

EXCLUSIVELY BREASTFED FOR THE FIRST TWO DAYS AFTER BIRTH

Indicator Phrasing

English: % of children born in the last 24 months who were fed exclusively with breast milk for the first two days after birth

French: % d'enfants nés au cours des 24 derniers mois qui ont été nourris exclusivement avec du lait maternel pendant les deux premiers jours après la naissance

Portuguese: % de crianças nascidas nos últimos 24 meses que foram alimentadas exclusivamente com leite materno nos primeiros dois dias após o nascimento

Czech: % dětí narozených za posledních 24 měsíců, které byly první dva dny po narození krmeny výhradně mateřským mlékem

What is its purpose?

It is common in many countries to give newborns other foods and liquids apart from breastmilk in the first few days after birth, such as sugar water, honey, alternative milks or tea. This practice can delay newborns' first critical contact with their mother, and can make it more difficult to establish breastfeeding over the long term. Therefore, this indicator measures the extent to which the WHO recommendation of feeding only breastmilk is followed.

How to Collect and Analyse the Required Data

Collect the following data by conducting individual interviews with mothers of (a [representative sample](#) of) children aged 0 - 23 months:

RECOMMENDED SURVEY QUESTION (Q) AND POSSIBLE ANSWERS (A)

Q1: *How long after birth did you put [child's name] to the breast?*

A1:

- 1) within one hour of birth
- 2) within _____ hours of birth
- 3) within _____ days of birth
- 4) child was never breastfed
- 5) does not remember

(ask the following question only if the child was breastfed within the first two days after birth)

Q2: *In the first two days after delivery, was [child's name] given anything other than breast milk to eat or drink – anything at all like water, infant formula, or [insert common drinks and foods, including ritual feeds, that may be given to newborn infants]?*

A2:

- 1) yes
- 2) no
- 3) doesn't remember

If the respondent has more than one child aged 0 - 23 months, ask Q1 and Q2 about all the children aged 0 - 23 months.

To **calculate the indicator's value**, divide the number of children aged 0 - 23 months who were fed exclusively with breast milk (see below) for the first two days after birth by the total number of surveyed children aged 0 - 23 months (excluding those who did not remember). Multiply the result by 100 to convert it to a percentage.

Important Comments

1) According to WHO/UNICEF (see below), exclusive breastfeeding is defined as breastfeeding with no other food or drink, not even water. Breastfeeding by a **wet nurse**, feeding of **expressed breast milk**, and feeding of donor human milk all count as being fed breast milk. **Prescribed medicines, oral rehydration solution, vitamins and minerals** are not counted as fluids or foods. However, herbal fluids and similar traditional medicines are counted as fluids, and infants who consume these are not exclusively breastfed.

Access Additional Guidance

- WHO/UNICEF (2021) [Indicators for Assessing IYCF Practices](#)
- FAO (2008) [Guidelines for Estimating the Month and Year of Birth of Young Children](#)