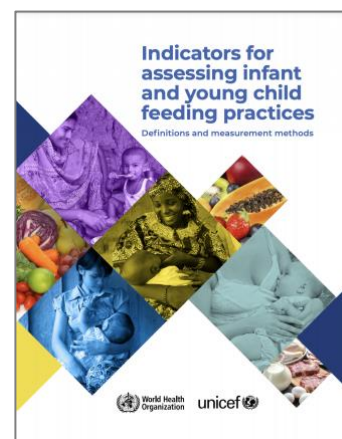




## GLOBAL MEASUREMENT UPDATE

### Indicators for assessing infant and young child feeding practices (IYCF) 2021

**INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING (IYCF) PRACTICES** impact the health and development of children 0–23 months of age, affecting their ability to grow to their full potential. Improving IYCF practices is a core nutrition effort and a critical step to strengthening infants’ health and well-being and their long-term development. The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF recently updated core indicators and methods to measure IYCF.



### WHAT ARE THE IYCF INDICATORS?

WHO and UNICEF recently launched [Indicators for assessing infant and young child feeding practices: Definitions and measurement methods](#) with a recommended set of 17 age-specific indicators. The indicators were designed for data collection in large-scale household surveys to make national and subnational comparisons, describe trends over time, identify populations at risk, target interventions, make policy decisions about resource allocation, and monitor progress in achieving goals. WHO and UNICEF recommend using the full set of indicators for any given population. The document also includes guidance on measurement methods.

**TABLE 1: THE 2021 IYCF INDICATORS**

Breastfeeding Indicators	Complementary Feeding Indicators
Ever breastfed	Introduction of solid, semi-solid or soft foods 6-8 months
Early initiation of breastfeeding	Minimum dietary diversity 6-23 months
Exclusively breastfed for the first two days after birth*	Minimum meal frequency 6–23 months
Exclusive breastfeeding under six months	Minimum milk feeding frequency for non-breastfed children 6–23 months
Mixed milk feeding under six months*	Minimum acceptable diet 6–23 months
Continued breastfeeding 12-23 months	Egg and/or flesh food consumption 6–23 months*
<b>Other Indicators</b>	Sweet beverage consumption 6–23 months*
Bottle feeding 0–23 months	Unhealthy food consumption 6–23 months*
Infant feeding area graphs*	Zero vegetable or fruit consumption 6–23 months*

\*New indicators in 2021 based on revisions of the 2008 IYCF guidance

Adapted from <https://data.unicef.org/resources/indicators-for-assessing-infant-and-young-child-feeding-practices/>

## WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE IYCF INDICATORS & GUIDANCE?

The new IYCF package includes standard indicators and measurement methods for assessing IYCF practices for children 0-23 months of age. These indicators update the 2008 IYCF guidance to more accurately measure IYCF practices that ensure the adequacy of nutrients and limit unhealthy foods. They employ a food list question rather than the frequency of feeding question. The questions can be incorporated into stand-alone household surveys, research studies, Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), or the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS).

### The package contains:

- **Indicator definitions** (Part I), details on the rationale for the indicators, numerator, denominator, indicator definition, and clarifying note useful for implementation and comparison.
- **Recommendations for measurement methods** (Part II), example questionnaires and recommended adaptations, along with interviewer selection and training approaches.

## WHO SHOULD USE THE PACKAGE AND HOW CAN IT BE USED?

- The package is primarily intended for **national survey organizations and managers of large-scale population-based surveys** that will collect information on the health, growth, and nutritional status of infants and young children less than 2 years of age. The indicators included can be used for questionnaire development and comparison in the analytic phase.
- The package will also be helpful for **public health nutritionists, national and subnational program managers, evaluators, researchers, and IYCF experts**, including those working on MOMENTUM awards, to:
  - **Monitor and evaluate** national nutrition and child health strategies using these indicators, included into national or subnational DHS/MICS surveys.
  - **Conduct formative assessments**, with disaggregation by geographies or other key stratifications, to understand current IYCF care.
  - **Design programs and interventions** around IYCF by pinpointing practices that need more support.
- The indicators **complement other measures** on program reach, knowledge, and attitudes to track whether health and nutrition programs are meeting their intermediate objectives.

### Bibliography

1. World Health Organization. Indicators for assessing infant and young child feeding practices: definitions and measurement methods. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240018389>
2. UNICEF. Indicators for assessing infant and young child feeding practices: definitions and measurement methods. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/indicators-for-assessing-infant-and-young-child-feeding-practices/>

### More information

Full details on the indicators and the recommended methods for their collection can be found at: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/indicators-for-assessing-infant-and-young-child-feeding-practices/>

USAID Advancing Nutrition contributed to this fact sheet.

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