

# Prevalence of Prelacteal Feeding Across the World\*

## What it is?

Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life is beneficial for mother and baby and implies that an infant receives breast milk without any additional food or drink, even water, for the first six months.<sup>1</sup> Any food provided to a newborn before the initiation of maternal breastfeeding is considered to be a prelacteal feed.<sup>2</sup> The type of prelacteal feed is often culturally determined.

## Why it matters?

The practice of giving prelacteal feeds is a key determinant of early cessation of full breastfeeding.<sup>4</sup> Prelacteal feeding is associated with an increased risk of illness from acute respiratory tract infections<sup>4</sup> and diarrhea.<sup>5</sup> Children with a history of prelacteal feeding are 16 times more likely to develop diarrhea.<sup>5</sup> Studies show that poor breastfeeding knowledge, breast-feeding misconceptions, and beliefs about social norms with regard to breastfeeding influences rates of prelacteal feeding.<sup>6\*</sup>

\*Given as liquid feeds

>70%

**BANGLADESH 92%**  
Honey, milk (other than breast or infant formula)<sup>13</sup>

**VIETNAM 73.3%**  
Sugar | glucose water, plain water, honey<sup>10</sup>

**HONDURAS 31%**  
Milk (other than breast or infant formula)<sup>23</sup>

**EGYPT 60%**  
Sugar | glucose water, teas<sup>8</sup>

**CHINA 37.5%**  
Plain water, infant formula, milk (other than breast or infant formula)<sup>21</sup>

**PHILIPPINES 55%**  
Plain water, infant formula, milk (other than breast or infant formula)<sup>18</sup>

**NIGERIA 56%**  
Sugar | glucose water, milk (other than breast or infant formula)<sup>15</sup>

**INDONESIA 60%**  
Infant formula and tea<sup>28</sup>

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 55.2%**  
Milk (other than breast or infant formula)<sup>23</sup>

**INDIA 60%**  
Ghutti: water mixed with honey and herbs, teas<sup>12</sup>

31-69%

**KENYA 26.8%**  
Sugar | glucose water, plain water, infant formula<sup>16</sup>

**NEPAL 26.5%**  
Teas, milk (other than breast or infant formula)<sup>9</sup>

**ETHIOPIA 27%**  
Makamesha: butter, cow's milk, ersho (a traditional baking soda prepared by incubating flour and double distilled water)<sup>7</sup>

**LYBIA 18.5%**  
Sugar | glucose water, honey<sup>19</sup>

**BOLIVIA 17%**  
Teas, infant formula, honey<sup>22</sup>

**MYANMAR 20%**  
Water, infant formula, condensed milk mixed with water<sup>29</sup>

**SOUTH AFRICA 29%**  
Teas, infant formula, honey<sup>26</sup>

<30%

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