

Breastfeeding: The 1st Hour

Save



ONE

million babies!

**WABA WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK
1-7 AUGUST 2007**

Initiation of breastfeeding within the 1st hour of birth is the first and most vital step towards reducing infant and under-five mortality, by reducing the overwhelmingly high neonatal mortality rate. Save **ONE million babies** – beginning with **ONE action, ONE hour** support and **ONE message**:

begin breastfeeding within ONE hour of birth!

SPONSORSHIP: WABA does not accept sponsorship of any kind from companies producing breastmilk substitutes, related equipment and complementary foods. WABA encourages all participants of World Breastfeeding Week to respect and follow this ethical stance.

2007

JANUARY						
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The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide based on the Innocenti Declarations, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. Its core partners are International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), La Leche League International (LLL), International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA), Wellstart International and Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM). WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF and an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

WABA, PO Box 1200
10850 Penang, Malaysia
Tel: 60-4-658 4816
Fax: 60-4-657 2655
Email: waba@streamyx.com
Website: www.waba.org.my



WORLD ALLIANCE FOR
BREASTFEEDING ACTION

Breastfeeding: The 1st Hour - Save ONE million babies!

RATIONALE

- It has long been known about the benefits of colostrum.
- New scientific evidence reveals that if all women begin breastfeeding within ONE hour, it could prevent ONE million newborn deaths.
- Few countries have such data available.
- We know some of the reasons why women delay breastfeeding.
- Community workers can play a major role to make it happen.
- We want to reach every family with the message and that we can do it together.

OBJECTIVES

- **To draw the world's attention to save ONE million babies beginning with just ONE action, just ONE hour of support and with just ONE message.**
- **To encourage establishing breastfeeding within the 1st hour as a key indicator of health progress by all communities, locally and globally.**

Millennium Development Goal 4 (MDG-4) aims at reducing under-five child mortality by two thirds by 2015. According to global data, out of all 10.9 million under-five deaths, roughly 4 million babies die during the first month of life. This means that deaths will have to be brought down considerably within the first month to make a significant dent on the child mortality rates.

A recent study has shown that if ALL women began breastfeeding within the 1st hour it would save ONE million of the 4 million newborn deaths. This study from rural Ghana, based on 10,947 breastfed singleton infants, has shown that initiation of breastfeeding within the 1st hour of birth reduced the infants' risk of death¹. On the other hand, there was a marked increase in risk with increasing delay in initiation. Overall late initiation (after day ONE) was associated with a 2.4-fold increase in risk. Giving pre-lacteal feeds, i.e. something other than mother's milk before beginning to breastfeed also increased the risk of neonatal mortality. The study conducted on babies who survived day ONE, clearly showed that 41% of all babies who die during 2 to 28 days of life can be saved by this simple intervention: beginning breastfeeding within ONE hour of birth. When the deaths of day ONE were included, it showed 22% of all neonatal (0-28 days) deaths could be reduced. In India, for example, this means 250,000 neonates can be saved from death annually by just this ONE act. Initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour of birth is thus, the first and most vital step towards reducing infant and under-five mortality.

Where countries stand on beginning breastfeeding within the 1st hour?

Coverage of interventions to improve early infant feeding practices such as early initiation of breastfeeding (within ONE hour or ONE day) is sub-optimal. Studied data on initiation is available in only 38 countries.

How can you help women to begin breastfeeding within the 1st hour?

How much support women get from the health sector and family determines this outcome. Women need minimum essential support like e.g. assistance at time of birth to initiate the process of breastfeeding, help and a policy to keep the baby and mother together after delivery, avoidance of giving pre-lacteal feeds and artificial nipple/teats.

Benefits to both women and babies

Timely initiation of breastfeeding is beneficial for both the baby and the mother because:

- Colostrum provides the baby with nourishment (the baby needs very little at this time – a few drops are enough) and thus, its first immunisation.
- It helps the production of milk enough for the next feed.
- It makes use of the baby's sucking reflex (which is strongest during the 1st hour) to establish proper latching.
- It helps prevent blood loss in the women.
- It provides the skin-to-skin contact and warmth that babies need most, particularly premature and low-weight babies.
- It is more beneficial for low-weight babies because they are more likely to die, and they need more support at birth to be able to suck well.

