

Complementary Food Supplements

**Summary of Working
group 2 discussion**

Continued Breast Feeding

- The group recognizes that breast milk is an essential food up to 24 months of age. All programs to promote healthy complementary feeding should incorporate effective elements to promote breastfeeding.
- Marketing and promotion complementary foods can and must comply with the international Code for breastmilk substitutes and the Operational Guidance document for Emergency Relief (IFE core group).

Animal source foods

- All successful complementary feeding programs have included animal source foods.
- Comparative studies suggest inclusion of animal source foods is associated with better growth and development.
- There is uncertainty as to how much animal source food is enough to promote health.

Alternative recipes for RUF

- There is the possibility of reducing cost, and thereby increasing availability, for RUFs used as complementary foods by using legumes, such as soy, as a component.
- Trials with peanut/ soy pastes have been successfully as complementary foods
- New formulations of ingredients, such as new soy technologies, may improve currently available foods
- More research is needed on the acceptable levels of antinutrients in such foods

Delivery Systems

- Having the right food is clearly not enough.
- Identifying malnutrition through widely available screening tools such as MUAC, can be used to augment coverage.
- An additional conference and resource bank is needed about the implementation of successful programs that result in improved complementary feeding.

Product safety/ standards

- A body of work on the standards for and safety of infant formulas/ foods has been compiled by IOM, this provides a platform on which to evaluate newer complementary foods, such as those RUFs.

Communicating with families

- Addressing the obstacles to good child feeding practices should engage the whole community
- Choosing strategies that include locally available elements (foods and practices) are easier to implement

Networking

- Governments and local authorities are essential stakeholders in efforts to improve complementary feeding.

Animal source foods

- The group agrees that complementary foods—those tailored specifically for the needs of infants 6-24 months of age—should be added to the food basket. Current knowledge is that children in this age group need animal source food, and actions should therefore be taken to include it into the food basket. Animal source food should be provided as part of RUF or FBF. Questions on needed quantities remain. There is possibility for future development of alternatives that replace animal source food.

Establishing standards

- The group recommends the WHO to establish standards on specialized food products for the malnourished (severe and moderate) that must be met before approval for general distribution. Exceptions for the use of untested foods can be made where there are grave emergencies and no other approved foods are available.

Breastfeeding is basic

- The group agrees that complementary feeding should be provided in a way that supports and does not undermine efforts to promote exclusive breastfeeding until 6 month of age and continued breastfeeding until at least two years of age.

