

2005

Breastfeeding and Family Foods: LOVING & HEALTHY

Feeding other foods while breastfeeding is continued



World Breastfeeding Week 2005

- ❖ Draw attention to the value of continuing to breastfeed children to 2 years or beyond.
- ❖ Raise awareness of the risks and costs of introducing other foods and drinks to breastfed babies before 6 months, thereby strengthening support for 6 months exclusive breastfeeding.
- ❖ Up-date information and ideas about the kinds of other foods and drinks needed by older breastfed babies and young children after 6 months.
- ❖ Share ideas for making complementary feeding easier, healthier and a time for learning and love.



JANUARY							FEBRUARY						
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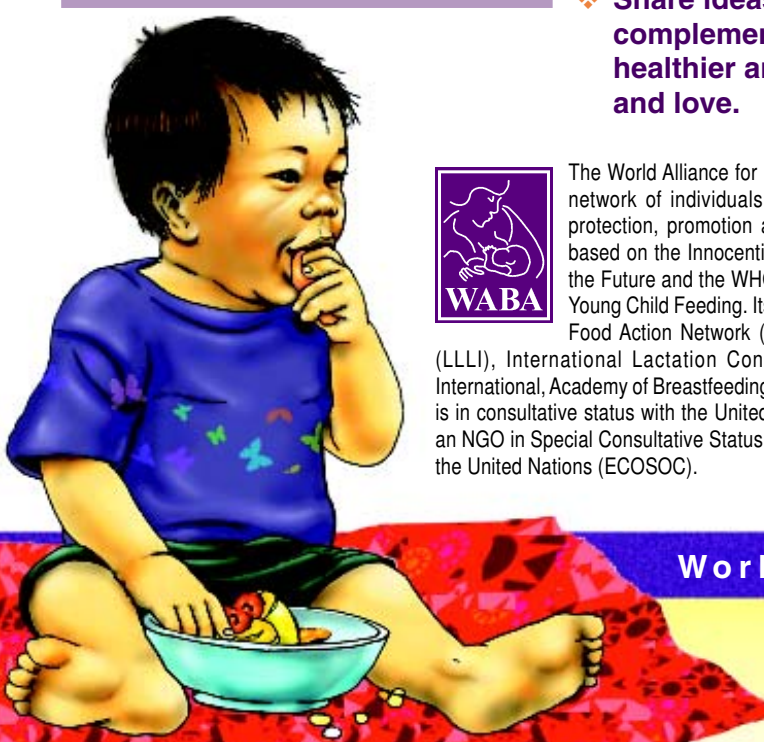
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JULY							AUGUST						
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NOVEMBER							DECEMBER						
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The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide based on the Innocenti Declaration, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding. Its core partners are the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), La Leche League International (LLL), International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA), Wellstart International, Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM) and LINKAGES. WABA is in consultative status with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

World Breastfeeding Week 1-7 August

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Breastfeeding and Family Foods: LOVING & HEALTHY

Feeding other foods while breastfeeding is continued

For the very best start in life, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and health associations worldwide recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months, followed by continued breastfeeding for up to 2 years or beyond. The theme for this year's World Breastfeeding Week is continued breastfeeding and giving other foods after 6 months of age. It aims to raise awareness of 6 months, and to help make the transition from fully breastfeeding, to breastfeeding and eating with the rest of the family, in a loving and caring way.

Continued Breastfeeding

Breastmilk continues to be an important source of nourishment for children after the first 6 months of life, particularly when mothers continue to practice breastfeeding, whilst giving other foods. On average, babies of 6-8 months obtain around 70 percent of their energy needs from breastmilk, 55 percent at 9-11 months, and 40 percent at 12-23 months. Breastmilk is also a major provider of protein, vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids. Breastmilk is a nutrient-rich and energy-rich food, providing more calories and nutrients per ml than most other foods. The challenge is how to feed other foods so that they add to the nutritional contribution of breastmilk, rather than replace it.

