

Ministry of Health, UNICEF and WHO Myanmar Statement on Safe Feeding for
Infants
(30 September 2008)

ENSURE SAFE FEEDING FOR INFANTS AND INCREASE VIGILANCE

The Ministry of Health, Government of Myanmar is taking prompt actions in response to contaminated milk powder issue. The Government of Myanmar has conducted search for possible contaminated milk formula in the market, initiated testing for melamine in milk products and increased surveillance for affected children by asking paediatrician to report infants seeking treatment for renal problems and having history of feeding with infant milk formula. The Ministry of Health (MoH), UNICEF and WHO are actively supporting promotion of safe feeding for infants and urging parents to ensure exclusive breastfeeding for their infants for the first six months.

Breast milk is a gift of life to infants, the best nutrition option and a good preventive medicine against diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections and other infections. Infants with diarrhoea easily become malnourished and dehydrated and so are at real risk of death. It is estimated that exclusive breastfeeding to the age of six months could prevent the deaths of million children each year in the world.

MoH, UNICEF and WHO recommend that all infants should be fed exclusively with breast milk for the first six months of life. We also encourage early initiation of breastfeeding which starts within one hour after birth. No other liquid or food, not even water, is needed during this period. Thereafter, infants should receive adequate and safe complementary foods while breastfeeding continues up to two years of age or beyond.

Echoing this year's Breastfeeding Week theme, Mother Support, Going for the Gold, we are working together to support mothers by creating an enabling environment to exclusively breastfeed their children for six months.

In addition, we have to work together more to facilitate private sectors' understanding and cooperation to keep the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, which includes no advertising of breastmilk substitutes to families, no promotion and no free distribution of products through health care facilities, no words or pictures idealizing artificial feeding.

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