The IMCI course for first-level health workers integrates case management of common childhood illnesses with preventive interventions to promote health and develop-
ment. It includes basic knowledge and skills for how to support infant and young
child feeding, including an assessment of feeding practices and counselling for all
children under two years of age. The generic IMCI course was updated and adapt-
ed for settings with HIV infection in 2006 and is also available as the Integrated


The IMCI course is also finalizing a new and updated indicators for infant and young child feeding agreed in 2007 as a collaborative effort of multiple partners. The indicators include meas-
ures of dietary diversity, feeding frequency, and consumption of iron-rich foods as proxies for adequacy of complementary feeding. The indicators are intended for use in large-scale population-based surveys such as Demographic and Health
Surveys (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS). As companion doc-
uments, an operational guide on measurement issues and an update with indicator
overcome feeding difficulties when they occur.


The department is also finalizing a training course on early initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding, and timely introduction of adequate complementary foods with continued breastfeeding. Modules will become available incre-
mentally in the course of 2009.


CAH is currently developing a package of training materials for community health workers entitled Caring for newborns and children in the community. The materials are composed of various modules, including on the management of the sick child, home-based postnatal care, and healthy child care practices. The training will equip community health workers to support infant and young child feed-
ing, including early initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding, and timely introduction of adequate complementary foods with continued breastfeeding. Modules will become available incre-
mentally in the course of 2009.

The Department is also finalizing a Model Chapter on infant and young child feeding for medical students and allied health professionals. This document is intended for use in the basic training of health professionals. The Chapter includes knowledge and descriptions of the essential skills that every health worker should master to support infant and young child feeding and to help caregivers overcome feeding difficulties when they occur.


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Infant and young child feeding

Good nutrition is critical for healthy growth and development of infants
and young children. The WHO/ UNICEF Global strategy for infant
and young child feeding summarizes the actions that governments and
other concerned parties should take to promote, protect and support
appropriate infant and young child feeding. This brochure presents tools
developed and supported by WHO’s Department of Child and Adolescent
Health and Development, in collaboration with other relevant
WHO departments and partners, to facilitate the implementation of the
Global Strategy and increase coverage of effective interventions.
Up to 70% of newborn deaths occur in babies who are of low birth weight; many of which could be prevented with adequate care and feeding. This systematic review addresses the questions of what to feed, when to start feeding, how to feed, how often and how much to feed low-birth-weight babies. The outcomes considered are mortality, morbidity, growth and development. The review is the basis of practical guidelines and training materials on feeding low-birth-weight babies that will be published in 2009.

This systematic review and meta-analysis demonstrates that people who were breastfed in their infancy have reduced risk factors for cardiovascular diseases in later life. They have lower mean and total cholesterol, higher performance on intelligence tests, and lower prevalence of overweight/obesity and of Type 2 Diabetes. The review substantiates the fact that being breastfed has long-term benefits on health.

GUIDELINES ON COMPLEMENTARY FEEDING
Guiding principles for complementary feeding of the breastfed child (2003)
The ten guiding principles summarised in this document are the basic for practical feeding recommendations for breastfed children 6-23 months of age. The principles set standards for dietary guidelines, and discuss when, where and how young children should be fed. Further background that contributed to their formulation is published in the Food and Nutrition Bulletin. Special Issue based on a WHO expert consultation on complementary feeding. Volume 24 (1) March 2003.

Guiding principles for feeding non-breastfed children 6-24 months of age (2005)
There are infants who will not enjoy the benefits of breastfeeding, including those born to HIV-infected mothers who choose not to breastfeed. These guiding principles are based on a detailed assessment of the feasibility of preparing adequate diets for non-breastfed children, using locally available foods. Annexes provide guidance on the process of developing feeding recommendations and on key issues around early cessation of breastfeeding for infants of HIV-infected mothers.

Recommendations for country-based management of uncomplicated severe malnutrition were agreed by leading experts and international agencies in 2006, paving the way for an important acceleration in treatment coverage of severe malnutrition. The statement makes practical recommendations for what countries can do to save the lives of severely malnourished children, as well as what international partners can do.

HIV and infant feeding
The Department has developed a range of tools and materials on HIV and infant feeding that are summarized in a separate brochure. These can also be downloadable from the CAH web site.

Guiding principles for complementary feeding of the breastfed child (2003)
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Breastfeeding counselling: a training course (1993)
The course is designed to help health workers acquire the knowledge and the skills to support mothers to breastfeed optimally, and to help overcome problems when they occur. It is appropriate for building the skills of breastfeeding counsellors, as well as for training trainers and supervisors who support primary health care work-ers in acquiring knowledge and skills to deliver a basic package of child health interventions.