

# Infant and Young Child Feeding – Importance During COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

According to the “Convention on the Rights of the Child,” every baby and child has the right to good nutrition. Dietary practices especially during first thousand days of life from gestation to two years of age have a permanent impact on life. Breast feeding up to first 6 months life exclusively followed by complementary feeding in addition to breast milk is an important aspect in person’s physical and mental development. Deficiency or excesses in person’s intake lead to malnutrition. The burden of malnutrition in India being high, hence the importance of Breast feeding and IYCF is being highlighted in this perspective during COVID-19 Pandemic.

**Key Words:** Breast Feeding, IYCF, Complementary Feeding, COVID-19.

## Introduction

Optimal feeding practises for infants and young children are one of the most successful strategies for improving child wellbeing. Unfortunately, 45 percent of child deaths are linked to malnutrition. In 2019, it was reported that 144 million children under the age of five were stunted (too low for their age), 47 million were wasted (too thin for their height), and 38.3 million were overweight or obese globally. Approximately, only 44% of infants aged 0–6 months receive exclusive breast feeding. Be that as it may, numerous kids are not taken care of in the suggested way. Numerous moms, who start breastfeeding acceptably, regularly start complementary feeds or quit breastfeeding inside a

couple of months. In addition, many children, even those who have grown well for the first six months of life, do not receive adequate complementary feeds. Hence there is a need to protect, promote and support breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices especially during COVID-19 pandemic.

Why should Breastfeeding Be Initiated Early after the Birth of the Baby?

Breastfeeding ought to be begun when the child is delivered with in initial an hour after the birth and not later than 60 minutes. In the event that the infant can’t be put to breast after ahead of schedule, even skin to skin contact with the mother assists the milk with streaming. The child is alert around this time. The family can see that the child is prepared for breastfeeding when he/she opens the mouth, turns the head as though looking for the areola or sucks on fingers or hands. Beginning breastfeeding early is truly outstanding activity that the mother can do to help her child be strong and has numerous benefits for both infant and the mother.<sup>1</sup>

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The infant gets every one of the advantages of the principal milk which resembles the child's first inoculation and shields the infant from disease. It additionally assists with smooth passage of stools, like a laxative, clears the meconium. It is plentiful in nutrient A which is significant for the eyes<sup>2</sup>

Early suckling aids in the production of more milk, the flow of breast milk, the prevention of early breastfeeding difficulties, and the improvement of overall health. Maintains the baby's warmth and encourages bonding in the relationship between the mother and the child. It comes in a number of different styles. There are many benefits to the mother. It's beneficial in a variety of circumstances. The placenta is pushed out, and bleeding is reduced. Breast engorgement is avoided in the mother<sup>2</sup>

### **Levels of recommended feeding practices globally**

World-wide, short of what one out of two babies are put to the breast inside the principal first hour of birth, and just more than two out of five new-born children under a half year old enough are only breastfed. The World Health Organization (WHO) suggests that breastfeeding proceeds until age 2 and past, yet under two out of three small kids matured 12–23 months are profiting by it.<sup>3</sup>

Worldwide evaluations for taking care of youngsters matured a half year to 2 years show considerable opportunity to get better. Somewhat more than 66% of six–to eight-month-olds are getting any good food whatsoever, and when considering proportions of diet amount and quality, the rates are a lot of lower: just one out of two get a base supper recurrence and short of what one out of three a base eating regimen variety.

Levels of suggested taking care of practices differ generally among locales. While more than two of every three babies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are put to the breast with in one hour of birth, just one out of three infants in Middle East and North Africa get advantages of early commencement of breastfeeding. Essentially, in the event of kept breastfeeding, more than three out of four kids 12-23 months old enough in South Asia are still breastfed contrasted with short of what one of every two kids in Latin America and the Caribbean. This noticed

example is nonetheless, turned around if there should arise an occurrence of markers surveying diets of babies and small kids like least dietary variety. Contrasted with three out of five youngsters 6–23 months old enough in Latin America and the Caribbean, short of what one of every five kids in South Asia get food varieties from the base number of nutrition classes<sup>3</sup>

### **Focus on complementary feeding practices**

From the age of a half year, a baby's requirement for energy and supplements begins to surpass what is given by breast milk, and corresponding taking care of gets important to fill the energy and supplement deficit gap<sup>4</sup>. On the off chance that correlative food sources are not presented at this age or on the off chance that they are given improperly, a new-born child's development may flounder. In numerous nations, the time of reciprocal taking care of from 6–23 months is the hour of pinnacle rate of development wavering, micronutrient lacks and irresistible sicknesses<sup>5</sup>.

