

TABLE 1

Contribution of Breastfeeding, Complementary Feeding, and Related Maternal Nutrition to the Millennium Development Goals		
MDGs	Goals and Targets	Contribution of Infant and Young Child feeding (i.e., Early and Exclusive Breastfeeding, continued breastfeeding with complementary feeding and related maternal nutrition)
Goal 1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Breastfeeding significantly reduces early childhood feeding costs, and exclusive breastfeeding halves the cost of breastfeeding ¹ . Exclusive breastfeeding and continued breastfeeding for two years is associated with reduction in underweight ² and is an excellent source of high quality calories for energy. By reducing fertility, exclusive breastfeeding reduces reproductive stress. Breastfeeding provides breast milk, serving as low-cost, high quality, locally produced food and sustainable food security for the child.
Goal 2	Achieve universal primary education	Breastfeeding and adequate complementary feeding are prerequisites for readiness to learn ³ . Breastfeeding and quality complementary foods significantly contribute to cognitive development and capacity. In addition to the balance of long chain fatty acids in breast milk which support neurological development, initial exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding address micronutrient and iron deficiency needs and, hence, support appropriate neurological development and enhance later school performance.
Goal 3	Promote gender equality and empower women	Breastfeeding is the great equalizer, giving every child a fair start on life. Most differences in growth between sexes begin as complementary foods are added into the diet, and gender preference begins to act on feeding decisions. Breastfeeding also empowers women: increased birth spacing secondary to breastfeeding helps prevent maternal depletion from short birth intervals, only women can provide it, enhancing women's capacity to feed children / increases focus on need for women's nutrition to be considered
Goal 4	Reduce child mortality	By reducing infectious disease incidence and severity, breastfeeding could readily reduce child mortality by about 13%, and improved complementary feeding would reduce child mortality by about 6% ⁴ . In addition, about 50-60% of under-5 mortality is caused by malnutrition due to inadequate complementary foods and feeding following on poor breastfeeding practices ⁵ and, also, to low birth weight. The impact is increased in unhygienic settings. The micronutrient content of breastmilk, especially during exclusive breastfeeding, and from complementary feeding can provide essential micronutrients in adequate quantities, as well as necessary levels of protein and carbohydrates.
Goal 5	Improve maternal health	The activities called for in the Global Strategy include increased attention to support for the mother's nutritional and social needs. In addition, breastfeeding is associated with decreased maternal postpartum blood loss, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and endometrial cancer, as well as the probability of decreased bone loss post-menopause. Breastfeeding also contributes to the duration of birth intervals, reducing maternal risks of pregnancy too close together, including lessening risk of maternal nutritional depletion from repeated, closely-spaced pregnancies. Breastfeeding promotes return of the mother's body to pre-pregnancy status, including more rapid involution of the uterus and postpartum weight loss (obesity prevention).
Goal 6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases	Based on extrapolation from the published literature on the impact of exclusive breastfeeding on MTCT, exclusive breastfeeding in a population of untested breastfeeding HIV-infected population could be associated with a significant and measurable reduction in MTCT.
Goal 7	Ensure environmental sustainability	Breastfeeding is associated with decreased milk industry waste, pharmaceutical waste, plastics and aluminum tin waste, and decreased use of firewood/fossil fuels for alternative feeding preparation ⁶ , less CO2 emission as a result of fossil fuels, and less emissions from transport vehicles as breastmilk is locally produced.
Goal 8	Develop a global partnership for development	The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding fosters multi-sectoral collaboration, and can build upon the extant partnerships for support of development through breastfeeding and complementary feeding. In terms of future economic productivity, optimal infant feeding has major implications.