

20 Years Later: Shaping Child Health Today for the Mauritius of Tomorrow

Breastfeeding, Early-Life Programming and NCD Prevention

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Purpose of This Presentation

Breastfeeding as early-life health intervention

Link with long-term NCD outcomes

Relevance to Mauritius

National Action Plan on Breastfeeding (2022–2027)



Breastfeeding: More Than Infant Feeding

- Biologically normal feeding
- Immune protection
- Neurodevelopment
- Long-term physiological regulation

The First 1000 Days

Conception to 2 years

Rapid system development

High sensitivity to nutrition

Lifelong consequences

Early-Life Programming



Appetite regulation



Insulin sensitivity



Lipid metabolism



Gut microbiome

Breastfeeding and Obesity

Lower risk of
overweight

Dose–
response with
duration

Appetite self-
regulation

Breastfeeding and Type 2 Diabetes

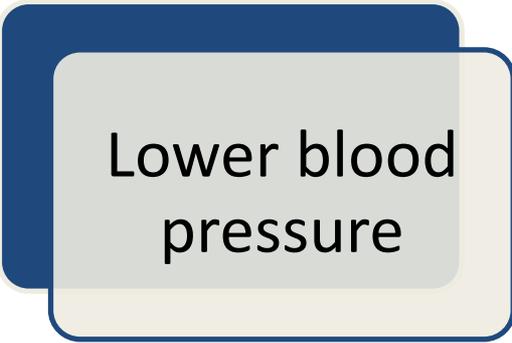
Improved glucose metabolism

Lower diabetes risk

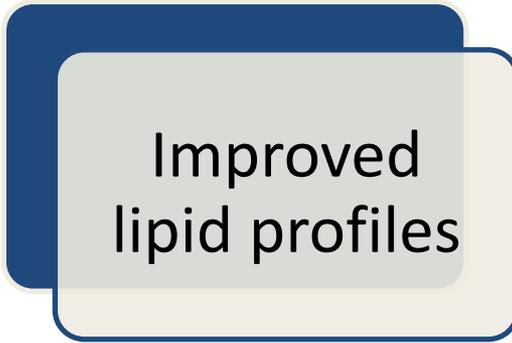
Maternal metabolic benefits



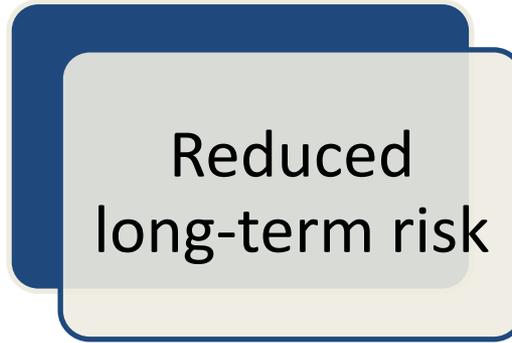
Breastfeeding and Cardiovascular Health



Lower blood pressure



Improved lipid profiles



Reduced long-term risk

Benefits of Breastfeeding Beyond NCD Prevention

Reduces infant infections and mortality

Supports neurodevelopment and cognitive outcomes

Improves maternal health and recovery

Ensures safe feeding and system resilience

Broader System, Equity and Sustainability Benefits

Strengthens bonding and mental wellbeing

Reduces household and health-system costs

Promotes equity and child rights

Environmentally sustainable nutrition

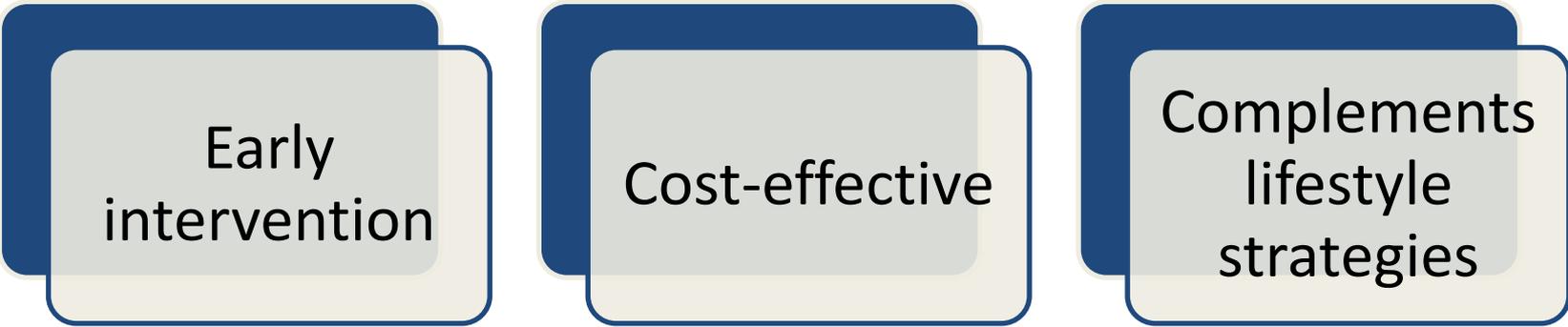


Why This Matters for Mauritius

- High NCD burden
 - Rising childhood overweight
 - Prevention must start early
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Breastfeeding as an NCD Prevention Strategy