Even after integral food sources have been presented, breastfeeding stays a basic wellspring of supplements for the baby and young child. It gives around one portion of a new born child's energy needs up to the age of one year, and up to 33% during the second year of life. Breast milk keeps on providing more excellent supplements than reciprocal food varieties, and furthermore defensive variables. It is consequently suggested that breastfeeding on request proceeds with sufficient integral taking care of as long as 2 years or past<sup>6</sup>.

Complementary food varieties should be healthfully satisfactory, safe, and fittingly taking care to meet the small kid's energy and supplement needs. Nonetheless, integral taking care of is regularly full of issues, with food varieties being too weaken, not took care of frequently enough or in too modest quantities, or supplanting breast milk while being of a second rate quality. Both food and taking care of practices impact the nature of integral taking care of, and moms and families need backing to rehearse the complementary feeding during the pandemic<sup>7</sup>

## **Breast Feeding and COVID-19**

It expresses that ladies with suspected, plausible or affirmed Coronavirus ought to be upheld to have their babies set skin-to-skin with them following birth, start breastfeeding inside an hour of birth, to keep their newborn children close by day and night, and solely breastfeed<sup>8</sup> Close by these practices, moms ought to apply contamination avoidance and control gauges by rehearsing respiratory cleanliness, washing their hands when contact with their newborn children, and guaranteeing that surfaces that they have been in contact with are cleaned and sanitized<sup>8</sup>. Where moms can't breastfeed in light of ailment they are to be helped to communicate milk for their babies<sup>8</sup> On the off chance that this is preposterous, the utilization of benefactor human milk ought to be investigated and if this isn't accessible wet nursing or newborn child recipe might be thought of. Continuous milk articulation and relactation when moms are all around ok is additionally suggested<sup>8</sup>.

In any case, concerns have been raised about whether moms with Coronavirus can communicate the SARS-CoV-2 infection to their baby or small kid through breastfeeding. Proposals on mother-newborn child contact and breastfeeding should be founded on a full thought of not just of the possible dangers of Coronavirus contamination of the baby, yet additionally the dangers of horribleness and mortality related with not breastfeeding, the unseemly utilization of baby recipe milks, just as the defensive impacts of skin-to-skin contact. This logical brief looks at the proof to date on the dangers of transmission of Coronavirus from a tainted mother to her infant through breastfeeding just as proof on the dangers to youngster wellbeing from not breastfeeding.<sup>9</sup>

WHO recommends that mothers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be encouraged to initiate or continue to breastfeed? Mothers should be counselled that the benefits of breastfeeding substantially outweigh the potential risks for transmission. Even complementary feeding in addition to breast feeding is of utmost importance. Cleaned utensils and spoons for feeding and usage of masks by the mothers in case of contact with

COVID positive case and isolation of mother and child in separate rooms if positive case is present in the house

### **Recommendations to the mother**

Mother is supposed to practice respiratory cleanliness, including during taking care of the child, if there are respiratory symptoms such as being short of breath, a medical mask has to be used when near the child. Ask mother to wash hands completely with cleanser or sanitizer when contact with their kid. Routinely clean and disinfect any surfaces you touch. In case the mother of the child is seriously sick with Coronavirus or experience the ill effects of different entanglements that keep you from really focusing on your baby or proceeding with direct breastfeeding, express milk to securely give breast milk to your new born child<sup>10</sup>.

On the off chance that you are too unwell to even consider breastfeeding or express breast milk, you ought to investigate the chance of relactation (restarting breastfeeding after a hole), wet nursing (another lady breastfeeding or really focusing on your youngster), or utilizing contributor human milk. Which way to deal with use will rely upon social setting, adequacy to her, and administration accessibility<sup>10</sup>

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