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Key advantages of breastfeeding





Exclusive breastfeeding, for the first 6 months of life, has **many advantages for both babies and their mothers.**

Breast milk is the **optimal source of energy and nutrients**, presented in the most digestible form, for babies aged 0-6 months.

Certain components of breastmilk can help breastfed babies fight infections, such as pneumonia and diarrhoea.

Unlike formula milk, breast milk **does not require the addition of water.**

Using unclean water sources to prepare formula carries an increased risk of life-threatening diarrhoea.



WHO and UNICEF recommend commencing breastfeeding within an hour of birth and exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life.

Alongside safe and adequate complementary feeding, continued breastfeeding is recommended from 6 months until 2 years of age.



These recommendations are associated with **lower mortality risk, less infections and better growth and development**, compared to non- or partially breastfed infants.


Breastfeeding reduces the mother's risk of postnatal depression, breast and ovarian cancer and type 2 diabetes.

The choice to breastfeed also saves the family precious time and resources that would otherwise be spent to buy and prepare formula.

Mothers with chronic illnesses or regular medication should seek medical advice when deciding whether to breastfeed. Most medications are safe to take during breastfeeding, but this should only be done on the advice of a clinician.



Sharing information on the key advantages of breastfeeding **can help mothers make informed infant feeding choices.**





You can find more information about infant and young child feeding in emergencies by visiting **Kaya**

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