

Practice Paper of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Abstract: Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding



ABSTRACT

It is the position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics that exclusive breastfeeding provides optimal nutrition and health protection for the first 6 months of life and that breastfeeding with complementary foods from 6 months until at least 12 months of age is the ideal feeding pattern for infants. Breastfeeding is an important public health strategy for improving infant and child morbidity and mortality, improving maternal morbidity, and helping to control health care costs. This practice paper was created to provide registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) and nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered (NDTRs) with guidelines and resources to promote and support breastfeeding. The position and practice papers should be used together to address the important contribution breastfeeding makes to the health of women, children, and infants and the future of our nation. While RDNs/NDTRs practice in a variety of settings, including direct patient care, education, industry, and research, it is essential that as health care practitioners they choose to support the World Health Organization International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and that they have the basic skills, knowledge, and attitudes to advocate for breastfeeding support in hospitals, in the workplace, in emergency situations, in child care settings, and for adequate funding for breastfeeding efforts and education. As experts in nutrition and health, RDNs/NDTRs are in a unique position to offer leadership in the promotion and support of breastfeeding, thereby reducing infant and child morbidity and mortality, reducing maternal morbidity, and helping control health care costs. This paper supports the "Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding" published in the March 2015 issue of the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*.

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