



OFFICE OF THE MISSION DIRECTOR  
**NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION, ASSAM**

Saikia Commercial Complex, Sri Nagar Path, Near Post office Bus Stand, G. S. Road, Christianbasti, Guwahati – 781005  
Website: <https://nhm.assam.gov.in> :: Phone No: 0361-2340236/39 :: Email Id: mdrhmasm@gmail.com

No.:NHM-12018/3/2018-CH-NHM/6449  
(ECF: 74962)

Dated: 10/06/2020

From: Dr. Lakshmanan S, IAS  
Mission Director  
National Health Mission, Assam

To: The Joint Director of Health Services cum Member Secy.,  
District Health Society, ( All districts.....)

Sub: Infant feeding during emergencies like **floods, earthquakes, epidemics and others**

Sir/ Madam,

With reference to the subject cited above, during emergencies, breastfeeding is more important than ever as a life-saving protection. In natural disasters and other emergency situations families are mobilized from their homes to a safer place, result in food insecurity, and limited access to clean water and disruptions to basic services. Children are the most vulnerable and in these settings, breastfeeding guarantees a safe, nutritious and accessible food source for infants and young children and a protective shield against disease and death. A state specific guidance note is enclosed for your reference.

Enclosure: As stated.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr. Lakshmanan S, IAS)  
Mission Director  
National Health Mission, Assam

Memo No: NHM-12018/3/2018-CH-NHM/6450-54

Dated: 10/06/2020

Copy to:

9. The Executive Director, NHM, Assam for information.
10. The PS to the Principal Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Dept. of Health & FW, for kind appraisal of the Principal Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Dept. of Health & FW, Dispur
11. The PS to the Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Dept. of Health & FW, for kind appraisal of the Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Dept. of Health & FW, Dispur, Assam.
12. The DPM are requested to inform NRC Nodal Officers.
13. Issue Cell for online and off line communication.

Mission Director  
National Health Mission, Assam





OFFICE OF THE MISSION DIRECTOR  
**NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION, ASSAM**

Saikia Commercial Complex, Sri Nagar Path, Near Post office Bus Stand, G. S. Road, Christianbasti, Guwahati – 781005  
 Website: <https://nhm.assam.gov.in> :: Phone No: 0361-2340236/39 :: Email Id: mdnrhmasm@gmail.com

**Guidance Note: INFANT FEEDING IN DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES**

Natural disasters, such as floods, earthquakes, epidemics and others, can make it hard for parents and caregivers to feed their infants and young children safely. In the event of a natural disaster, be prepared for challenges, which may include mobilization of people to safer place, power outages, unhealthy living spaces, shortage of food and unsafe water. Continued breast feeding is advisable in any emergencies. The following provide specific information for how to feed your young child safely during an emergency.

**The cleanest, safest & best food for an infant, in disasters or emergencies, is human milk.**

- It is nutritionally adequate.
- It is readily available.
- It protects against diseases, especially diarrhea and respiratory infections.
- It is right in temperature and helps to prevent hypothermia.
- Easily digested and well absorbed
- Contains essential amino acids
- Rich in essential fatty acids
- Better bioavailability of iron and calcium
- Hormone release during breastfeeding helps relieve maternal stress and anxiety.

**Feeding related difficulties in a Disaster or an Emergency**

- There may be no clean and safe drinking water.
- There may be no germ-free environment.
- Likelihood of getting change for cleaning and sterilization of feeding utensils is less.

**Disadvantages of Formula use during Disasters or Emergencies**

- It may not be available.
- It may become contaminated if prepared with unclean water or stored in non-sterilized containers.
- Errors in formula preparation may occur.

**Action to support breastfeeding practice in Disaster or Emergency.**

1. Keep families together.
2. Create safe place for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. They should provided with security, counseling, water, and food.
3. Assure mothers that human milk can contribute significant nutrition in the absence of safe complementary foods for the first year of life and beyond.
4. Advocate for optimal feeding options for orphaned infants.





OFFICE OF THE MISSION DIRECTOR  
**NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION, ASSAM**

Saikia Commercial Complex, Sri Nagar Path, Near Post office Bus Stand, G. S. Road, Christianbasti, Guwahati – 781005  
Website: <https://nhm.assam.gov.in> :: Phone No: 0361-2340236/39 :: Email Id: mdnrhmasm@gmail.com

5. Assist new mothers to initiate breastfeeding within 1 hour of birth, promote exclusive breastfeeding for about 6 months, and encourage breastfeeding for at least 2 year or longer.
6. Provide support for breastfeeding through assessment of the infant's and mother's hydration and nutritional status. If abnormal, increase breastfeeding frequency for the infant and increase nutritional support of the mother. Extra food should be provided for all pregnant and lactating women.
7. Exclusive breast feeding is recommended up to 6 months of age for both HIV exposed and infected infants.
8. In situations where the mother's own milk is not available, the best option is donor human milk from a lactating mother staying together in camp or nearby. As a last option if formula is given, recommend ready-to-feed standard formula. Use concentrated or powdered formula only if bottled or boiled water is available.
9. Advocate for breastfeeding promotion, protection, and support. Infant feeding practices and resources should be assessed, coordinated, and monitored throughout the disaster. A rapid response team may be constituted to solve field level feeding issues.

*Am*  
12/6/2020  
MD, NHM, Assam