

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.

