

Breastfeeding

Nature's Way

1997

JANUARY							JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	5
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
26	27	28	29	30	31		27	28	29	30	31		
FEBRUARY							AUGUST						
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APRIL							OCTOBER						
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MAY							NOVEMBER						
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
JUNE							30						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	DECEMBER						
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1997							28	29	30	31			

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Breastfeeding: Nature's Way

Breastmilk is the most ecologically sound food available to humans. It is produced and delivered to the consumer without any pollution. It is a natural resource of enormous value which is usually overlooked. Its use has only positive effects on the environment. However, breastmilk is threatened by social attitudes towards breastfeeding and, more significantly, by the promotional tactics of baby milk companies.

Most people know that breastfeeding is best for babies. Fewer people realize that it is also best for mother's health. On the other hand, bottle feeding causes the deaths of one and a half million babies every year and ill health in countless others. It also pollutes our air, water and land, wastes resources, creates disposal problems and increases population levels.

Bottle feeding harm the environment:

- Packaging of baby milks and related equipment wastes resources such as tin, paper, glass, plastic, rubber and silicon. These materials are rarely recycled, so they increase our disposal problems.
- Baby milks are the end product of a number of industrial processes. The energy used to create the required high temperatures and mechanical procedures causes air pollution (acid rain and greenhouse gases) and uses natural resources in the form of fuel.
- The milk and packaging materials often travel considerable distances before processing and, once ready for the market, baby milks have to be transported to the consumer.
- Water, bottles and teats have to be sterilized before use. Specially in the South, water and fuel are often precious resources.
- Manufacturers use huge amounts of paper and other resources to promote their baby milks.

Breastfeeding protects our environment:

- Breastmilk produces no waste: it is produced in the right amounts for the baby's needs. Mothers need only the smallest amount of extra energy, which is often taken from body fat (even malnourished mothers can produce enough breastmilk to feed a baby).

- Breastmilk needs no extra packaging and is ready to use at the right temperature.
- Breastmilk does not have to be shipped around the world (but a mother has a ready supply wherever she goes).
- Most women do not menstruate when breastfeeding and therefore need fewer towels, tampons or cloths. This reduces the need for fibres, bleaching, packaging and disposal.
- Breastfeeding passes on immunization and other health benefits to the baby, saving lives, preventing illness and distress and saving money and health service resources.

Environmental and other consumer organizations, as well as governments, should recognize the ecological benefits of breastfeeding. Health workers should be well trained in the support of breastfeeding and hospital policies should reflect a commitment to breastfeeding.

You can do about it, locally:

- Raise the issue of breastfeeding at environmental events.
- Write articles and letters and for the newsletters.
- Inform your elected politicians of this issue and ask for their support.
- Combat misleading information about toxins in breastmilk.
- Join or form a mothers' support group.
- Ask your employer and trade union to support policies which will provide creches and adequate maternity leave.

And nationally:

- Contact organizations working on environmental issues to ensure that they recognize and publicize the ecological benefits of breastfeeding.
- Join one of the groups which campaign to force their baby milk companies to end their unethical marketing practices.
- Join a breastfeeding promotion group and encourage networking with environmental pressure groups.
- Urge your country's government to adopt as law the WHO/UNICEF International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and to give mothers the right to adequate maternity leave and childcare provision.

WBW Coordinating and Distributing Centres

Regional and acting regional coordinating centres for WBW 1997 are:

AFRICA

IBFAN Africa (English)
PO Box 781, Mbabane, Swaziland
Tel: (268) 45006 Fax: 44246
IBFAN Afrique Francophone c/o APAIB
01 B. P. 6287, Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso
Tel: (226) 303804 Fax: 303888

AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND & THE PACIFIC

Nursing Mothers Association of Australia (NMAA)
PO Box 231, Nunawading VIC 3131, Australia
Tel: (61-3) 9877 5011 Fax: 9894 3270

Secretary PINDA, c/o Continuing Education

USP (University of South Pacific)
P.O. Box 1168, Suva, Fiji Fax: (679) 300482

BRAZIL & LUSOPHONE COUNTRIES

ORIGEM / WABA Brazil (Portuguese)
Av. Beira Mar, 3661 Loja 19, Casa Caiada
Olinda, PE, 53130-540, Brazil
Tel/Fax: (55 81) 432 1913
Email: origem@elogica.com.br

CENTRAL AMERICA

CEFEMINA (Spanish)

Apartado 5355, 1000 San Jose, Costa Rica
Tel: (506-2) 571756 Fax: 571758

NORTH AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

La Leche League International (LLL)
1400 N. Meacham Road, Schaumburg
IL 60173- 4840 USA
Tel: (1-708) 5197730 Fax: 5190035

EUROPE

Baby Milk Action (BMAC)
St. Andrew's St., Cambridge CB2 3AX, UK
Tel: (44-1223) 464420 Fax: 464417
Geneva Infant Feeding Association (GIFA)
PO Box 157, CH-1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland
Tel: (41-22) 7989164 Fax: 7984443

SOUTH ASIA

Breastfeeding Promotion Networks of India (BPNI) PO Box 10551, BP 33, Pitampura, Delhi 110034, India Tel: (91-11) 7211435 Fax: 7134787

ASIA

WABA Secretariat, PO Box 1200, 10850 Penang Malaysia
Tel: (60-4) 6584816 Fax: 6572655
Your local coordinating office is:

WABA is a global network of organizations and individuals who believe breastfeeding is the right of all children and mothers and devote themselves to protect, promote and support that right. WABA acts to help implement the Innocenti Declaration and works in close liaison with UNICEF.

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.



WABA - PO Box 1200, 10850
Penang Malaysia
Tel: 60-4-6584 816
Fax: 60-4-6572 655
E-Mail: secr@waba.po.my