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# 2015 Breastmilk: Nourishment and Love



Pan American  
Health  
Organization



World Health  
Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE Americas



**Breast milk: baby's first personalized medicine**

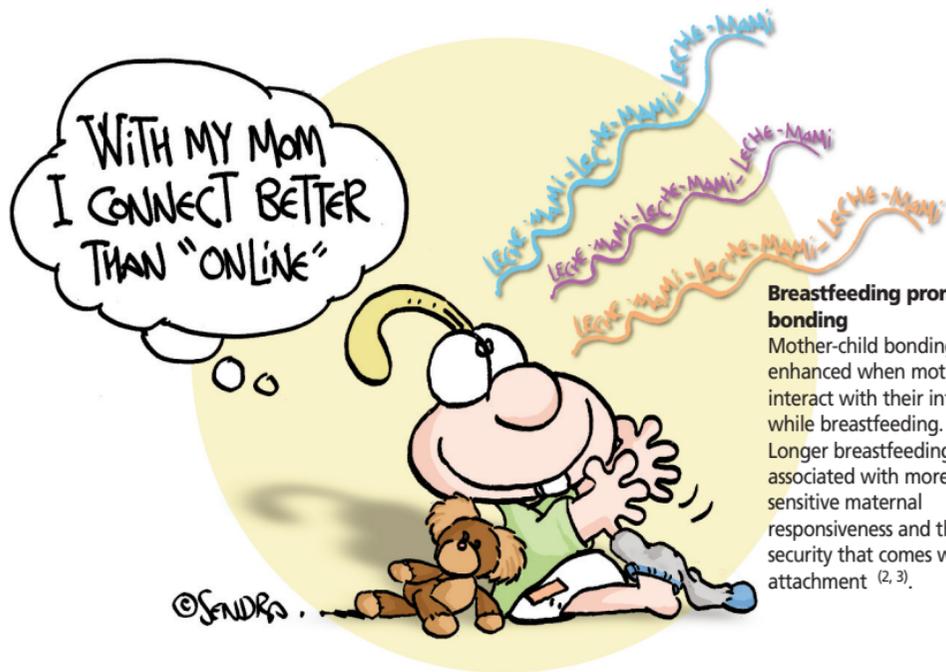
Breast milk plays a key role in shaping and maintaining newborn health. It not only fights harmful microbes, it feeds helpful ones and jumpstarts a newborn's immune system <sup>(1)</sup>.

# January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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## Pan American Health Organization

January marks the start of PAHO's 113th year



**Breastfeeding promotes bonding**

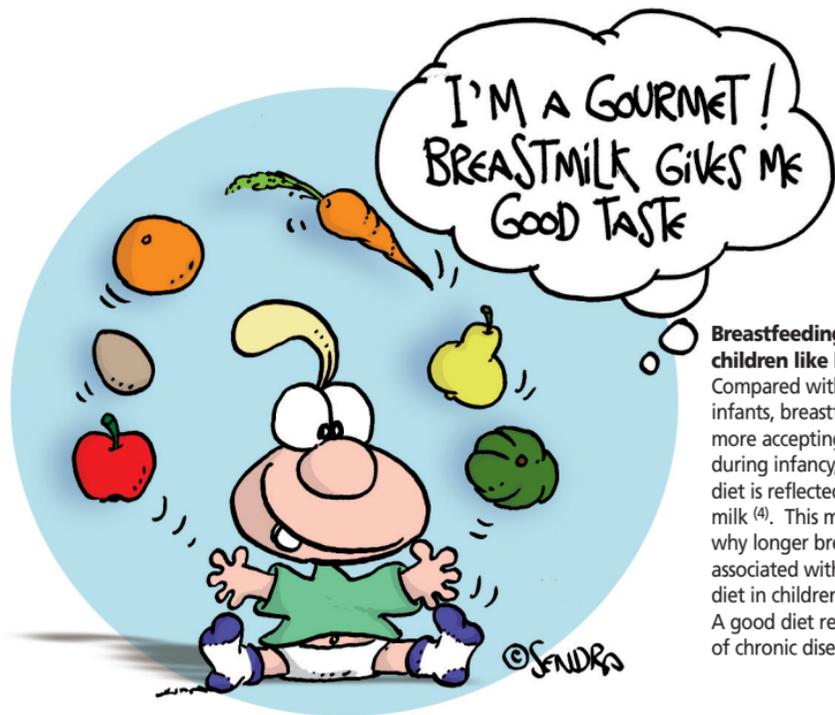
Mother-child bonding is enhanced when mothers interact with their infants while breastfeeding. Longer breastfeeding is associated with more sensitive maternal responsiveness and the security that comes with attachment <sup>(2, 3)</sup>.

