

WORLD VISION INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING PREVENTIVE NUTRITION PROGRAMMING

Focus on Exclusive Breastfeeding in Normal Circumstances



Benefits of Exclusive Breastfeeding for the First Six Months of Life

Mothers and their infants receive healthful benefits from exclusive breastfeeding. These benefits cannot be matched by any other feeding method. When an infant reaches six months of age, appropriate complementary foods must be introduced. Breastfeeding should be continued to provide an infant with optimal nutrition for 24 months or more.

Benefits	Infant	Mother
Physiological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warmth • Optimal nutrition • Immune defense • Increased protection from infectious and chronic disease • Oral re-hydration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased likelihood of optimal birth spacing • Lowered risk of hemorrhage due to uterine contraction • May protect against certain cancers
Psychological and Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skin-to-skin contact provides security and love • May be associated with higher cognitive development scores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonding with infant • Confidence the infant is receiving the best possible nutrition



TAKE A BITE OUT OF MALNUTRITION WITH THE PREVENTIVE NUTRITION APPROACH

Risks Associated with Alternative Feeding Methods for the First Six Months of Life

Mothers and infants are susceptible to health risks if an infant is fed foods or liquids other than breast milk before six months of age, especially in resource-poor settings.

Infant	Mother
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk for mortality and morbidity from diarrhea, infections, and other illnesses. • Increased risk for malnutrition, poor growth, and poor cognitive development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk for closely spaced pregnancy, straining the mother's body and causing early, abrupt weaning of the older child if breastfed. • Decreased protection from uterine hemorrhage and certain cancers.



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For more information about exclusive breastfeeding and PMTCT in the context of HIV/AIDS, visit: <http://wvfoodresourcesworkshop.com/>