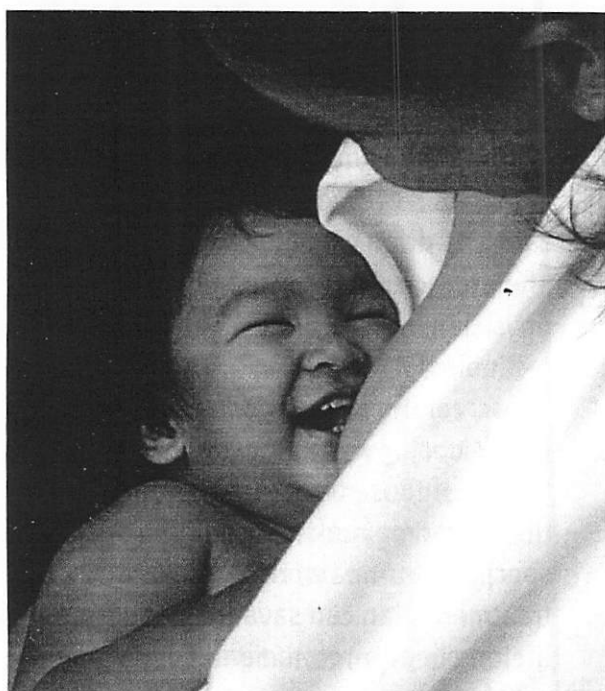




Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF)



Breastfeeding is the most ideal way of providing food for the healthy growth and development of infants. It is also an integral part of the reproductive process with important implications for the health of mothers.

Breast milk is an important source of energy and nutrients in children 6-23 months of age. It can provide one-half or more of a child's energy needs between 6 and 12 months of age, and one-third of energy needs between 12 and 24 months.

Appropriate Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices

- **Breastfeeding**

Early Initiation of Breastfeeding

Infants should be initiated to breastfeeding within 1 hour after birth. This will stimulate early onset of full milk production and promote bonding of mother and child.

Exclusive Breastfeeding for the First 6 Months

Infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months of life to achieve optimum growth and development. Exclusive breastfeeding means giving breastmilk alone and no other foods or drinks, not even water, with the exception of vitamins and medicine drops.

Continued Breastfeeding

Extend breastfeeding for up to 2 years of age and beyond.

- **Complementary Feeding**

Provide nutritionally adequate and safe complementary foods to meet the infant's evolving nutritional requirements after 6 months of age.

Guiding Principles for Appropriate Complementary Feeding

1. Continue frequent, on demand breastfeeding until 2 years old and beyond.



2. Practice responsive feeding (e.g., feed infants directly and assist older children).
3. Feed slowly and patiently; encourage them to eat but do not force them; talk to the child and maintain eye contact.
4. Practice good hygiene and proper food handling.
5. Start at 6 months with small amounts of foods and increase gradually as the child gets older.
6. Gradually increase food consistency and variety.
7. Increase the number of times that the child is fed, 2-3 meals per day for infants 6-8 months of age, and 3-4 meals per day for infants 9-23 months of age, with 1-2 additional snacks as required.
8. Feed a variety of nutrient-rich foods.
9. Use fortified complementary foods or vitamin-mineral supplements, as needed.
10. Increase fluid intake during illness, including more breastfeeding, and offer soft, favorite foods.

Feeding in Exceptionally Difficult Circumstances

1. *Malnourished infants:* Continue breastfeeding frequently and relactate.
2. *Preterm or low birth weight infants:* Feed every 2 hours during day and night; keep baby close to mother's breast.

3. Feeding during emergencies

- Continue breastfeeding if possible.
- If breastfeeding is not possible, provide breast milk from milk bank. Provide properly prepared breast milk substitutes. Practice complementary feeding—prepare food properly and use safe drinking water.

References

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- World Health Organization. (2011). Infant and Young Child Feeding Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs342/en/>

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