What can you do?

- Find out if your country/state/district/province/community has such data.
- Find out from your community why incorrect practices are followed, what are the solutions to this, and document them.
- Write to your governments to commit resources for action to educate all health care providers, midwives and nurses to convey the message to women and families.
- Brief local media persons on the new finding and prepare for WBW 2007.
- Call upon each man, doctor, nurse, midwife and youth to support at least ONE mother for ONE week.
- Send to us by 1st March, what percentage of women begin breastfeeding within the 1st hour of birth in your country (Mention the study, its population scope and year of study to waba@streamyx.com).

WBW Coordinating and Distributing Centres

OVERALL COORDINATION

WABA Secretariat

P O Box 1200, 10850 Penang, Malaysia
Fax: 60-4-657 2655 • waba@streamyx.com • www.waba.org.my

✉ AFRICA

IBFAN Africa

P O Box 781, Mbabane, Swaziland
Fax: 268-40 40546 • ibfanswd@realnet.co.sz

IBFAN Afrique

Cite Ouaga 2000, 01 BP 1776, Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso
Fax: 226-50-374163 • ibfanfan@fasonet.bf

✉ ASIA

WABA Secretariat (See address above)

South Asia

Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI)

BP-33, Pitampura, Delhi 110 034, India
Fax: 91-11-2734 3606 • bpni.india@gmail.com

✉ EUROPE

BMA

Baby Milk Action, 34 Trumpington Street,
Cambridge, CB2 1QY, UK.
Fax: 44-1223-464 417 • info@babymilkaction.org

CoFAM / IPA

c/o Information pour, l'Allaitement, 52 rue Sully,
69006 Lyon, France
Fax: 33-478 930 268 • roques.nathalie@wanadoo.fr

GIFA

Avenue de la Paix 11, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland
Fax: 41-22-798 4443 • info@gifa.org

Aktionsgruppe Babynahrung Ev (AGB)

Untere Maschstrasse 21, D-37073 Gottingen, Germany
Fax: 49-551-531 035 • info@babynahrung.org

✉ LATIN AMERICA

CEFEMINA

Apartado 5355, 1000 San Jose, Costa Rica
Fax: 506-224 3986 • cefemina@racsa.co.cr

CEPREN

Av. Pardo, 1335 Of.301-302, Lima-18 Peru
Fax: 51-1 241 6205 • cepren@amauta.rcp.net.pe

Origem Group

Rua da Uniao, 253, Boa Vista, Recife, Pernambuco CEP
50050-010, Brazil
Fax: 55-81-32314325 • juliana@origem.org
www.aleitamenta.org.br

✉ NORTH AMERICA

LLL International

957 N. Plum Grove Road, Schaumburg, IL 60173-4808, USA
Fax: 1-847-519 0035 • llhq@llli.org • www.lalecheleague.org

INFAC Canada

6, Trinity Square, Toronto, ON M5G 1B1, Canada
Fax: 1-416-591 9355 • info@infactcanada.ca
www.infactcanada.ca

✉ PACIFIC

ABA

P O Box 4000, Glen Iris, VIC 3146, Australia
Fax: 61-3-9885 0866 • info@breastfeeding.asn.au
www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Development Officer PINDA

c/o Christine Quested
Nutrition Centre Health Department
Private Mail Bag, Apia, Western Samoa
Fax: 685-218 70

1. Karen M. Edmond, Charles Zandoh, Maria A. Quigley, Seeba Amenga-Etego, Seth Owusu-Agyei and Betty R. Kirkwood. Delayed Breastfeeding Initiation Increases Risk of Neonatal Mortality. 2006;117:380-386 Pediatrics

WBW 2007 Photo CONTEST

Theme: "Breastfeeding: The 1st Hour - Save ONE million babies!"

10 winning entries will be awarded **US\$100** each and featured in the WABA Action Folders. Closing date: 15 March 2007. Terms & conditions apply. For more info, visit www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org to enter.