

Sample key messages to mothers and caregivers in an emergency

Their use should be informed by the particular context and carefully translated to ensure accurate interpretation.

Babies are very vulnerable but taking special care in feeding them can protect them. This is what you can do to protect your baby.

The most effective way of protecting babies is to breastfeed them. Breastmilk gives your baby, food and water and is a medicine that fights illness. Babies under 6 months should not be given anything except for breastmilk. Giving a baby under 6 months water or infant formula, milk powder or solid food under the current circumstances is dangerous. It can give them diarrhoea and this can be fatal, this is why it is so important to only breastfeed if it is at all possible. Children over 6 months should continue to be breastfed until at least 2 years.

The youngest babies are at the greatest risk if they are not breastfed. So it is essential that newborn babies begin breastfeeding immediately after birth (within an hour) and are given only breastmilk.

Some people think that stress or not having good food will make a mother's milk dry up, this is not true. A hand or shoulder massage can help you to feel less stressed and will help the milk to flow more easily when you are breastfeeding. Stressful or traumatic situations can interfere with how often and when you feed your baby, so that you may produce less breastmilk. Babies and young children may be disturbed by stressful situations and become difficult to settle down to feeding.

Whatever the reason, more frequent breastfeeds will help you make more milk if you think you don't have enough. Keeping the baby close to you, the mother, day and night will help her to breastfeed more and make more milk.

If you have had powdered milk given to you for your baby and you are breastfeeding, drink it yourself, nourishing yourself will help you to nourish your baby. Do not give your baby infant formula or powdered milk unless it is absolutely necessary because it is dangerous.

If a baby does not have a mother or if their mother has stopped breastfeeding another woman can breastfeed the baby (depending on local context).

If you have been using infant formula and breastfeeding you can increase your milk supply by reducing the amount of formula given to your baby and breastfeeding more frequently. If you have stopped breastfeeding you can start again, letting the baby suck at the breast will start the milk flowing again but this can take a few days to a couple of weeks for there to be enough milk - depending on how long it has been

since you stopped.

It is very important to take extreme care in feeding babies formula. This should only happen if there is no way that the baby can be breastfed. It is very important to make sure that everything used to feed the baby is clean. Cups are better for feeding than bottles, which are very hard to clean properly. Cleaning water and water to make up formula should be boiled. Made up formula should not be stored. Seek help from organisations supporting mothers feeding their babies. Seek medical help if your baby gets sick with diarrhoea or a chest infection.