BREASTFEEDING GLOBALLY: AN OVERVIEW

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WHY BREASTFEEDING?

• Provides optimal nutrition and protective factors for infants and young children

• Suboptimal breastfeeding contributes to over 800,000 child deaths annually
  — Exclusively breastfed infants in lower- and middle-income countries (LMICs) have only 12% risk of mortality as compared to those who were not breastfed\(^1\)

• Nearly 600,000 childhood deaths (6–59 months) from diarrhea and pneumonia each year can be attributed to not breastfeeding \(^2\)
  — Nearly half of all diarrhea episodes and one-third of all respiratory infections in children could be prevented with breastfeeding\(^1\)

• Breastfeeding may prevent nearly 100,000 deaths in women from breast and ovarian cancers and type II diabetes\(^2\)

• Lactational amenorrhea method supports healthy birth spacing

\(^1\)Victora et al. 2016 *Lancet.*
GOALS AND TARGETS for Global Breastfeeding

World Health Organization recommendation for optimal breastfeeding practices:

• Early initiation of breastfeeding (within 1 hour of birth)
• Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months
• Continued breastfeeding for up to 2 years and beyond

World Health Assembly Nutrition Target for Breastfeeding:

Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 50% by 2025 and 70% by 2030

Photo: Kate Consavage, USAID
GOALS AND TARGETS for Global Breastfeeding

WHO/UNICEF Global Breastfeeding Collective Scorecard 2019

Current rates and targets of breastfeeding practices

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>CURRENT PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>2030 TARGET</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of babies breastfed within an hour of birth</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of babies under 6 months old exclusively breastfed</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of children still breastfed at 1 year of age</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of children still breastfed at 2 years of age</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>60%</td>
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Breastfeeding Practices in USAID Maternal and Child Nutrition Priority Countries

Children who started breastfeeding within 1 hour of birth

Among live-born children born in the two years preceding the survey the percentage who started breastfeeding within 1 hour of birth.

- Bangladesh 2014 DHS
- Cambodia 2014 DHS
- Congo Democratic Republic 2013-14 DHS
- Ethiopia 2016 DHS
- Ghana 2014 DHS
- Guatemala 2014-15 DHS
- Haiti 2016-17 DHS
- Kenya 2014 DHS
- Malawi 2015-16 DHS
- Mali 2012-13 DHS
- Nepal 2016 DHS
- Nigeria 2013 DHS
- Rwanda 2014-15 DHS
- Senegal 2017 DHS
- Taliban 2017 DHS
- Tanzania 2015-16 DHS
- Uganda 2016 DHS
- Zambia 2013-14 DHS

Breastfeeding Practices in USAID Maternal and Child Nutrition Priority Countries

Children exclusively breastfed

Percentage of youngest children under two years of age living with the mother who are exclusively breastfed
Breastfeeding Practices in USAID Maternal and Child Nutrition Priority Countries
CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS to Breastfeeding Globally


Figure 1: Global distribution of breastfeeding at 12 months
Data are from 153 countries between 1995 and 2013.

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS to Breastfeeding Globally

- Delayed initiation of breastfeeding: pre-lacteal feeds, discarding colostrum, caesarean delivery
- Low exclusive breastfeeding
- Attitudes and perceptions of the mother, family, community
- International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes violations and influence of breast milk substitutes marketing
- Access to lactation support
- Access to facility-based childbirth
- Maternal employment protections
- Breastfeeding in humanitarian emergencies

USAID Nutrition Strategy Goal
Improve nutrition to save lives, build resilience, increase economic productivity, and advance development
USAID Efforts to Promote Breastfeeding Globally

- Strengthening health services and quality of delivery
- Improving capacity to address special cases (e.g., HIV, prematurity, low birth weight)
- Community-based breastfeeding education, counseling, and support
- Implementing social and behavior change interventions
- Engaging fathers, caregivers, families, and community members

Photo: USAID’s Suaahara II project, Nepal
USAID Efforts to Promote Breastfeeding Globally

- Supporting breastfeeding in humanitarian crises
- Partnering with governments and organizations to promote policies and programs to protect and promote breastfeeding
- Enhancing capacity for national data collection
- Generating and dissemination evidence on breastfeeding

Photo: Karen Kasmauski, USAID’s Maternal and Child Survival Program