

World Breastfeeding Week 1-7 August

Theme: Breastfeeding and Family Foods: Loving & Healthy

For the very best start in life, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and health agencies worldwide recommend that

- Starting breastfeeding immediately after birth, preferably within one hour.
- Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months
- Continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond
- Introducing appropriate and adequate complementary feeding after 6 months

According to WHO "Malnutrition has been responsible, directly or indirectly, for 60% of the 10.9 million deaths annually among children under five, 2.42 million of these (roughly one quarter) deaths are in India alone. According to another study, 47% of the children under 3, i.e., about 36 million are underweight, which has profound negative consequences on physical development and mental health of children and thus Indian society.

For the first time Government of India has included state specific goals in its 10th five year plan to improve infant and young child feeding practices to reduce Infant Mortality Rates (IMR) and malnutrition. The five-year plan aims to improve exclusive breastfeeding rate to 80% during first 6 months from the current level of around 41% and increase rate of complementary feeding from 33.5% to 75%.

Each year WBW is celebrated from 1–7 August with a new theme to mobilize the work on breastfeeding and infant feeding throughout the country. The theme for this year is – Breastfeeding and Family Foods: Loving and Healthy.

The theme of this year's World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is continued breastfeeding and giving other foods after six months of age. These foods need to be high in nutrients, the right consistency and appropriately fed. We consider how to make the transition from exclusive breastfeeding, to breastfeeding and eating with the rest of the family, in a way that is loving and caring.

This year, WBW will focus on how governments, NGOs, health workers and community workers can have a positive impact on the health status of infants and young children and the level of malnutrition in the community can be reduced by exclusively breastfeeding the child for the first six months and by providing optimal feeding practices for the children.

Visit <http://www.bpni.org/cgi1/introducing.asp> for more information.

For more information contact:

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