Complementary Feeding

After 6 months of age, children need other foods in addition to breastmilk to meet their nutritional needs. The process of giving other foods and drinks in addition to breastmilk is referred to as 'complementary feeding'. The foods given should 'complement' – make complete – the nutrients provided by breastmilk. Optimal complementary feeding needs to be

- ❖ Timely – started at the right time, so it doesn't lessen the benefits of breastfeeding,
- ❖ Nutritionally Adequate – provides the energy and nutrients needed by breastfed babies over 6 months,
- ❖ Safe – hygienically prepared and fed, and
- ❖ Responsively Fed – given in a way which is sensitive to what the child needs to achieve effective feeding.

The key nutrients which the older baby (over 6 months) needs in greater amounts than can be provided by breastmilk and typical complementary feeding, are iron and zinc. In some communities, vitamin A, some of the B vitamins, vitamin C, folate and calcium can also be of concern.

Family Foods

Between 6-24 months children are growing rapidly, but their stomachs are still relatively small (about the size of a fist). During this time they need highly nutritious foods, which provide a lot of nutrients in a small quantity of food – nutrient dense foods.

A lot of discussion went into the choice of this year's World Breastfeeding Week title 'Breastfeeding and Family Foods'. We decided upon 'family foods' because in most households around the world infants are fed from the same pool of foods that are eaten by the rest of the family. This is not meant to imply that older babies can move directly from exclusive breastfeeding to eating exactly the same meals as the rest of the family. Older babies and young children need to be given the 'best bits' of the family's food like beans, vegetables, fish and meat, modified (mashed, chopped, softened etc) to make it suitable for their eating abilities. By around 12 months of age most children are physically able to eat foods of similar consistency to the rest of the family. In some circumstances, families may prefer to prepare separate nutritious foods specifically for their older babies.

Commercially made baby foods, which are properly fortified with suitable amounts of added vitamins and minerals can be helpful if the family can afford them. But they are generally an expensive means of feeding older babies and children, and may contain inappropriate fillers and additives.

A Caring Transition

Starting older babies on other foods to complement breastmilk marks a new phase in their social, emotional, and behavioural development and their relationship with parents and carers. Feeding provides opportunities for development of communication skills, motor skills and hand-to-eye coordination. The consistency and texture of the foods given, how they are fed, and the amounts offered needs to change as children grow and learn how to move food around in their mouths, to chew, to hold foods and a spoon and in time to feed themselves. This child-sensitive feeding is referred to as 'responsive feeding' and involves carers helping and encouraging children to eat, (without force feeding), feeding slowly and patiently, experimenting with different foods and minimising distractions so that feeding becomes a time for learning and love. Complementary feeding and continued breastfeeding is part of a caring transition from exclusive breastfeeding through to family foods.

Preparing for WBW

Decide which aspect of feeding children over 6 months needs most support for improvements in your area and which of the WBW goals you want to focus your activities on. You may need to interview some mothers, read some infant feeding surveys and visit the market/shops.

Things to find out:

- ❖ Do mothers usually breastfeed beyond 6 months?
- ❖ When are babies usually given other foods/drinks than breastmilk?
- ❖ What are the first other foods/drinks typically given?
- ❖ What other foods/drinks do children in age groups 6-8 months, 9-11 months, 12-24 months typically receive?
- ❖ Where do mothers generally get their information about starting solid foods?
- ❖ What is the current information and advice given out to mothers about starting their older babies on solid foods? Is it up-to-date?
- ❖ What do the labels on commercial baby foods say about when and how often they should be given?
- ❖ Are there any locally produced baby foods available?

Getting Equipped

The following documents are available from the internet:

- ❖ Guiding Principles for Complementary Feeding of The Breastfed Child. www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/NUTRITION/complementary.htm
- ❖ Guidelines for Appropriate Complementary Feeding of Breastfed Children 6-24 Months of Age-Facts for Feeding. www.linkagesproject.org/publications/index.php

Recipes

Begin collecting recipes and ideas for preparing nutritious foods for young children using locally available ingredients. Consider whether you want to run some demonstrations, or put the recipes in the local media.

WBW Distributing Centres

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SPONSORSHIP: WABA does not accept sponsorship of any kind from companies producing breastmilk substitutes, related equipment and complementary foods. WABA encourages all participants of World Breastfeeding Week to respect and follow this ethical stance.