



## Prevention in children and adolescents AEPap/PAPPS

### Support to breastfeeding in Primary Care

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

Human milk is recognized as the ideal nourishment for all children due to its proven health benefits for mother and child. WHO and other organizations recommend exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life and, at least until two years, complemented with other foods. This recommendation extends to sick and preterm newborns, with rare exceptions. Proofs on the protecting effect of breastfeeding for child and mother health are very robust relating to fourteen diseases as it has been referred recently: nine child diseases (acute lymphocytic leukemia, acute otitis media, Crohn disease, ulcerative colitis, gastrointestinal infection, respiratory tract infection with hospital admission, obesity, necrotizing enterocolitis and sudden infant death syndrome) and five mother diseases (breast cancer, premenopausal ovarian cancer, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and heart attack). If WHO recommendation on duration of breastfeeding were accomplished in EE.UU. 3340 deaths would be prevented each year based in these fourteen mentioned diseases: 2619 women deaths and 721 children deaths. Moreover, 14 200 million dollars could be saved annually. Therefore, due to the relevant health benefits for the population in general and also in the economic field, support to breastfeeding should be a priority for all health professionals.

### Recommendations

Considering that support to breastfeeding in Primary Care, taken all the interventions as a whole, has a positive and consistent benefit with a minimum risk of adverse events and considering that it needs available and acceptable resources:

- We recommend implementing breastfeeding support measures in Primary Care to extend de duration of breastfeeding (strong for).

Research exploring the impact on breastfeeding of specific strategies implemented in Primary Care is scarce and even though the effect is positive more information would be desirable.

- We suggest that the action steps recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics or the 7 IHAN steps be implemented in the health centers in order to extend the duration of breastfeeding (weak for).
- We suggest to train health centers' physicians in breastfeeding, involve breastfeeding consulting nurses or promote the support among peers to prolong breastfeeding (weak for).

Conflict of interests: Carmen Pallás Alonso is the president of IHAN Spain and Javier Soriano Faura is the coordinator of the IHAN health centers' group.