

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

play an important role in promoting and advocating for breastfeeding in the society. They can share personal experiences and strategies, and have a positive influence on infant feeding choices.

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 **MEMBER OF YOUR COMMUNITY**, you can support breastfeeding in many ways:

1. Actively share your experiences of breastfeeding and the latest evidence-based information with parents and friends through social media or breastfeeding support groups.
2. Encourage parents-to-be to choose healthcare facilities that promote and support breastfeeding and connect parents with breastfeeding support groups.
3. Advocate to government and local businesses to establish breastfeeding-friendly spaces and normalise breastfeeding in public.
4. Organise or participate in events or activities that promote and support breastfeeding in your community such as World Breastfeeding Week.
5. Volunteer to support breastfeeding, particularly in crisis and emergency situations. Share evidence-based information on the importance of breastfeeding and the danger of uncontrolled distribution of infant formula and breastmilk substitutes.
6. Empower parents with strategies to enable them to combine breastfeeding and work. Encourage your employer to set up breastfeeding facilities at the workplace.
7. Collaborate with others to ensure a continuum of care for the breastfeeding dyad by ensuring that they have the necessary support in different environments e.g. healthcare facilities, homes, workplaces.
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?



World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)



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