

INTRODUCTION

In the name of Allah, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful "And the mothers giving birth to their children should breastfeed them up to two years if they want to complete the lactation period" (The Holy Qur'an Chapter 2 verse 233).

Infancy is an important period of human development which consists of a complex group of processes that begin the development toward the adult human being (*Noshpitz, 1979*). It is viewed by many as the most critical segment of life, the period during which developmental pathways are laid down for all human skills and thought process (*Bower, 1977*). It is literally the period from birth to about ages 18 months to 2 years (*Barnhart, 1979*).

Growth during early infancy is very rapid requiring ideal nutritional status (*Sumitt, 1990*). Provided an infant is born with adequate foetal stores and has ultraviolet irradiation of the skin, human milk can supply all his nutritional needs (*Mcharen, 1982*).

Breastfeeding continues to have practical and psychological advantages for both mothers and infants throughout the second year of life. It should be considered when the mother selects the method for feeding and nurturing her baby. Human milk is the most appropriate of all available milks for the human infant because it is uniquely adapted for his or her needs. Breastfeeding as a process is the most appropriate for meeting the developmental and behavioral needs of growing infants and securing an intimate mother-infant relationship (*Barness, 1992*).

Promotion of breastfeeding continuation into the second year of life should be a national goal, all infants should be breastfed unless specific contraindications or unsuccessful breastfeeding is present (*Lawrence, 1994*).