



International Day of the Midwife Supporting breastfeeding and gender equality



Our world is facing great health challenges at this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Midwives, along with all other healthcare workers, are at the forefront of the response and we salute them for their tireless and brave work to help save lives. Breastfeeding saves lives and prevents many infections and conditions. In the context of COVID-19, WHO and UNICEF recommend breastfeeding according to standard infant feeding guidelines while applying all necessary precautions. Midwives provide critical support for breastfeeding families.

Midwives provide a broad range of essential health services, not just to breastfeeding families, but also to the community. They have essential roles at all levels of healthcare. There is an association between receiving **midwife-led continuity of care** and increased satisfaction with care throughout the continuum of pregnancy, intrapartum and postpartum period, and an increased duration of exclusive breastfeeding. Midwives also play a vital role in promoting gender equality by including and supporting both parents in the continuum of care.

We need to acknowledge the **role of midwives** in forming strong multidisciplinary healthcare teams, which in turn has a powerful influence on a family's decision to breastfeed and meet their breastfeeding goals. Midwives also have an **important role** in the coordination of breastfeeding support between health facilities and the community.



WABA's **Warm Chain of Support for Breastfeeding campaign** places the breastfeeding dyad at the core and follows the first 1,000 days timeline. It strives to link different stakeholders by coordinating efforts at all levels to provide a continuum of care. Consistent messages and proper referral systems throughout the warm chain will ensure that the family benefits from ongoing breastfeeding support and skilled assistance.

This **International Day of the Midwife 2020**, the **International Confederation of Midwives (ICM)** will focus in more depth on how midwives and women can partner together to mobilise and unite toward a shared goal of gender equality. Therefore, it is essential that multidisciplinary healthcare teams including midwives receive **appropriate training**. Such training will provide the team members with the skills to support breastfeeding, increase knowledge of their roles and enhance their ability to link with others effectively in the warm chain of support.

#IThankMyMidwife #Midwives2020 #WABA #breastfeeding #warmchain



World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations dedicated to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide based on the Innocent Declarations, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF and an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). WABA coordinates the annual World Breastfeeding Week campaign.

www.waba.org.my