

OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS

are primary healthcare providers for mothers, before, during and after delivery. They can play an active role in breastfeeding support and enable mothers to achieve their infant feeding goals.

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 **OBSTETRICIAN / GYNAECOLOGIST**, you can support breastfeeding in many ways

- 1.** Inform all pregnant women and their partners about the importance and management of breastfeeding. Ask about any breast surgeries and any previous breastfeeding difficulties during the obstetric history/examination.
- 2.** Establish mother-friendly labour room practices. Ensure uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact within one hour of delivery and support mother to initiate breastfeeding.
- 3.** Avoid unnecessary caesarean and instrumental deliveries as well as other routine procedures unless medically indicated.
- 4.** Keep up-to-date information on individual medications to avoid inappropriate advice that can lead women to discontinue breastfeeding unnecessarily.
- 5.** Provide mothers with contact information for community-based lactation support before they discharge from the maternity facility.
- 6.** Support mothers to establish an adequate breastmilk supply including in vulnerable or emergency situations.
- 7.** Empower mothers with strategies to enable them to combine breastfeeding and work.
- 8.** Work together with others to ensure a continuum of care for the breastfeeding dyad.
- 9.** Do not accept any gifts, samples, sponsorship or displays of infant formula, bottles or teats from companies.
- 10.** How else can YOU protect, promote and support breastfeeding?



World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)



This card was developed in collaboration with Dr. Taru Jindal and Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM)

