

# NUTRITIONISTS AND DIETITIANS

play a key role in shaping food choices, improving nutritional status, and providing preventative and therapeutic intervention in both general and emergency settings.

## BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding matters because it is a low-cost way of providing the best nutrition for the baby. It protects the baby against common illnesses both in the short and long-term. It reduces the risk of cancer and other conditions in the mother. The cost of not breastfeeding is huge for families and nations. Breastfeeding is also a climate-smart decision and key to the Sustainable Development Goals.

WHO and UNICEF recommend:

- ▶ Early initiation of breastfeeding within 1 hour of birth.
- ▶ Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life.
- ▶ Continued breastfeeding up to 2 years of age or beyond, with the introduction of nutritionally adequate and safe complementary (solid) foods at 6 months.



**WARM CHAIN OF SUPPORT FOR BREASTFEEDING:** The Warm Chain places the mother-baby dyad at the core and follows the first 1,000 days timeline. It strives to link different actors by coordinating efforts at all levels to provide a continuum of care. Each actor or link in the Warm Chain may already be part of an existing initiative such as the BFHI or a community health programme. With consistent messages and proper referral systems throughout the warm chain, the mother-baby dyad will benefit from ongoing support and breastfeeding counselling. All mothers are then empowered with a more satisfying and effective breastfeeding experience. A warm chain of support will help build an enabling environment for breastfeeding and protect against industry influence.

# As a **NUTRITIONIST/DIETITIAN**, you can support breastfeeding in many ways

1. Include breastfeeding when addressing nutritional status, especially in humanitarian crises.
2. Address barriers to optimal breastfeeding through behaviour change and communications.
3. Incorporate breastfeeding in information and training courses.
4. Ensure that standard breastfeeding indicators are used in surveys and research.
5. Advocate for optimal breastfeeding in policies and programmes related to public health and nutrition.
6. Empower mothers with strategies to enable them to combine breastfeeding and work.
7. Work together to ensure a continuum of care for the mother-baby dyad.
8. Do not accept any gifts, samples, sponsorship or displays of infant formula, bottles or teats from companies.
9. How else can YOU protect, promote and support breastfeeding?  
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**World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)**

