Infant Feeding
DURING DISASTERS

**BREASTFEEDING** matters because...
- It can be impacted if stopped for even a short period of time.
- Breastfeeding cannot be put on “hold” until the disaster is over.
- It protects infants from the risks of using contaminated water supplies during a disaster.
- Breast milk is available all the time without needing other supplies.
- It can help protect against respiratory illnesses & diarrhea, which can be fatal to displaced families.

**Barriers to breastfeeding during a disaster**
- Lack of lactation support, whether it is a new mother or a mother with a newly weaned baby.
- Being away from home - displaced or having to relocate.
- Being separated from people who usually support the mother.
- Lack of privacy, security, comfort, dim lights & quiet in emergency shelters.

**BREASTFEEDING benefits**

**Breastfeeding Mothers**
- Reduce their risks for:
  - Ovarian cancer
  - Breast cancer
  - Type 2 Diabetes

**Breastfed infants**
- Have a reduced risk of:
  - SIDS
  - Lower respiratory infections
  - Type 2 diabetes
  - Asthma
  - Obesity

**Workforce & environmental**
- Infants have less illness so mothers may less work
- Less trash & plastic waste compared to formula & bottle supplies

**Communities who promote breastfeeding**
- Could save $13 billion annually
- Prevent 1,000 deaths per year
  *(for 90% of women for their babies first 6 months of life)*

**How RESPONDERS can help**
- Assure mothers that breastfeeding can provide sufficient nutrition for babies when other foods aren’t available.
- Keep families together.
- Provide water & food for breastfeeding mothers.
- As a last resort, ready to use infant formula in a disposable cup should be the alternative.
- Create safe locations for pregnant & breastfeeding women.
- Ensure access to healthcare providers with lactation experience.

For more information visit
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohsepr

References: