

# CHILD FEEDING DURING & AFTER ILLNESS

## Feeding during & After Illness (Upto 2 years)

- ❖ During the weaning period, i.e., from six months to two years of age, young children often suffer from infections like:
  - Diarrhoea,
  - Fever,
  - Cold and cough etc.
- ❖ Food intake of infants and young children decreases during illness, however the energy requirement increases.
- ❖ Appropriate feeding during and after illness is important to avoid weight loss and other nutrient deficiencies.
- ❖ Hence, it is important to know how and when the ill child should be fed.



### Remember

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- ❖ Feeding during sickness is important for recovery and for prevention of undernutrition.
- ❖ A sick child needs more nourishment so that he could fight infections without using up nutrient reserves of his body.
- ❖ Breastfed babies have lesser illness and are better nourished.
- ❖ Do not force-feed the child.



## Things to do

A breastfed baby should be given breastfeeding more frequently during illness.

- ❖ For infants older than six months, both breastfeeding and complementary feeding should continue during illness.
- ❖ Restriction or dilution of food should be discouraged.
- ❖ Time and care must be taken to help an ill child eat enough food.
- ❖ The infant can be encouraged to eat small quantities of food but more frequently and by offering foods the child likes to eat.
- ❖ Make sure that children with measles, diarrhoea and respiratory infections eat plenty of vitamin A rich foods (e.g., yellow and orange fruits & vegetables like papaya, carrot, green leafy vegetables, milk & milk products etc.). ORS should be given in small quantities to sick child suffering from diarrhoea.
- ❖ After the illness when the child is recovering, a nutritious diet with sufficient energy (with addition of oil/ghee/butter), protein (pulses & legumes) and other nutrients (like iron, vitamin A, vitamin C) is necessary to enable him to catch up growth and replacement of nutrient stores.
- ❖ The nutrient intake of child after illness can be easily increased by increasing one or two meals, by offering nutritious snacks, by giving extra amount at each meal in the daily diet for a period of about a month or so.



## Role of AWW

- ❖ Advise the mothers that feeding should be continued even during illness.
- ❖ Food should be given in small amounts but more frequently.
- ❖ Simple home-cooked food should be given, which is easily digestible.
- ❖ Advise mothers to continue breast-feeding more frequently for a few days after an episode of illness.
- ❖ Advise the mothers not to dilute the dal or other foods for the baby. Takeout food for the child and then add spices in the food for rest of the family.
- ❖ Add a spoonful of butter/ghee/oil in the baby's food.