2015
Breastmilk: Nourishment and Love

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Pan American Health Organization
World Health Organization
Americas
Breast milk: baby's first personalized medicine

Breast milk plays a key role in shaping and maintaining newborn health. It not only fights harmful microbes, it feeds helpful ones and jumpstarts a newborn’s immune system.

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Pan American Health Organization

January marks the start of PAHO's 113th year.
Breastfeeding promotes bonding
Mother-child bonding is enhanced when mothers interact with their infants while breastfeeding. Longer breastfeeding is associated with more sensitive maternal responsiveness and the security that comes with attachment (2, 3).
Breastfeeding helps children like healthy foods. Compared with formula-fed infants, breastfed babies are more accepting of new foods during infancy, as a mother’s diet is reflected in her breast milk. This might explain why longer breastfeeding is associated with a healthier diet in children at age 6. A good diet reduces the risk of chronic diseases later in life.
Breastfeeding benefits moms’ health too

Breastfeeding protects against breast and ovarian cancers, type 2 diabetes and some cardiovascular conditions. Women who breastfeed for 6 to 11 months have an 11% lower risk of type 2 diabetes than those who never breastfeed (6). Ovarian cancer risk is 34% lower among women who breastfeed compared with those who don’t (7).

Breastmilk of my mom... Five stars!

Love
Food
Natural
Comfortable
Immunity

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April

April 7 World Health Day
April 22 International Mother Earth Day
April 25 World Malaria Day
April 25 - May 2 Vaccination Week in the Americas
April 28 World Day for Safety and Health at Work
Dads have a role to play in supporting breastfeeding.

Fathers' actions and attitudes have tremendous potential to facilitate breastfeeding. If a dad views breastfeeding as important to the health and well-being of his baby, this will contribute to a successful experience for mother and child (8).
Pope Francis blesses breastfeeding

While baptizing infants in the Sistine Chapel, Pope Francis told mothers: “If they are hungry, mothers, feed them—without thinking twice—because they are the most important people here.” If barriers to breastfeeding in public are removed, breastfeeding once again becomes a social norm, recognized and accepted as the ideal way to feed a child.
Hospital formula reduces breastfeeding

Even if women intend to exclusively breastfeed, giving their babies formula in the hospital leads to double the risk that they will not fully breastfeed after baby’s first month and a nearly threefold risk of stopping breastfeeding when their babies are 2 months old (11). More hospitals need to become “baby friendly”, avoiding unnecessary in-hospital formula supplementation and other impediments to optimal breastfeeding (12).
Protect breastfeeding from inappropriate marketing of substitutes

The International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes provides guidelines to prevent the inappropriate marketing of breast milk substitutes, including infant formula, feeding bottles, nipples, follow-up milks, and related products (13). But the code needs to be legislated and monitored. When companies are in violation, they should be sanctioned.
Breastfeeding is good for the environment
Breast milk is a natural, renewable food that reduces a family’s carbon footprint. It requires no containers, no paper, no fuel and no transportation. Every 1 million formula-fed babies use 150 million formula containers, many of which end up in landfill (14).

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September 8 - International Literacy Day
September 10 - World Suicide Prevention Day
September 12 - Caribbean Wellness Day
September 12 - 18 Wellness Week
September 16 - International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
September 21 - International Day of Peace
September 28 - World Rabies Day
September 29 - World Heart Day

Sept. 28 - Oct. 2 PAHO Directing Council

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Breastfeeding makes babies smarter, stay in school longer
Adults who were breastfed as children score 2 to 5 points higher on cognitive development indicators (15). Breastfeeding is also associated with higher educational achievement (16).

Breastfeeding makes me strong, healthy and intelligent!

October

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October 1
International Day of Older Persons

October 3
Inter-American Water Day

October 8
World Sight Day

October 10
World Mental Health Day

October 11
International Day of the Girl Child

October 13
International Day for Disaster Reduction

October 14
Global Handwashing Day

October 15
International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

October 16
World Food Day

October 17
World Polio Day

October 24
United Nations Day
Breastfeeding helps children maintain a healthy weight

Longer breastfeeding may reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity by about 10%, helping to reduce the serious chronic diseases associated with these conditions. Breastfeeding promotion should be included as one component of programs targeted at early healthy growth and the prevention of child obesity.

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November 6
Malaria Day in the Americas
November 8
World Radiology Day
November 14
World Diabetes Day
November 15
World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims
November 16
International Day for Tolerance
November 18
World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day
November 20
Universal Children’s Day
November 25
International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
Mother’s milk supplies unique nutrition for babies
Breast milk supplies all the nutrients babies need for the first 6 months of life and makes a substantial contribution to their nutritional needs thereafter. New unique nutritional and immunological components of breast milk are continually being discovered [1]. Formula tries to play catch-up, but will never succeed.
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**References**

5. Perme CG. et al., Breastfeeding duration is associated with child diet at 6 years. Pediatrics, 2014; 134(S50).