

**Key Messages on the  
Essential Nutrition Actions to Improve  
the Nutrition of Women & Young Children  
in Ethiopia**

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**Optimal breastfeeding 0 to 6 months**

**Complementary feeding with breastfeeding 6 to  
24 months**

**Women's nutrition**



**Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia  
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## Key Messages for Ethiopia on Optimal Breastfeeding 0 to 6 months

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
1. <b>Mother</b>	Give the first yellow milk made especially for the new born as it will protect your baby from illness.	This first yellow milk (colostrum) is the mother's natural butter and will help to expel your baby's first dark stool.
		Colostrum contains many important factors which will protect your new baby from disease.
2. <b>Mother</b>	Put your baby on the breast immediately after birth, even before the placenta is expelled, to stimulate your production of milk.	Immediate breastfeeding within one hour of birth will help to expel the placenta and reduce post-partum bleeding.
		Pre-lacteal feeds (such as sugar water, water, butter, <i>ersho</i> ) are not necessary and may interfere with establishing good breastfeeding practices during the first days of the baby's life.
3. <b>Mother</b>	Feed your baby only breast milk for the first six months, not even giving water, for it to grow healthy and strong.	Feeding the baby only breastmilk provides the best nourishment possible for the baby and will protect it from diseases such as diarrhea and respiratory infections.
		Giving the baby water or other liquids may make your baby sick with diarrhea.
		If the baby takes water or other liquids, its appetite for breastmilk may decrease meaning it sucks less on the breast leading to poor growth.
		Even during very hot weather, breastmilk will satisfy all your baby's thirst for liquids during the first six months.

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
<p><b>4. Mother</b></p>	<p>Breast feed your baby on demand, at least 10 times day and night, to produce enough milk and provide your baby enough food to grow healthy.</p>	<p>Frequent breastfeeding helps the milk to flow.</p>
		<p>Increases bonding between mother and child.</p>
		<p>Ensure proper positioning and attachment of the baby on the breast to ensure it gets enough breastmilk and also to avoid breast problems such as sore and cracked nipples.</p>
		<p>Advise mothers with nipple and breast problems to seek immediate care from a Health Worker.</p>
<p><b>5. Mother</b></p>	<p>Empty one breast first before switching to the second for your baby to get the most nutritious hind milk to grow strong and healthy.</p>	<p>Foremilk quenches thirst because it is more watery.</p>
		<p>Hind milk is richer and satisfies the baby's hunger so that it will not cry as much.</p>
<p><b>6. Husband</b></p>	<p>Ensure that your wife who is breastfeeding has two extra meals a day to maintain her health and the health of the baby.</p>	<p>To maintain their health, breastfeeding women need to eat a wide variety of foods, particularly animal products (meat, milk, eggs, etc), fruits and vegetables.</p>
		<p>Ripe papaya, orange, carrot, pumpkin, mango and liver are especially good for the mother.</p>
<p><b>7. Mother</b></p>	<p>During illness, increase the frequency of breastfeeding for your baby to recover faster.</p>	<p>Continue to breastfeed during diarrhea, even increasing the frequency, to replace the liquid lost.</p>
		<p>Breastfeeding more during illness will help your baby to fight the sickness and not loose weight.</p>
		<p>Breastfeeding also provides comfort to a sick baby.</p>
		<p>Sick mothers can continue to breastfeed their baby.</p>

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
8. Mother	After each illness increase the frequency of breast feeding for the baby to regain health and weight.	Each time a baby is sick, it will loose weight so it is important to breastfeed as often as possible.
		Your breast milk is the safest and most important food you can offer your baby to regain its health and weight.
9. Mother	Take Vitamin A supplementation within 45 days of delivery for the baby's health and strength.	Ask a Health Worker for Vitamin A supplementation after the birth of the baby.
		Taking a Vitamin A capsule will enrich the mother's breastmilk with important nutrients to keep the baby healthy and strong.
10. All family members	Sleep under an insecticide treated net (INT), especially pregnant women and children, to prevent getting malaria.	Malaria causes anemia which will make members of your family unwell and very tired.
		Family members with fever need to be taken to a health facility for immediate treatment.
11. Mother and father	Use LAM as a family planning method: 1. if the mother does not have her menses, 2. if the baby is exclusively breastfeed, and 3. if the baby is less than 6 months	LAM is a modern family planning method, effective to 98% if the 3 conditions are met
12. Mother and father	When your baby is older than 6 months, or if one of the conditions of LAM does not exist, visit the health facility or Community Based Reproductive Health Agent to obtain another Family Planning method	Don't wait until the baby is 6 months to decide on which family planning method you want to have.
<b>Additional nutrition message for infants 0 to 6 months on Vitamin D</b>		
WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
Mother and father	Expose your baby to sunlight for 20 to 30 minutes daily to ensure it grows well	Exposure to sunshine will help ensure your baby has adequate Vitamin D which is important for bone growth and good health.

