



Breastfeeding: Fast Facts

Ahead of World Breastfeeding Week, celebrated every year from 1 to 7 August in more than 120 countries, the Association for Dietetics in South Africa sends out a clear message: breast is best and families should make a conscious decision to choose breastfeeding to feed their babies, and so nurture their children's short and long term health.

Here are some fast facts related to breastfeeding:

- 25 – The percentage of mothers in South Africa who exclusively breastfeed, according to a 2010 study by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC);
- 75 – the percentage of mothers in South Africa who use formula or mixed feeding of breast milk, formula, solids and other liquids during their baby's first six months, according to the same HSRC report;
- Six (6) – the age in months up to which babies should be exclusively breast-fed with no other solids or liquids, as recommended by the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding by the World Health Organization (WHO) and The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Department of Health;
- 30 – the number of minutes within which mothers who are physically able to should breastfeed their newborn infant after birth. This not only promotes bonding between mother and child but also ensures that breastfeeding is imprinted on the baby's young brain making it easier to breastfeed thereafter.
- Two (2) - the age up to which breastfeeding should continue, with complementary nutritious solid foods to ensure optimum health and development for young children.
- 88 – the percentage of water found in breast milk, meaning pure breast milk is more than enough to satisfy a baby's thirst without extra water and teas during the first six months of their life. Breast milk, including expressed milk, also provides all the energy and nutrients the infant needs and has other health and development benefits.
- 1 – the first milk, colostrum, provides important immune protection to an infant when he or she is first exposed to micro-organisms in the environment. Colostrum also contains a growth factor to help prepare the lining of the gut to receive the nutrients in milk.

For more information on breastfeeding and nutrition, contact a registered dietitian. Visit www.adsa.org.za

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