventions.



## What do we know?

- Human milk is a **complex biological system** that is more than the sum of its parts.
- Human milk production **should be studied as an interactive system** consisting of inputs from the lactating parent, their breastfed baby, and their respective environments.

## What questions remain?

Thanks to the last 20 years of human milk research, we are entering the **next level of scientific questions about human milk.**

- How do the qualities of the lactating parent affect milk composition?
- What are the components of human milk and how do they interact with each other in this complex biological system?
- How does the infant affect milk composition and production?
- How can new technologies and methodologies be applied to study human milk as a complex biological system?
- How can new human milk research be translated and implemented to support safe and effective feeding practices?

**To answer these questions,** NICHD launched the Breastmilk Ecology: Genesis of Infant Nutrition (BEGIN) Project.

## Calls to Action

Learn more about NICHD's exciting human milk research through the [\*\*BEGIN Project\*\*](#).

Spread the word about NICHD's vital research on human milk as a complex biological system.