Early
intervention

Cost-effective

Complements
lifestyle
strategies

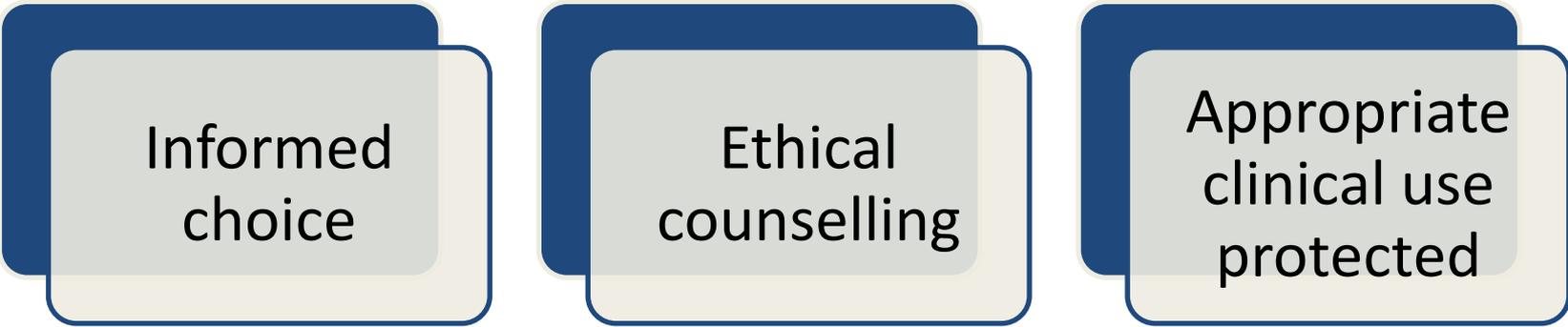


Clinical Balance: When Formula Is Needed

- Preterm infants
 - Metabolic disorders
 - Maternal illness
 - Clinical judgement central
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Breastfeeding Support \neq Formula Prohibition



Informed
choice

Ethical
counselling

Appropriate
clinical use
protected

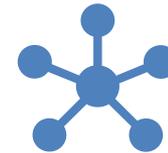
Role of Health Professionals



Trusted advice



Consistent
messaging



Influence long-
term outcomes

Why a National Action Plan on Breastfeeding?

Low exclusive breastfeeding rates

Systemic barriers

Coordinated response needed

National Action Plan on Breastfeeding (2022–2027)

Aim: Support breastfeeding through enabling environments

Key Strategic Areas



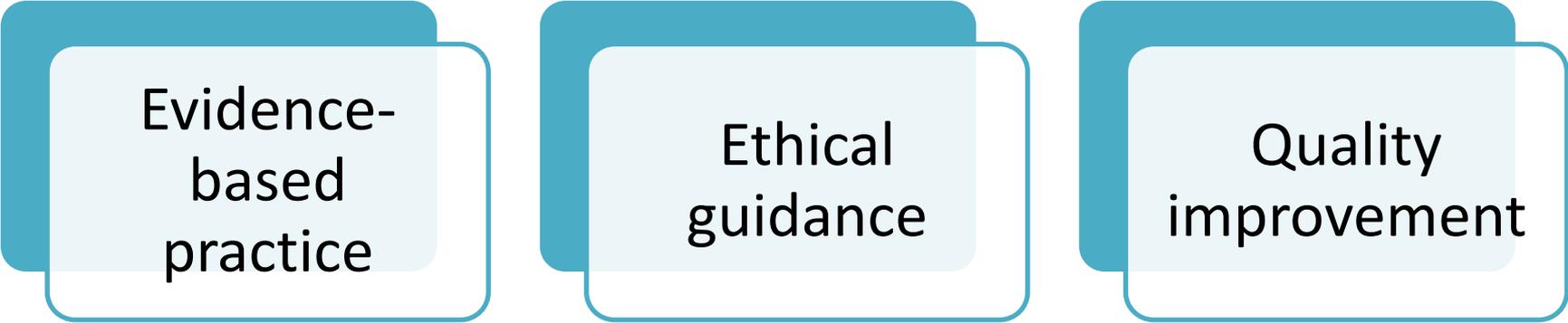
Action Plan and NCD Prevention

Early
metabolic
foundations

Reduced
future NCD
burden

Health system
sustainability

Role of Clinicians in the Action Plan



Evidence-
based
practice

Ethical
guidance

Quality
improvement

Transition: From Breastfeeding to Lifelong Nutrition

First step in
nutrition
continuum

Foundation
for later diet

Key Messages

Breastfeeding is
foundational

Shapes lifelong
NCD risk

National Action
Plan
operationalises
evidence

Key References

- Victora CG et al. The Lancet – Breastfeeding in the 21st Century
- Rollins NC et al. The Lancet – Improving breastfeeding practices
- WHO (2023–2024). Long-term effects of breastfeeding
- BMJ / Journal of Public Health (2023–2024). Breastfeeding and cardiometabolic outcomes



THANK YOU