

Feeding Babies and Young Children:

Key points for helpers

Remember:

Babies and children under 2 years are particularly vulnerable in emergencies.

What worked at home – for you or refugees – may not be safe in emergency situations. Try not to let your personal experiences influence you.

- **Breastfeeding saves lives** in emergency situations. Mothers must be encouraged and supported to continue to breastfeed until the child is 2 years old.
- Stress, exhaustion, illness and dehydration will NOT dry up a mother's milk supply, but may make her FEEL that it has. Encourage mothers to continue breastfeeding.
- If a mother is mix-feeding (both breastfeeding and formula) or has stopped breastfeeding within the last 2 weeks, she should be encouraged to return to exclusive breastfeeding by putting the baby to the breast frequently 2-3 hourly and topping up with formula AFTER a breastfeed.

Babies under 6 months need breast or formula milk.

Babies over 6 months (if not breastfed) can be fed full-fat animal (cow or goat) milk including UHT plus complementary foods. Toddler formula is unnecessary.

Preparing infant formula:

- **Ready to use formula is safest.** Powdered formula is not sterile, may be contaminated and requires careful preparation.
- **Bottles harbor germs.** Cups are easier to clean or disposable cups can be given. All babies can feed from cups but may not be used to this.
- **All feeding utensils must be scrupulously cleaned.**
- Bottles or cups should be washed in hot soapy water before being sterilized.
- Formula powder should ideally be made with boiled water over 70 degrees C to kill bacteria that may be present in the water or the powder.
- Formula feeds should not be prepared in advance. If there is no other option, they should be cooled in the fridge before taking out. Feeds can then be kept in a cool bag with an ice block for 4 hours max, or in a bag for 2 hours max.

Get more info and the **Feeding Your Baby As You Travel** flyer to give parents the info they need at www.enonline.net/guidelinesiycfeedingsupporttransit