

World Breastfeeding Week 2017

Together we can make breastfeeding sustainable



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Health
Organization



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Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE Americas

A collective responsibility



Successful breastfeeding does not depend exclusively on each woman's efforts—the promotion of breastfeeding is a collective social responsibility.

There are many reasons why a woman would do not breastfeed her babies and—from family members to policy makers—we all have a role to play.

Every baby boy and girl has the right to be breastfed and, by coming together at all levels, we can accelerate the changes needed to make this a reality.

Nutritional benefits

Breastfeeding guarantees food security for infants.

- Six months of exclusive breastfeeding contributes all the necessary nutrients and calories for growth and development.
- Beyond six months, breastfeeding continues to provide calories and high-quality nutrients that help prevent hunger, malnutrition, and obesity.

Health benefits

Breastfeeding considerably improves the health, development, and survival rate of infants, children, and mothers.

- Prolonged breastfeeding is associated with a 13% reduction in the prevalence of overweight and obesity and with a 35% reduction in the incidence of type 2 diabetes.
- Current breastfeeding rates prevent almost 20,000 maternal deaths from breast cancer every year, and other 20,000 deaths could be prevented with improved breastfeeding practices.

Cognitive development

Breastfeeding contributes to mental and cognitive development, facilitating learning and preparing children for school.

- Breastfeeding is associated, on average, with a 3-point increase in intellectual quotient (IQ).
- The worldwide cost of lower cognitive capability associated with the absence of breastfeeding is about \$300 billion per year.
- In urban settings in Brazil, people who had been breastfed for more than 12 months completed one year more of education than those breastfed for less than 12 months.

Economic benefits for the child

Breastfeeding gives children a better start to life, regardless of whether they are born in a high- or low-income country, or whether their family is rich or poor.

- In Brazil, children in urban settings who had been breastfed for 12 months earned 33% more in adulthood than those who had been breastfed for less than 12 months.
- In the United States, it is currently estimated that lifetime income increases by approximately \$20,000 due to breastfeeding.

Economic benefits

Breastfeeding is good for the economy

- Mothers who breastfeed are less frequently absent from work than mothers who bottle-feed their children, since their babies tend to be sick less frequently and with less serious illnesses.
- In Mexico, the costs associated with the absence of breastfeeding were estimated at \$2.1 billion in 2012.
- In the United States, the burden of suboptimal breastfeeding (excluding cognitive effects) is \$13 billion for infants and \$17.4 billion for mothers.

What can be done to protect breastfeeding?

- Invest in human and financial resources to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding.
- Prevent aggressive promotion of breastmilk substitutes, strengthening the Code and monitoring systems.
- Revitalize the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.
- Ratify ILO Convention 183 and Recommendation 191, which recommends at least 18 weeks maternity leave and a daily break for breastfeeding.
- Provide mothers and fathers with support and counseling by trained staff in health services and in the community.

What can be done to promote breastfeeding?

Communities	can create breastfeeding support groups for mothers and fathers
Employers	can offer more flexible working hours and provide breastfeeding rooms
Families	can take charge of daily tasks and encourage mothers to breastfeed
Governments	can implement and monitor policies that protect breastfeeding
Health workers	can help mothers defend their right to breastfeed

Together we can make breastfeeding sustainable



COMMUNITIES



FAMILIES



HEALTHCARE WORKERS



EMPLOYERS



GOVERNMENTS

Making **Breastfeeding** Sustainable



COMMUNITIES

can create support groups for
new and expectant parents.



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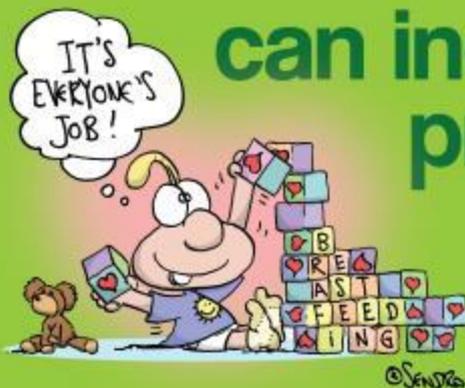
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EMPLOYERS

can increase work flexibility and provide nursing rooms.



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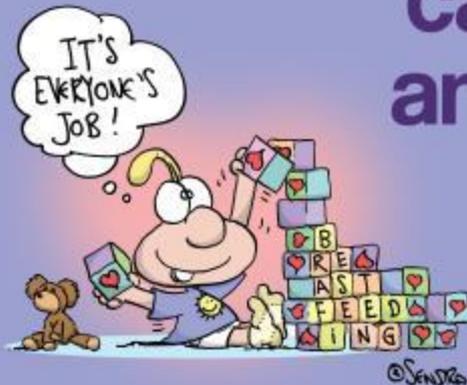
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FAMILIES

can take on daily tasks
and encourage mothers
to breastfeed.



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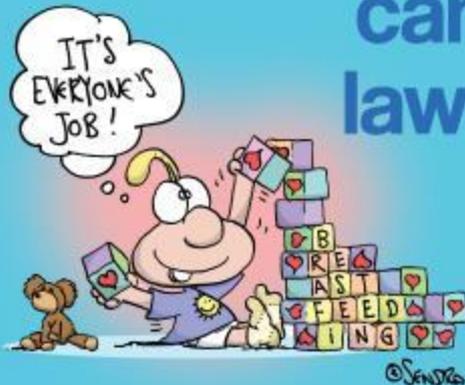
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GOVERNMENTS

can implement and monitor laws and policies concerning breastfeeding.



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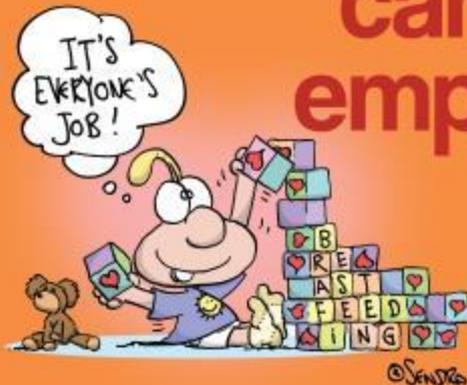


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Making **Breastfeeding** Sustainable



HEALTHCARE WORKERS
can help mothers to feel
empowered to breastfeed.



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Thank You!

