

ENVIRONMENTALISTS

can play a role in the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding by advocating for breastfeeding as a renewable and sustainable first food. Breastfeeding contributes positively towards planetary health which includes the health of people and the planet.

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 an **ENVIRONMENTALIST**, you can support breastfeeding in many ways

1. Advocate to align policies on breastfeeding with environment/ climate initiatives and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. Reinforce the message that breastfeeding contributes to food security and planetary health.
3. Engage school children, students, youth and social media influencers to include breastfeeding as a sustainable food when discussing environment and climate issues.
4. Promote breastfeeding as a locally-available and renewable food especially in times of environmental and natural disasters.
5. Work together with breastfeeding advocates and policymakers for a toxic- and waste- free future, including reduction and elimination of toxic substances.
6. Empower women/parents by supporting breastfeeding as part of green workplace initiatives.
7. Watch out for misleading marketing and donations of breastmilk substitutes, bottles or teats. This is not allowed according to the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. Inform relevant authorities if you see such violations.
8. How else can YOU protect, promote and support breastfeeding?



World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)



This card was developed in collaboration with
[IPEN \(International Pollutants Elimination Network\)](http://IPEN.org)