# February

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Pan American Health Organization

February 4  
World Cancer Day



**Breastfeeding helps children like healthy foods**

Compared with formula-fed infants, breastfed babies are more accepting of new foods during infancy, as a mother's diet is reflected in her breast milk <sup>(4)</sup>. This might explain why longer breastfeeding is associated with a healthier diet in children at age 6 <sup>(5)</sup>. A good diet reduces the risk of chronic diseases later in life.

# March

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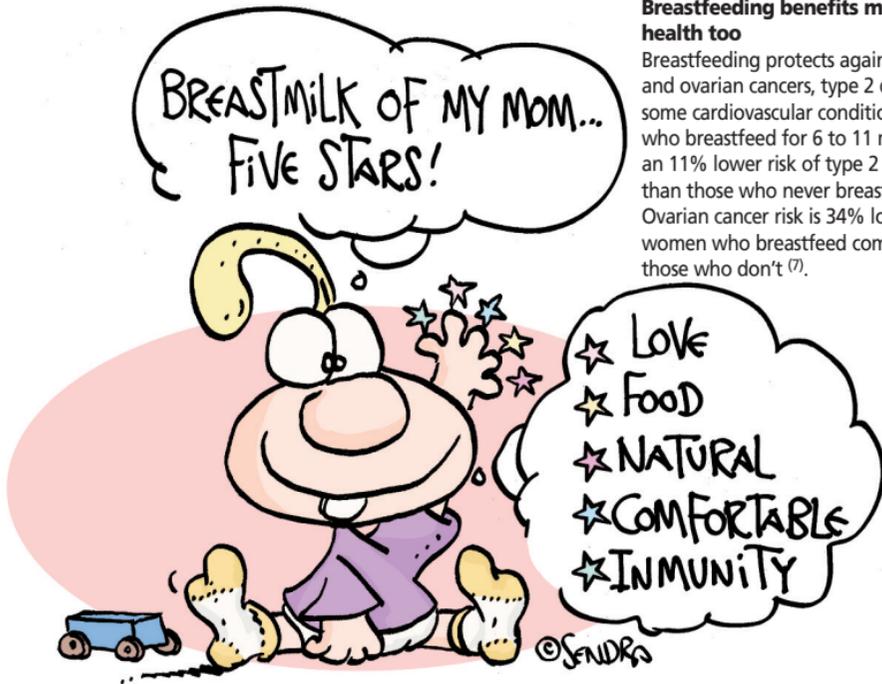
## Pan American Health Organization

March 8  
International  
Women's Day

March 13  
World  
Kidney Day

March 22  
World Water  
Day

March 24  
World TB Day



**Breastfeeding benefits moms' health too**

Breastfeeding protects against breast and ovarian cancers, type 2 diabetes and some cardiovascular conditions. Women who breastfeed for 6 to 11 months have an 11% lower risk of type 2 diabetes than those who never breastfeed <sup>(6)</sup>. Ovarian cancer risk is 34% lower among women who breastfeed compared with those who don't <sup>(7)</sup>.

# April

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## Pan American Health Organization

April 7  
World Health Day

April 22  
International Mother Earth Day

April 25  
World Malaria Day

April 25 - May 2  
Vaccination Week in the Americas  
World Immunization Week

April 28  
World Day for Safety and Health at Work





**Dads have a role to play in supporting breastfeeding**

Fathers' actions and attitudes have tremendous potential to facilitate breastfeeding. If a dad views breastfeeding as important to the health and well-being of his baby, this will contribute to a successful experience for mother and child <sup>(8)</sup>.

# May

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## Pan American Health Organization

- May 3 World Press Freedom Day
- May 15 International Day of Families
- May 17 World Hypertension Day
- May 18 – 26 World Health Assembly
- May 22 International Day for Biological Diversity
- May 31 World No Tobacco Day



**Pope Francis blesses breastfeeding**

While baptizing infants in the Sistine Chapel, Pope Francis told mothers: "If they are hungry, mothers, feed them—without thinking twice—because they are the most important people here."<sup>(9)</sup> If barriers to breastfeeding in public are removed, breastfeeding once again becomes a social norm, recognized and accepted as the ideal way to feed a child <sup>(10)</sup>.