## Key Messages for Ethiopia on Complementary Feeding with Breastfeeding 6 to 24 months

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
1. <b>Mother and father</b>	Introduce complementary foods at six months of age, such as soft porridge 2-3 times a day, for your baby to grow healthy and strong.	Porridge can be made from many different types of cereals and tubers (e.g. potatoes, <i>enset</i> ).
		The consistency of the porridge should be thick enough to be fed by hand.
		Thicken the porridge as the baby grows older, making sure that it is still able to easily swallow without choking.
		Thin gruels made with water are not healthy for your baby as they do not provide enough of the nutrients it needs to grow strong and healthy.
		When possible use milk instead of water to prepare the porridge.
		Foods given to the child must be stored in hygienic conditions to avoid diarrhea and illness.
		First types of complementary foods, such as porridges, found in different regions that can be used to feed babies 6 to 12 months of age include:  SNNPR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>husifa</i> (Sidama)</li> <li>- <i>bullā, genfo</i> (Gurage/Cheha)</li> <li>- <i>uncha shandra</i> (N. Omo/Konta)</li> <li>- <i>boru-de-libajun</i> (Bench and Majil/Menit)</li> <li>- <i>boru-de-wedida</i> (Bench and Majil/Menit)</li> </ul> Oromia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>shura</i> (E. Marage/Kersa Jurso)</li> <li>- <i>merqa</i> (E. Wellega)</li> </ul> Amhara: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>genfo</i></li> </ul>

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
2. <b>Mother</b>	Continue to breast feed your child on demand, at least 8 times, day and night until two years and beyond to maintain its strength.	During the first and second year, breastmilk is still an important source of nutrients for your baby.
3. <b>Mother and father</b>	Enrich your baby's porridge with 2 to 3 different types of foods at each meal (such as butter, oil, peanuts, meat, eggs, lentils, vegetables and fruits) for it to grow and get strong.	<p>From 6 months onwards, feed your child 2-3 types of different enrichment foods with the porridge at each meal, in addition to breastmilk.</p> <p>Try to feed different foods each time.</p> <p>Mash and soften the enrichment foods so the baby can easily chew and swallow without choking.</p> <p>Cow's milk can be offered to your child in addition to the enrichment foods given, however, not to replace the enrichment foods.</p> <p>Add butter and oil every time.</p> <p>Animal foods (meat, liver, fish, eggs) are especially good for your baby and will keep it healthy and strong.</p> <p>Ripe orange/yellow fruits (papaya, mangos) and vegetables (carrots) are good sources of Vitamin A.</p> <p>Dark green leaves (kale, chard, <i>shiferaw</i>) and legumes contain important nutrients such as iron and will help your baby grow strong.</p> <p>Types of enrichment foods that can be given with the porridge include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oil and butter</li> <li>Meat and fish</li> <li>Eggs</li> <li>Peanuts, beans, peas or lentils</li> <li>Ripe papaya or mangoes</li> <li>Carrots</li> <li>Avocados</li> <li>Dark green leafy vegetables</li> </ul>

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
<p><b>4. Mother and father</b></p>	<p>From 6 to 12 months of age, in addition to the 2-3 servings of enriched porridge, also feed your baby 1-2 other solid foods (<i>mekses</i>) each day to ensure healthy growth.</p>	<p>Babies have small stomachs and can only eat small amounts at each meal so it important to feed them frequently throughout the day.</p>
		<p>By 8 months the baby should be able to begin eating finger foods such as pieces of ripe mango &amp; papaya, avocado, banana, other fruits &amp; vegetables, fresh &amp; fried bread products, boiled potato, sweet potato, <i>kita</i> (unleavened bread), etc.</p>
		<p>Feed these finger foods as snacks (<i>mekses</i>) at least 1-2 times each day</p>
		<p>Foods given to the child must be stored in hygienic conditions to avoid diarrhea and illness.</p>
<p><b>5. Mother and father</b></p>	<p>From 12 to 24 months of age, feed your child at least 3-4 times a day using family foods, along with 1-2 other solid foods (<i>mekses</i>) each day to ensure healthy growth.</p>	<p>It is very important that the family's meals are also enriched with a variety of foods and that the child eats a variety of foods.</p>
		<p>Young children have small stomachs and can only eat small amounts at each meal so it important to feed them frequently throughout the day.</p>
		<p>Other solid foods (<i>mekses</i>) can be given as many times as possible each day and can include ripe mango &amp; papaya, avocado, banana, other fruits &amp; vegetables, fresh &amp; fried bread products, boiled potato, sweet potato, <i>kita</i> (unleavened bread), etc.</p>
		<p>Foods given to the child must be stored in hygienic conditions to avoid diarrhea and illness.</p>

