

Summary

Do s and Don't s on feeding under 5 children during periods of economic crisis

The health staff should encourage and guide parents and caregivers to feed the children an adequate number of nutritious but low cost meals which can be prepared with the locally available food items.

The following is to serve as guidance for all public health staff when counseling parents/caregivers on child feeding and nutrition during these critical times.

Do s

- Exclusively breastfeed till six months are completed.
 - Practice demand breastfeeding in response to baby's hunger cues.
- Continue breastfeeding age appropriately for two years or even beyond along with nutritious food thereafter
 - During second 6 months 3-4 breastfeeds during day time and perhaps once during the night time
 - After 1 year of age 2-3 times during the day time.
 - In the extreme situations when the food availability is very limited the breastfeeding frequency can be increased irrespective of these recommendations. If breastfed at least once a day, increasing the frequency of suckling will increase your breast milk supply.
- Increase the frequency of complementary food as recommended for age after starting complementary food from 6 months onwards.
- Breastfeed after a meal and not before the meal to make the baby get a good appetite.
- Give home prepared nutritious food
 - Buy even a small quantity of nutritious food items to be cooked at home- rice, pulses, fish, sprats, "koonisso", eggs, vegetables, green leaves, fruits, oil and coconut etc.
 - Try to grow some nutritious food items in the home premises as well.
- Know the appropriate frequency of meals for your baby.
- If food is very limited - try to give the main meals at least and breastfeed in between.
- If Thripasha or an equivalent is available (for under nourished children) give it as snacks.
- Make every possible effort to give the appropriate quantity of food per main meal for your baby. Growing children should be prioritized when providing food.
- If this is difficult, try to increase the energy density (e.g. by adding some oil, thick coconut milk, blended/ground scraped coconut....)
- Whatever nutritious food that is available at the moment in the household can be used for the babies (while adhering to recommendations on salt and sugar).
- Make the food more nutritious for the baby by simple measures
 - Adding roasted powdered sprats/seeds/pulses, koonissa, eggs, green leaves, bread fruit, jack and jack seeds, fruits, manioc, sweet potatoes, any other yam, kottamba, cashew etc. depending on availability adding several items together...
- Practice responsive feeding to get the maximum out of what is fed
- Stick to the age appropriate meal frequency (unless advised otherwise for medical reasons).
- Cultivate good feeding habits

- As much as possible synchronize the baby's meal times with the family meal time.
- Make the family sit and eat together without other distractions (TV, mobile phone etc.)
- Practice positive interactions during meal times (praising good feeding habits such as eating the required amounts, eating a variety of food, self-feeding etc. to encourage feeding)

Don't s

- Do not give ready to eat food bought from outside such as formula milk, baby rusks, commercial complementary food, biscuits, imported food items including imported fruits/canned or tinned or packaged food, sweets, junk food, other store bought ready to eat food etc.
- Avoid sugary foods (e.g. sweets) and beverages including cola drinks and malted drinks as these are not suitable for children and may also cut down the intake of more nutritious food.
- Do not force feed