



AWARENESS

BREASTFEEDING FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET!

Most people are aware of the benefits of breastfeeding for babies and mothers, but what we don't often realise is the positive impact that breastfeeding has on the environment.

In a time of celebrating **World Breastfeeding Week**, which runs from the **1st to 7th August 2020**, the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) calls for us to focus our attention not only on health and social welfare, but to consider climate change as a motivating factor for choosing breastmilk over formula for infant feeding, if one is able to.

Not good for mother earth

Although infant formula is a marvellous product, providing a necessary substitute for breastmilk when mothers are unable to breastfeed or choose not to, its production and consumption is not very kind to "mother earth" herself.

According to research published by the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ), in terms of waste, at least "550 million infant formula cans, comprising 86,000 tons of metal and 364,000 tons of paper are added to landfills every year."

Other environmental costs that are not even documented include:

- transportation (at multiple stages in production),
- significant greenhouse gas emissions (especially methane from livestock),
- excess use of paper and other marketing resources in the sale of products,
- water waste and plastic waste.

How breastfeeding helps protect our planet

Considered to be a world resource, "breastmilk is the most ecologically sound food available to humans," states WABA, listing the following reasons:

- "It is produced and delivered without any pollution."
- "It is produced in the right amounts for the baby's needs."
- "Breastmilk is ready to use at the right temperature."
- "Breastmilk does not have to be shipped around the world (but a mother has a ready supply wherever she goes)."
- "Most women do not menstruate when breastfeeding and therefore need fewer towels, tampons or cloths. This reduces the need for fibres, bleaching, packaging and disposal."

It's also worth noting that the health benefits that breastfeeding provides for babies, especially immunity from mothers, reduces the need for healthcare services and medical treatment, which also have a massive carbon footprint.

Naturally, there's no doubt that breastfeeding is best feeding.