Challenges & Support Needed for Breastfeeding during POSTNATAL CARE / FIRST SIX WEEKS AFTER BIRTH

After the mother & baby leave the delivery room, postpartum care (for the mother) & postnatal care (for the baby) begins. Care is usually given by the staff in the hospital for a few hours or days, & others in the community service after discharge, which should continue for 6 weeks until the postpartum check.

To ESTABLISH breastfeeding in the early days, counselling & practical help with breastfeeding are needed in the maternity facility and when the mother is at home.

Challenges during the postnatal period:

- Staff may not be trained to give effective practical help for breastfeeding
- With short hospital stays, staff may not have enough time in the first day or two to help mothers breastfeed effectively
- If adequate guidance is not provided during the next 1 - 2 weeks when the mother & baby are at home, mothers may be left without the skills they require & breastfeeding may not be established. Parents may be advised or choose to formula-feed instead

How to improve support:

- Inform mothers where they can get appropriate breastfeeding support
- Teach a mother how to express her milk
- Train midwives/healthcare providers & community breastfeeding counsellors to give practical guidance to mothers for establishing breastfeeding from after delivery through the postpartum period.
- Healthcare providers have the competency to guide mothers & explain how to breastfeed responsively

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