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
<p>6. Mothers and fathers</p>	<p>As your baby grows older, feed more food at each meal in order to ensure that they are eating enough to maintain healthy growth.</p>	<p>The following are examples of different foods &amp; their amounts that can be fed to infants &amp; young children. Change these recipes each day using a variety of different foods remembering to encourage your child to eat more at each meal as they get older:</p> <p><b><u>Each day a 6 to 8 months old baby can eat:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 full 'buna' cups of cooked soft sorghum porridge enriched with 1 teaspoon oil and 1 teaspoon of pea flour (<i>shiro</i>) [If two meals are fed to baby each day, feed 1 'buna' cup of enriched porridge at each meal] <u>and</u></li> <li>- 1 full 'buna' cup of milk (either given to baby in a cup or used to cook porridge instead of water) <u>and</u></li> <li>- 3 teaspoons of mashed ripe mango as <i>mekses</i> <u>and</u></li> <li>- juice of one small orange as <i>mekses</i> <u>and</u></li> <li>- iodized salt to cook enriched porridge</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Each day a 9 to 11 month old baby can eat:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 full 'buna' cups of cooked <i>enset</i> porridge enriched with 2 teaspoons oil, 3 leaves of kale, 1 teaspoon of pea flour (<i>shiro</i>) and 1 egg [If three meals are fed to the baby each day, feed 1 'buna' cup of enriched porridge at each meal] <u>and</u></li> <li>- 1 full 'buna' cup of milk (either given to baby in a cup or used to cook porridge instead of water) <u>and</u></li> <li>- 1/2 mashed ripe mango as <i>mekses</i> <u>and</u></li> <li>- 1 piece of cooked sweet potato as <i>mekses</i> <u>and</u></li> <li>- iodized salt to cook enriched porridge</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Each day a 12 to 24 month old child can eat:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 full 'buna' cups of <i>fitfit</i> made with: 1/3 injera circle, 2 teaspoons oil, 1 Tablespoon pea flour (<i>shiro</i>), 1 small onion, 1 potato and 3 leaves of kale. [Feed child this amount over 3-4 meals during the day] <u>and</u></li> <li>- 2 big 'buna' cups of milk (either given to baby in a cup or used to cook <i>fit fit</i> instead of water) <u>and</u></li> <li>- mashed papaya as <i>mekses</i> <u>and</u></li> <li>- 1 avocado as <i>mekses</i> <u>and</u></li> <li>- iodized salt to cook the <i>fitfit</i></li> </ul>

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
7. <b>Mother</b>	Be patient and actively encourage your baby to eat all its food in order to grow healthy.	At first the baby may need time to get used to eating foods other than breastmilk so have patience and take enough time to feed them, even using play to help them eat. Make the time for eating special.
		Use a separate plate to feed the child to make sure it eats all the food given.
		Forced feeding will discourage babies and young children from eating.
		As they are too little to feed themselves, babies need to be fed directly to make sure they eat all the food given to them.
		Even when older, young children should be supervised during mealtime to make sure they eat all the food put on their plate.
8. <b>Mother and father</b>	During illness, increase the frequency of breastfeeding and offer additional food to your child to help it recover faster.	Fluid and food requirements are higher during illness.
		Take time to patiently encourage your sick child to eat as their appetite may be decreased because of the illness.
		It is easier for a sick child to eat small frequent meals so feed the child foods it likes in small quantities throughout the day.
9. <b>Mother and father</b>	When your child has recovered from an illness, give it one additional meal of solid food each day during the two weeks that follow to help it recover quickly.	Children who have been sick need extra food and should be breastfed more frequently to regain the strength and weight lost during the illness.
		Take enough time to actively encourage your child to eat this extra food as they still may not appear hungry due to the illness.

