



WORLD ALLIANCE FOR BREASTFEEDING ACTION

A breastfeeding team includes dads



The drive for gender equality has reshaped parenting roles and fathers are no longer seen as just the breadwinner or merely a babysitter. Young parents are getting more involved in sharing domestic and childcare responsibilities. More and more fathers are seeing the benefits of being involved in their child's care and development.

"Having involved fathers is good for gender equality. It is good for women's health. It leads to better relationships within couples and can be linked with a reduction in rates of men's violence against women. It is good for children, too."

State of the World's Fathers 2019, MenCare

Forming a parenting team with equal shared responsibilities is essential to achieving a more gender-equal world. Both parents can then be involved in their child's care and development, as well as be able to pursue their careers. Shifts in policies and national legislation in support of parental leave encourage more fathers to participate more equally in childcare. It is very heartening to witness new fathers engaging and playing with their newborns. Studies show that the first 1000 days of the child's life shape its entire future and involved fatherhood matters.

"We at Family Included continue to promote understanding of the important ways that fathers influence breastfeeding and how engaging them enhances breastfeeding a great deal. Encouraging breastfeeding as teamwork and supporting the father-baby bond are both winning strategies."

Family Initiative

Fathers also have a profound influence on decision-making on how the baby is fed. The breastmilk substitute industry marketing increasingly targets fathers. Understanding the importance of breastfeeding and how to support it as a father is crucial. Although breastfeeding is primarily in the mother's domain, a breastfeeding team approach is effective. Fathers are a crucial member of the breastfeeding team and they can support breastfeeding in many ways. Healthcare professionals can support the breastfeeding team by including fathers in antenatal, delivery and postpartum care services. Fathers can be encouraged to join a father support group to share experiences and learn from others in their community.

"Alive & Thrive field experience has taught us that fathers' actions can lead to real improvements in nutrition. Fathers can play an important role and are eager to participate if they are engaged in meaningful ways. For example, in Bangladesh fathers re-allocated household budgets and bought fewer unhealthy foods to afford nutrient-rich foods. They assigned housework to others in the family so that mothers had more time to breastfeed. In Nigeria and Madagascar fathers are reminded about a better economic future if children have a strong start through better feeding practices. This Father's Day, we urge support for programs that proactively reach out to fathers to play active roles in improving the ways their children are nourished."

Alive & Thrive

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected many families negatively, for example loss of income and subsequent stress. However, the preventative measures such as staying at home and social distancing have also enabled some new parents time to be at home with their newborns. For those parents who are able to work from home and care for their child, this can lead to an improved breastfeeding experience. Breastfeeding teams around the world agree that fathers' support is critical for breastfeeding.

"It's not a comfortable situation for fathers during the pandemic; income is reduced, and side jobs are cancelled. I know everyone in the family is stressed but as a father and a husband, we should make them feel pleased. Supporting mothers to breastfeed is a piece of cake, make her dinner, simply give her a massage or play with your newborn can increase the level of oxytocin. That is something we can do to make sure the entire family stays happy and healthy."

AyahAsi Indonesia

Fathers are an important member of the breastfeeding team. When fathers support breastfeeding and are involved in caring for the baby, breastfeeding improves, the parental relationship is better, and their infant develops more quickly.

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) and its partners wish all fathers out there who are supporting their family and breastfeeding a **Happy Father's Day 2020!**



#fathersday #genderequality #breastfeeding #breastfeedingteam



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 Innocenti 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

