

ISDI Statement

Complementary feeding of infants and young children

Brussels, 6 May 2021

ISDI welcomes the publication of the recent article on [Complementary feeding of infants and young children 6 to 23 months of age](#) by Chessa K Lutter, Laurence Grummer-Strawn and Lisa Rogers, especially the evidence it provides about the need for complementary feeding and its importance for the growth and development of infants. ISDI acknowledges the findings of the article and would like to emphasise that commercially prepared complementary foods are scientifically developed and formulated with the purpose of satisfying the nutrient needs of the target population.

The first years of a child's life are critical for long-term physical and mental development. ISDI supports the WHO's recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and continued breastfeeding, along with the introduction of adequate complementary foods, for up to two years and beyond. Around 6 months of age, an infant begins to need more energy and nutrients than those provided by breast milk or infant formula alone, so infants start to transition to a family diet. This process is known as complementary feeding and continues up to 24 months. During this transition, there is an increased need for nutritionally adequate and safe complementary foods that provide energy and essential nutrients for optimal growth and development.

ISDI strongly supports a strict legislative framework to regulate appropriate complementary foods and address the needs of infants and caregivers by allowing high quality and nutritious products whilst safeguarding innovation. Furthermore, we support efforts to restrict levels of added sugars (i.e. mono- and disaccharides). ISDI supports the recommendation that children reduce their daily intake of free sugars to less than 10% of their total energy intake ([WHO, 2015](#)).

It is essential that infants and young children receive the necessary nutritious foods to help set them on a path to a long and healthy life. ISDI, and the manufacturers it represents, are committed to providing the best nutrition to infants and young children. Fortified commercial complementary foods have higher levels of vitamin A and iron, which means they help increase the intake of key nutrients, have high bioavailability and promote increased diversity of the child's diet.

For more information about complementary feeding, read our [factsheet](#) or visit the [dedicated page](#) on the ISDI website. For information about follow-up formula for older infants and young children, please [click here](#).

Note to the editors:

ISDI is the leading international expert association on special dietary foods, including foods specifically designed for infants and young children. ISDI members are national and international associations that are active in this sector from more than 20 countries over 6 continents. Our members manufacture and market foods that are formulated, in accordance with applicable Codex Alimentarius standards, to meet the compositional criteria, quality requirement and nutritional needs of infants and young children.

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