



Breastfeeding saves lives



ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ЈАВНО ЗДРАВЉЕ СРБИЈЕ
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Република Србија
МИНИСТАРСТВО ЗДРАВЉА



If you are a breastfeeding mother you need to know:

1. **Breastmilk is the best food for babies under all circumstances but is particularly beneficial in times of emergencies as it is always available, hygienic and contains all necessary nutritious elements.**
2. Mothers in emergencies and under stress can still produce sufficient quantities of milk. If the quantity of mother's milk reduces due to stress and exhaustion, mother should not give up breastfeeding but rather, should seek and receive emotional and practical support from the closest ones and health workers in the refugee camp. Getting enough rest, food and water is very important.
3. More frequent breastfeeding, at least 10 times in 24 hours, maintains further milk production – the more often mother breastfeeds her baby, the more milk is produced. This is the way to secure sufficient supply of food for your baby in emergency.
4. If, during the emergency, breastfeeding is discontinued, it is important to know that it can be re-established! Producing sufficient quantities of milk most often can be stimulated by putting the baby on the breasts for frequent feeding and by manual extraction and breast massage and by making the mother feel confident.
5. Mother's milk strengthens the immune system of the baby, which reduces the risk of coming down with infectious diseases, such as acute respiratory infections and diarrhea, two major child killers.
6. Baby does not need any other food or liquid except mother's milk, during the first 6 months of life. Mother's milk contains adequate amount of water that baby needs, even in warmest and driest days.
7. Mothers who breastfeed their babies in the first 6 months should continue doing so until the baby is two years or more. In addition, after 6 months other hygienic and nutritious foods should be offered along with breastmilk.
8. During emergencies it can happen that infant formulas are being distributed or offered to mothers of young children. Breastfeeding mothers do not need to provide infant formula or other breastmilk substitutes to their babies. Using infant formula and other breastmilk substitutes will reduce production of breastmilk which is optimal for baby's health and development. Use of infant formula or other breastmilk substitutes during an emergency carries high risks of malnutrition and illnesses and should be the last resort.
9. If mother experience any problem with breastfeeding or is unable to breastfeed her baby, the assistance should be sought from health workers in the refugee camp or local community, or from NGOs providing breastfeeding support, if such NGOs exist. The decision of initiating usage of formula, only when it becomes necessary, should be based on careful needs assessment.

Do not hesitate to look for support and advice when you need it!