



Breastfeeding and Family Foods Loving & Healthy



Sir,

Letter to State Government Officials

Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI), the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) and the advocates and activists working on infant feeding, believe that breastfeeding is universally recognized as the natural and best way to feed babies and young children, but as they grow older, young children need to join-in eating the same foods and meals as the rest of the family.

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is celebrated every year from 1st to 7th August to renew our commitment to the promotion of breastfeeding. We have been celebrating WBW since 1992. The theme for WBW 2005 is:

Breastfeeding and Family Foods: Loving and Healthy

The theme for this year's World Breastfeeding Awareness Week is about exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months followed by introduction of appropriate and adequate complementary feeding along with continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond.

According to WHO's Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding, "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, 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%.

You have a significant role to play in the promotion of breastfeeding and infant feeding with the required resources and manpower to reach out to the masses. Your motives are public and the people have faith in your honesty and integrity. Your support to our movement will really strengthen the cause of infant feeding.

What action can be taken...

1. Include exclusive breastfeeding 0-6 months as a monitoring indicator for infant feeding practices.
2. Complementary feeding can be another indicator that can be monitored.
3. These indicators can be monitored at every monthly and quarterly meeting.
4. Set up State IYCF (Infant and Young Child Feeding) Committees along the lines of the National Breastfeeding Committee.

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

Please feel free to contact us if you need any assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Encl: WBW materials



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