

BREASTFEEDING

- a) Early initiation of breastfeeding; immediately after birth, preferably within one hour.
- b) Breast-milk alone is the best food and drink for an infant for the first six months of life. No other food or drink, not even water, is usually needed during this period. But allow infant to receive ORS, drops, syrups of vitamins, minerals and medicines when required for medical reasons.
- c) After 6 months of age, babies should be introduced to semi-solid, soft food (complementary feeding) but breastfeeding should continue for up to two years and beyond, because it is an important source of nutrition, energy and protection from illness.
- d) From the age of 6–8 months a child needs to eat two to three times per day and thereafter, three to four times per day starting at 9 months – in addition to breastfeeding. Depending on the child's appetite, one or two nutritious snacks, such as fruit, home-made energy dense food, may be needed between meals. The baby should be fed small amounts of food that steadily increase in variety and quantity as he or she grows
- e) During an illness, children need additional fluids and encouragement to eat regular meals, and breastfeeding infants need to breastfeed more often. After an illness, children need to be offered more food than usual, to replenish the energy and nourishment lost due to the illness.

Benefits of Breastfeeding to the baby and mother as below:

Benefits for the baby

- Early skin-to-skin contact keeps the baby warm.

- It helps in early secretion of breastmilk.
- Feeding first milk (colostrum) protects the baby from diseases.
- Helps mother and baby to develop a close and loving relationship.
- Decreased risk of illnesses such as diarrhoea, pneumonia, ear and throat infections.
- Improved intelligence.
- Ensures better development and growth.

Benefits for the mother

- Helps womb to contract and the placenta is expelled easily.
- Reduce the risk of excessive bleeding after delivery
- Reduces the risk of breast cancer, uterine cancer and ovarian cancer
- Lessens osteoporosis
- Benefits child spacing
- Promotes post-partum weight loss
- Costs less to feed the child