

WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK • 1 – 7 AUGUST 2008

Mother Support: Going for Gold



HISTORY

In 1991, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) organised a three day meeting involving 17 national and international organisations to strategise for a coordinated global effort to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. The two main workable actions that emerged at that meeting was the idea of a World Breastfeeding Day (which later evolved to become World Breastfeeding Week) and a Baby-Friendly Hospital campaign. The theme for the first World Breastfeeding Week campaign in 1992 was The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI).

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) Secretariat was started in Penang, Malaysia to facilitate the coordination of WABA activities globally. Today WABA continues to operate from Penang, Malaysia and is in consultative status with UNICEF.

THEME 2008: MOTHER SUPPORT – GOING FOR GOLD

As we wait to welcome the 2008 Olympics which will be held from 8 – 24 August, World Breastfeeding Week 2008 reminds communities of the critical need to increase support for mothers who are striving to achieve the gold standard of infant feeding:

- to breastfeed their babies exclusively for the first six months; and,
- to continue breastfeeding together with feeding other appropriate complementary foods up to two years and beyond.

Just like a competing athlete, mothers too need lots of encouragement and support to overcome challenges to successfully breastfeed.

For a breastfeeding mother, these challenges include overcoming misinformation, maintaining breastfeeding while working outside the home, coping in emergency situations and, most importantly, overcoming doubts about her ability to breastfeed her baby.

Belief in oneself is a key ingredient for success for both the athlete and the mother.

This year's World Breastfeeding Week aims to create awareness and inspire families, health care practitioners, communities, governments, civil society, and the workplace to provide support to a breastfeeding mother.

www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org

1. Address each mother and baby's situation as individual and unique; be sensitive to the needs of a breastfeeding mother.
2. Listen empathetically to learn a mother's concern; refrain from talking except to ask questions for clarity; provide just enough information for her to make her own choices.
3. Ensure that fathers and families are well informed so that they can support each woman in breastfeeding.
4. Hold governments, workplaces, and society responsible to create an environment in which every woman is fully enabled to have the choice to breastfeed and to act on her decision.
5. Believe that a mother can successfully breastfeed and tell her that; on the other hand, recognise when a mother needs more help than you can offer.

Five Golden Rules to Support Breastfeeding