

## Suggestions for Radio Messages - Breastfeeding and Child Nutrition Week

Breastfeeding is the traditional way to feed babies and toddlers. Besides providing babies with the nutrients they need for healthy growth, breast milk protects them against infections and contributes to optimal brain development. Breastfeeding is recommended exclusively until the baby reaches the age of roughly six months and in association with healthy food until to the age of two years or longer.

Breastfeeding has many benefits. Breastfeeding strengthens the mother-child bond, provides a moment of relaxation and comfort for the mother and child, contributes to stress reduction, reduces the mother's risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer, contributes to the mother's post-pregnancy weight loss and is economical as well as rapidly available.

Receiving support can facilitate the breastfeeding experience, particularly when difficulties arise. The support of the partner, the family, the community and health professionals (physicians, nurses and midwives) can make a difference. Do not hesitate to offer your help to a breastfeeding mother. It could make a real difference.

Mothers who do not breastfeed also need support, especially during the baby's first few months. There are many ways to support new mothers: by encouraging and comforting them, by helping care for the baby and the other family members, and by assuming some of the tasks at home.

If the child is not breastfed, iron-enriched infant formula is the best alternative up to the age of 12 months. It is important to know the safe method of preparing infant formula. Until 4 months of age, the water used must be boiled and the bottles must be sterilized. Conservation time and temperature must also be strictly observed. Feeding your child, whether you breastfeed or not, is a moment of calm and comfort for the child and the parents; do not hesitate to practise skin-to-skin contact no matter the method of feeding your baby.

All babies need vitamin D drops every day. Vitamin D is important for healthy bones and teeth and helps protect against infections. Vitamin D comes from certain foods (Arctic char, seal, beluga, eggs and milk) but it is also produced by the body with exposure to the sun. Unfortunately, the dose of vitamin D from the combination of those sources is generally insufficient to cover children's needs, especially in the North.

Babies will show signs of being ready for solid food at the age of roughly six months. Those signs are: better control of their head, ability to sit up, ability to indicate that they are no longer hungry, tendency to take foods and attempt to bring them to their mouth.