

# Who's Made the Code into Law ?

This map shows countries that have implemented most of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent WHA Resolutions by means of a comprehensive law, decree and other legally enforceable measure.



Source: IBFAN/ International Code Documentation Centre (ICDC)

- Lack of the immunological benefits of breastmilk, unhygienic food preparation and unsafe water means that a bottle-fed child is up to 25 times more likely to die as a result of diarrhoea or other diseases than a breastfed child.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 1.5 million infants die every year because they were not breastfed.

## Infant feeding in emergencies

In the globalised world of the 21st century, emergency situations are becoming ever more commonplace. Flooding and desertification due to climate change and increase in poverty and war will enlarge the number of disenfranchised mothers and children. In such situations, breastfeeding is of critical importance – it saves babies' lives. Breastmilk provides the perfect nutrition for babies while its anti-infective properties protect against diarrhoea and respiratory infections that can be epidemic in emergencies. By contrast, artificial feeding in these situations is dangerous and increases the risk of malnutrition, disease and infant death.

Breastfeeding can provide nurturing and support for both mother and child and should be protected at all times. It is important to de-bunk certain myths about breastfeeding in emergency or humanitarian situations:

### *Myth 1 – Stress makes milk dry up*

While extreme stress or fear may cause a mother's milk to momentarily stop flowing, this response is usually temporary. There is growing evidence that breastfeeding produces hormones that actually reduce tension, calming both mother and child.

### *Myth 2 – Malnourished mothers cannot breastfeed*

In emergency situations, food should be given to the lactating mothers so that they maintain their strength to care for older children and other family members in addition to breastfeeding their babies. Only during severe maternal malnutrition does breastmilk production decline. In such rare cases, infants can be supplemented until the mother's nutritional status improves.

### *Myth 3 – Babies with diarrhoea need water or tea*

Breastfed babies with severe diarrhoea should receive oral rehydration when they have signs of dehydration, but breastfeeding should never be stopped nor reduced. Care is required as water is often contaminated in emergency situations.

### *Myth 4 – Once breastfeeding has stopped, it cannot be resumed*

With an adequate re-lactation technique, it is possible for mothers to resume breastfeeding. This can provide life-saving nutrition and immunological benefits in an emergency.

Source: BFHI News, UNICEF, September/October 1999

## Environment

*Contaminants found in breastmilk are messengers - like canaries in a coal mine – telling us about the chemical body burdens found in everyone.*

Paraphrased from *Towards Healthy Environments for Children* – November 2002

Breastfeeding is ecologically sound, provides the complete first food to infants and is one of the world's most valuable renewable