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
<p><b>10. Mother and father</b></p>	<p>Feed your baby using a clean cup and spoon, never a bottle as this may cause your baby to get diarrhea.</p>	<p>Nutritious porridges for children should be thick enough to be fed by hand. Porridge that is too watery and can be fed with a bottle will not help your baby to grow.</p>
		<p>Bottles are very difficult to keep clean and can make your baby sick with diarrhea.</p>
		<p>Cups can be used to feed your baby, are easy to keep clean and are cheaper to buy than a bottle.</p>
<p><b>11. Mother and all family members</b></p>	<p>Wash your hands with soap and water before preparing food, before eating, and before feeding young children to avoid diarrhea.</p>	<p>Touching food with unclean hands can cause diarrhea.</p>
		<p>Utensils for feeding the baby also have to be clean.</p>
		<p>Use a cup to feed a baby or a young child never a bottle which can cause diarrhea.</p>
		<p>Foods given to the child must be stored in hygienic conditions to avoid diarrhea and illness.</p>
<p><b>12. Mother and father</b></p>	<p>When your baby is 6 months old, make sure it receives Vitamin A supplementation every six months to make it strong.</p>	<p>Ask a Health Worker to give Vitamin A supplementation two times a year to your child between 6 to 59 months of age.</p>
		<p>Vitamin A is important for your child's eyesight as well as will help your child fight illness.</p>
		<p>Be sure to bring your child to Vitamin A supplementation sessions during Child Health Days.</p>
<p><b>13. Mother and father</b></p>	<p>Find ripe orange/yellow fruits and vegetables or liver to feed your child to keep it healthy.</p>	<p>These foods are good sources of Vitamin A and other nutrients that will help your child grow strong and healthy.</p>
		<p>Children should eat these foods as often as possible.</p>

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
14. Mother and father	When your child is two years old, it has to receive de-worming medicine every six months to maintain healthy growth.	Ask a Health Worker for de-worming medicine to be given two times a year to your child between the ages of 2 to 5 years.
		Intestinal parasites cause young children to become anemic which will make your child unwell and tired.
15. All family members	Sleep under a insecticide treated net (INT), especially pregnant women and children, to prevent getting sick with malaria.	Malaria causes anemia which will make members of your family unwell and very tired.
		Family members with fever need to be taken to a health facility for immediate treatment.
16. Mother and father	Ensure that all family food is cooked using iodized salt so that family members remain healthy.	Iodized salt is not available everywhere, but should be used when available.
		Pregnant women need to use iodized salt to ensure the health of their new baby.

**Additional nutrition message for children 6 to 12 months on Vitamin D**

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
Mother and father	Expose your child to sunlight for 20 to 30 minutes daily to ensure it grows well	Exposure to sunshine will help ensure your child has adequate Vitamin D which is important for bone growth and good health.

## Key Messages for Ethiopia on Women's Nutrition

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
1. Husband	Ensure that your pregnant wife has one additional meal every day to maintain her strength.	Pregnant women need to eat a variety of foods, particularly animal products (meat, milk, eggs, etc), plus fruits & vegetables.
		Ripe papaya & mango, orange, carrot, pumpkin and liver are especially good.
		Pregnant women need to eat more food than usual rather than decrease their intake.
2. Husband	Make sure your pregnant wife gets iron/folate tablets to maintain her strength during the pregnancy.	Ask a Health Worker for iron/folate tablets to be given to your pregnant wife over a six month period.
		The six month course of iron/folate tablets can carry over even after the birth of the baby.
		Pregnant women have increased needs for iron.
		Iron/folate pills are important to prevent anemia in a pregnant woman and will help to keep her and the new baby healthy.
		Liver is a good food source of iron for a pregnant women.
3. Husband	Make sure your pregnant wife gets de-worming pills once in the second or third trimester of pregnancy.	Ask a Health Worker for mebendazole (500 mg) to be given once to your pregnant wife in the second or third trimester of pregnancy.
		Intestinal worms can cause anemia which leads to tiredness and poor health.
4. Husband	Ensure that your wife who is breastfeeding has two extra meals a day to maintain her health and the health of the baby.	To maintain their health, breastfeeding women need to eat a wide variety of foods, particularly animal products (meat, milk, eggs, etc), fruits and vegetables.
		Ripe papaya & mango, orange, carrot, pumpkin and liver are especially good for the mother.

WHO?	ACTION	WHY?
5. <b>Mother</b>	Take Vitamin A supplementation within 45 days of delivery for the baby's health and strength.	Ask a Health Worker for Vitamin A supplementation after the birth of the baby. Taking a Vitamin A capsule will enrich the mother's breastmilk with important nutrients to keep the baby healthy and strong.
6. <b>All family members</b>	Sleep under a insecticide treated net (INT), especially pregnant women and children, to prevent getting malaria.	Malaria causes anemia which will make members of your family unwell and very tired
		Family members with fever need to be taken to a health facility for immediate treatment