

Feeding infants and young children in difficult situations

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What matters

Safety

- Breastfeeding
- Formula/bottlefeeding

Resilience

- Emotional safety

Practical help

Breastfeeding is the safest way to feed infants under any circumstance and especially under difficult circumstances

BUT THIS IS NOT ALWAYS WELL KNOWN OR SUPPORTED

Breastfeeding is hard for the mother:
it's exhausting and stressful

Breastfeeding offers endorphins and
oxytocin to help mothers relax and bond
with their baby

Milkproduction will stop when mother
is under stress

Milkflow may be hindered temporarily by
stress, milkproduction itself is robust

If mother is stressed her milk won't be
good for her baby: it will pass her
stress onto the baby

Breastmilk is always good for babies, and
the act of breastfeeding itself will help
both mother and baby relax and feel safe

Formula feeding is safe because you
know if baby is getting enough

Formulafeeding is only relatively safe if
good hygiene and clean drinking water are
available; it offers no additional protection
or healthbenefits

Breastfeeding

Feed early

- First hour after birth
- Don't stretch time between feeds to a schedule

Feed often

- This does not take more time
- Stimulates milkproduction
- Helps baby stay calm

Pay attention to latch

Skin to skin contact will increase calm,
minimise weightloss and increase
milkproduction



Bottle/formulafeeding

Make sure water is safe to drink

Make sure there is enough clean water to drink and for hygiene

When water is in short supply avoid bottles; use cupfeeding, preferably with disposable cups

Frequent smaller feeds are easier to digest

If formula is given in addition to breastfeeding offer small amounts after breastfeeding in order to interfere as little as possible with milkproduction



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9EIS-RW7gM>

Emotional safety: mindfulness

Better decisionmaking

Better sleep

Better immune system

Better digestion

Improves contact

Better milkflow



Breathing is enough
Being present is enough

MOTHERS* DON'T HAVE TO RELAX

*OR OTHER CAREGIVERS



How to use feedingtimes to bond and calm

Every feeding moment is an invitation to mindfulness

Breath is a powerful tool to regulate stress

Babies need co-regulation by a caregiver

Every feeding moment may hopefully offer

- Physically safe food
- Emotionally safe feeding



<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/infant-and-young-child-feeding>

Elacta online lecture on the importance of breastfeeding

<https://www.elacta.eu/news/breastfeeding-support-in-the-ukrainian-emergency/>