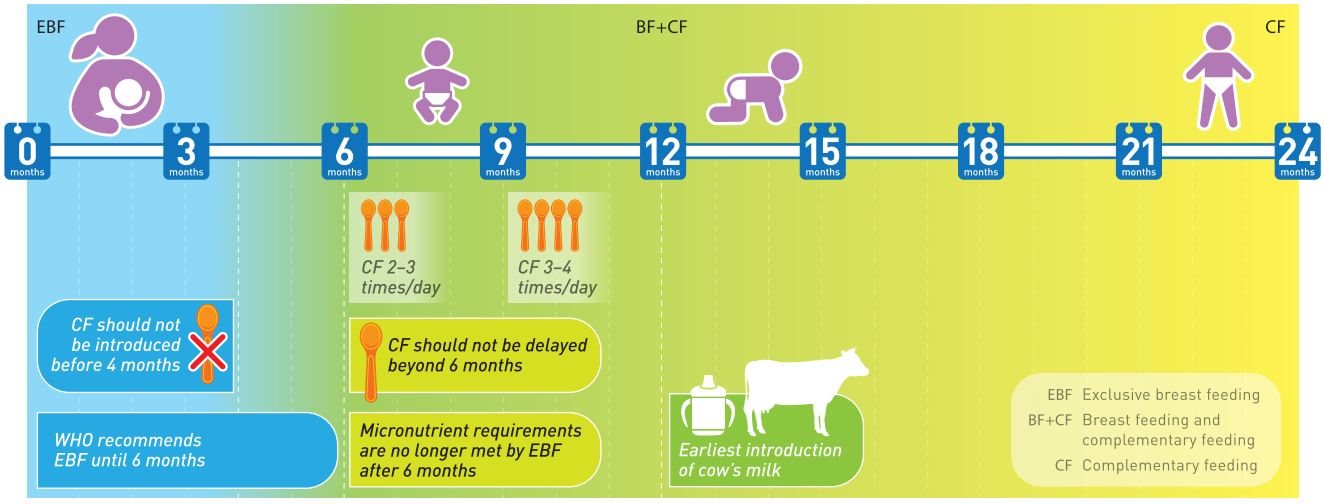
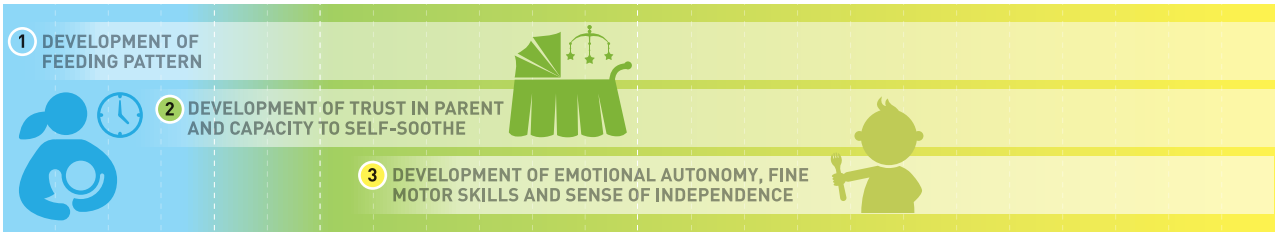
The appropriate introduction of **Complementary Feeding** for short-term as well as long-term health and growth

Optimal timing and content of complementary feeding (CF) will support the development of healthy dietary patterns in infants, with subsequent beneficial effects on health outcomes in later life.

100% of an infant's nutritional requirements must be met at all times as complementary feeding gradually replaces breast feeding



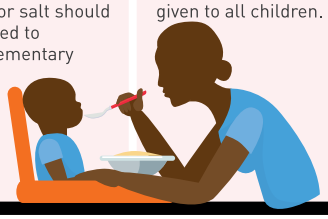


CF should be introduced according to the infant's developmental and nutritional status, but not before the age of 4 months and no later than 6 months.

CF should meet the infant's nutritional requirements when breast milk does not cover them.

Caregivers/parents should provide a variety of foods with texture and consistency appropriate to the infant's developmental stage, and also to promote healthy food preferences.

Fruit juices and sugar-sweetened beverages should be avoided during the first years of life. In addition, no sugar or salt should be added to complementary foods.



Iron-rich complementary foods including meat products and/or iron-fortified foods should be given to all children.

Appropriate CF has positive effects on:

+ optimal growth
+ body composition
+ neuro-development
+ healthy food preferences
+ gut microbia composition and function

Fortification of commonly-used food vehicles such as milk, maize meal, porridge and vegetable oils provides opportunities for increasing nutrient intake during infancy.

Challenges and Opportunities during the Complementary Feeding Period

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