

INTRODUCTION

Nutrition is defined as the sum of the processes by which a person obtains, ingests, absorbs and metabolizes these substances essential for life under all environmental circumstances (Barness, 1975).

There is no doubt that human milk is a unique food and the preferred first food for infants which has special characteristics matched to their nutritional needs and physiologic limitations (Anderson, 1985).

It is widely recommended that for the majority of infants their own mother's milk is the most appropriate food for the first six months of life (Ford et al., 1983). However nutrient supplements for all infants are required to insure adequate vitamin D, iron and flouride after that age.

Breast feeding is the best for infants, mothers and nation. For infants, it has better digestability, leads to favourable growth and development and emotional stability (Jelliffe & Jelliffe, 1978) and is associated with lower morbidity and mortality due to its anti-infective properties (Stephens, 1980). For mothers, breast feeding is a natural way of contraception (Hennart & Vis, 1980), it helps uterine involution, there is less risk of cancer breast and mothers are less liable to iron deficiency anemia because of lactational amenorrhea (Berg, 1973). For the nation, it

decreases population growth and saves millions of pounds to be used for raising the health standard (Gabr, 1984).