June 4  
International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression  
June 5  
World Environment Day

June 14  
World Blood Donor Day

June 17  
World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

June 22 - 26  
PAHO Executive Committee Meeting

June 26  
International Day against Drug Abuse & Illicit Trafficking

June 26  
International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

# June

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## Pan American Health Organization



**Hospital formula reduces breastfeeding**

Even if women intend to exclusively breastfeed, giving their babies formula in the hospital leads to double the risk that they will not fully breastfeed after baby's first month and a nearly threefold risk of stopping breastfeeding when their babies are 2 months old <sup>(11)</sup>. More hospitals need to become "baby friendly", avoiding unnecessary in-hospital formula supplementation and other impediments to optimal breastfeeding <sup>(12)</sup>.

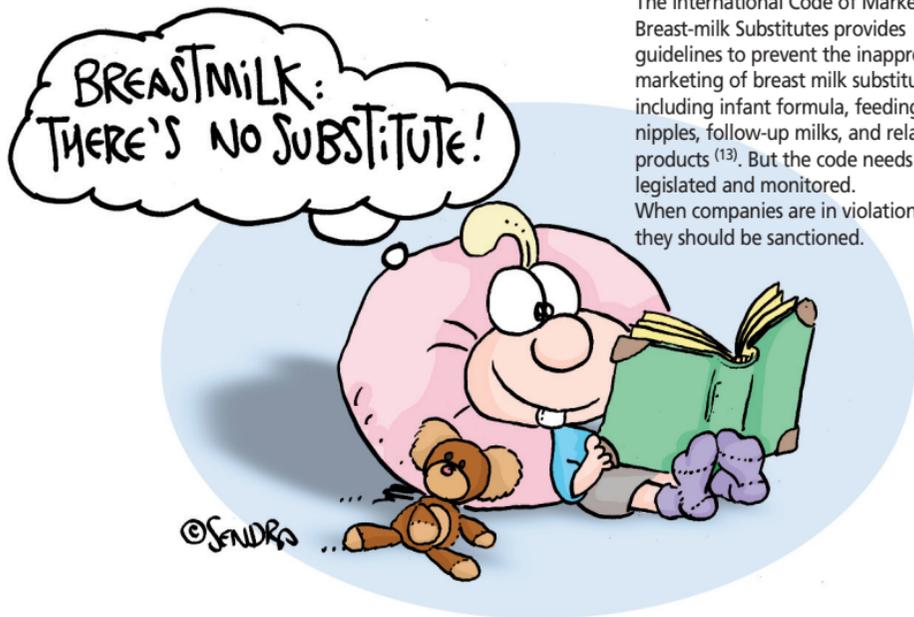
# July

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## Pan American Health Organization

July 11  
World  
Population  
Day

July 28  
World  
Hepatitis  
Day



**Protect breastfeeding from inappropriate marketing of substitutes**

The International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes provides guidelines to prevent the inappropriate marketing of breast milk substitutes, including infant formula, feeding bottles, nipples, follow-up milks, and related products <sup>(13)</sup>. But the code needs to be legislated and monitored. When companies are in violation, they should be sanctioned.

# August

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## Pan American Health Organization

August 1-7  
World Breastfeeding Week

August 9  
International Day of the World's Indigenous People

August 12  
International Youth Day

IT NEVER EXPIRES...  
IT NEVER NEEDS HEATING...  
IT IS ALWAYS THERE  
WHEN NEEDED...  
BREASTMILK OF MY MOTHER!



**Breastfeeding is good for the environment**

Breast milk is a natural, renewable food that reduces a family's carbon footprint. It requires no containers, no paper, no fuel and no transportation. Every 1 million formula-fed babies use 150 million formula containers, many of which end up in landfill <sup>(14)</sup>.

# September

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## Pan American Health Organization

September 8  
International  
Literacy Day

September 10  
World Suicide  
Prevention Day

September 12  
Caribbean  
Wellness Day

September 12 - 18  
Wellness Week

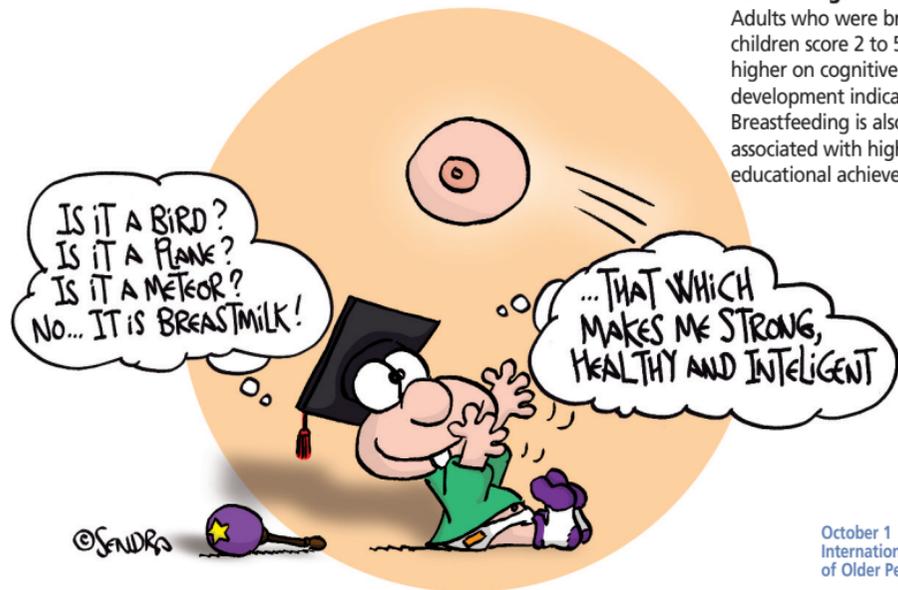
September 16  
International Day  
for the Preservation  
of the Ozone Layer

