

Nutrition

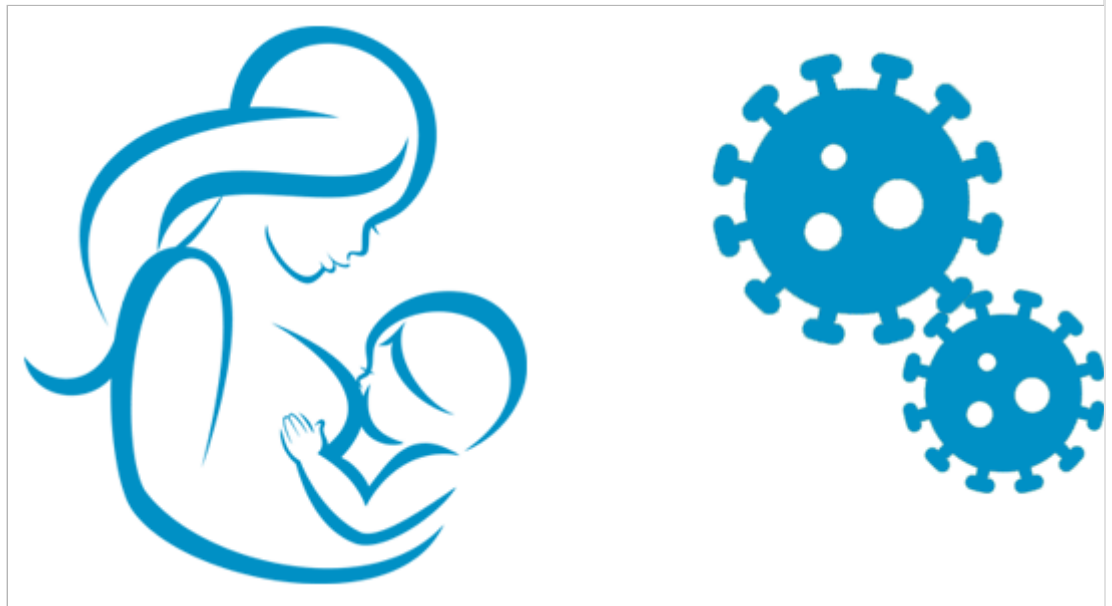
Nutrition

About the
programme

Breastfeeding advice during the COVID-19 outbreak



Strategy/policy



Food security

Nutrition monitoring
and surveillance

Publications

Meeting reports

Events and meetings

News

Country activities

Relevant health
topics

Useful links

Breastfeeding protects newborns from getting sick and also helps protect them throughout their infancy and childhood. Breastfeeding is particularly effective against infectious diseases because it strengthens the immune system by directly transferring antibodies from the mother. As with all confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases, mothers with any symptoms who are breastfeeding or practicing skin-to-skin contact should take precautions.

Actions for breastfeeding mothers

Practice respiratory hygiene, including during feeding. If you have respiratory symptoms such as being short of breath, use a medical mask when near your child.

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap or sanitizer before and after contact with your child.

Routinely clean and disinfect any surfaces you touch.

If you are severely ill with COVID-19 or suffer from other complications that prevent you from caring for your infant or continuing direct breastfeeding, express milk to safely provide breastmilk to your infant.

If you are too unwell to breastfeed or express breastmilk, you should explore the possibility of relactation (restarting

breastfeeding after a gap), wet nursing (another woman breastfeeding or caring for your child), or using donor human milk. Which approach to use will depend on cultural context, acceptability to you, and service availability.

Actions for health facilities and their staff

If you are providing maternity and newborn services, you should not promote breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles, teats, pacifiers or dummies in any part of your facilities, or by any of your staff.

Enable mothers and infants to remain together and practice skin-to-skin contact, and rooming-in throughout the day and night, especially straight after birth during establishment of breastfeeding, whether or not the mother or child has suspected, probable, or confirmed COVID-19.

Counselling and psychosocial support

If you, your infants, or young children have suspected or confirmed COVID-19, seek breastfeeding counselling, basic psychosocial support, or practical feeding support. You may get support from appropriately trained health care professionals and also community-based lay and peer breastfeeding counsellors.

Standard infant feeding guidelines

Initiate breastfeeding within 1 hour of the birth.

Continue exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months, then introduce adequate and safe complementary foods at age 6 months.

Continue breastfeeding up to 2 years of age or beyond.

[Flyer on breastfeeding advice during the COVID-19 outbreak \(Arabic\)](#)

[Social cards on breastfeeding and COVID-19](#)

Featured publications



[Strategy on nutrition for the Eastern Mediterranean Region 2020-2030](#)



Regional
framework for
action on obesity
prevention 2019–
2023 | Arabic |
French



Wheat
flour

Information resources

Safe Preparation
of Therapeutic
Milks F75 and
F100

Breastfeeding
[video in Arabic
by MSF Yemen]

A week of
breastfeeding
[video in Arabic
by UNICEF]

Healthy advice
[video in Arabic]

10 facts on
breastfeeding |
Arabic | French

Frequently asked
questions on
noncommunicable
diseases

Afghanistan's
national nutrition
bulletins

UNICEF-WHO-
The World Bank:
2012 Joint child
malnutrition
estimates -
Levels and trends

e-Library of
Evidence for

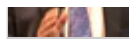
[Nutrition Actions
\(eLENA\)](#)

[Vitamin and
Mineral Nutrition
Information
System \(VMNIS\)](#)

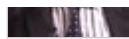
[WHO Child
Growth
Standards](#)

[Body mass
index calculator](#)

Part 1:



[presentation by
Professor W.
Philip T. James
on reducing salt
content in food
Part 2: Reducing
transfat intake](#)



[presentation by
Professor
Graham A.
MacGregor on
reducing salt
intake](#)

Statistics and figures

WHO has several nutrition-related global databases. They include data for countries in the Region. Please click on the links to access them.

[Vitamin and
Mineral Nutrition
Information
System](#)

[WHO Global
Database on
Body Mass Index](#)

[WHO Global
Database on
Child Growth and
Malnutrition](#)

[WHO Global
Data Bank on
Infant and Young
Child Feeding](#)

Some nutrition-
related data from
the Regional
Health
Observatory:

[Estimates of
anaemia in non-
pregnant women
of reproductive
age](#)

[Anaemia in
preschool-age
children](#)

Trend estimates
for under 5 child
malnutrition:

[Wasting \(%\)](#)

[Overweight \(%\)](#)

[Stunting \(%\)](#)

[Underweight \(%\)](#)

Contact us

[Submit
comments or
queries about this
programme](#)

Site map

[Home](#)
[Health topics](#)

**Help and
services**

[Employment](#)

WHO Offices

[WHO
headquarters](#)

Data and statistics
Media centre
Information
resources
Countries
Programmes
About us

Copyright
Privacy
Contact us
Remote access
Login

WHO African
Region
WHO Region of
the Americas
WHO South-East
Asia Region
WHO European
Region
WHO Western
Pacific Region