September 21  
International Day  
of Peace

September 28  
World Rabies Day

September 29  
World Heart Day

Sept. 28 - Oct. 2  
PAHO Directing  
Council



**Breastfeeding makes babies smarter, stay in school longer**

Adults who were breastfed as children score 2 to 5 points higher on cognitive development indicators <sup>(15)</sup>. Breastfeeding is also associated with higher educational achievement <sup>(16)</sup>.

# October

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## Pan American Health Organization

October 1  
International Day  
of Older Persons

October 3  
Inter-American  
Water Day

October 8  
World Sight  
Day

October 10  
World Mental  
Health Day

October 11  
International Day  
of the Girl Child

October 13  
International  
Day for  
Disaster  
Reduction

October 15  
Global  
Handwashing Day

October 16  
World Food Day

October 17  
International  
Day for the  
Eradication of  
Poverty

October 24  
United Nations  
Day  
October 24  
World Polio Day



**Breastfeeding helps children maintain a healthy weight**

Longer breastfeeding may reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity by about 10%, helping to reduce the serious chronic diseases associated with these conditions <sup>(15)</sup>. Breastfeeding promotion should be included as one component of programs targeted at early healthy growth and the prevention of child obesity <sup>(17)</sup>.

# November

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## Pan American Health Organization

November 6  
Malaria Day in the Americas

November 8  
World Radiology Day

November 14  
World Diabetes Day

November 15  
World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims

November 16  
International Day for Tolerance

November 18  
World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day

November 20  
Universal Children's Day

November 25  
International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

# December



**Mother's milk supplies unique nutrition for babies**

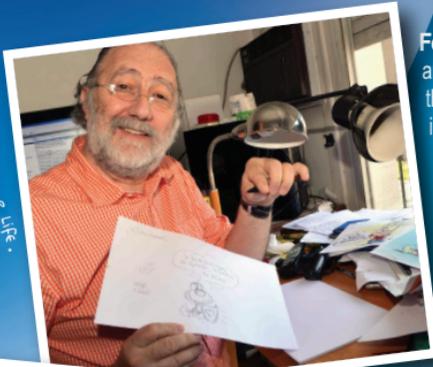
Breast milk supplies all the nutrients babies need for the first 6 months of life and makes a substantial contribution to their nutritional needs thereafter.

New unique nutritional and immunological components of breast milk are continually being discovered <sup>(1)</sup>. Formula tries to play catch-up, but will never succeed.

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## Pan American Health Organization

- December 1 World AIDS Day
- December 2 112th PAHO Anniversary
- December 3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- December 3 Pan American Physician Day
- December 10 Human Rights Day



**Fernando Javier Sendra**, an Argentine cartoonist, is well known throughout Latin America for his insightful and clever character "**Yo Matias**" (Me Matias). Mr. Sendra is the author of over 20 books, including 10 of the Yo, Matias series. In 1990, his comic strip Prudencio (now called "Yo, Matias") began to appear in El Clarin, the most popular daily newspaper in Argentina.

Since 2002, Mr. Sendra graciously developed images for PAHO to use to promote breastfeeding. The positive response to these materials in the Americas illustrates the power of humor to deliver a public health message. Images of Matias are currently being used to promote PAHO's breastfeeding campaign under the banner "**Breastfeeding: Love and Health for Life**". In 2010, in front of all the Ministers of Health of the Americas, Mr. Sendra was awarded PAHO's Champion of Health Award as recognition of his contributions to public health.

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[www.paho.org/childfeeding](http://www.paho.org/childfeeding)  
or contact [publications@paho.org](mailto:publications@paho.org)

# [www.paho.org](http://www.paho.org)

525 23rd St, NW  
Washington DC 20037  
Tel: (202) 974-3000  
Fax: (202) 974-3663

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