

# Overview on child health, nutrition and food hazards during the first thousand days of life

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### ABSTRACT

The dangers of food during a child's first thousand days of life are covered in this article. The purpose is to bring decision-makers, healthcare officers, and professionals—including paediatricians, paediatric surgeons, obstetricians, nurses, midwives, dieticians, and lactation consultants—to the significance of safeguarding newborns and their families during a crucial time for the mother-child binomial. The conclusions emphasise the significance of promoting the adoption of integrated strategies, useful at setting up adequate preventive efforts and a paradigm shift to develop and adopt effective monitoring strategies and procedures, able to minimize the risks due to hazards in food throughout the first thousand days of life, as a first line of prevention in children's health. In recent years, there has been a substantial increase in global awareness of the concept of food safety, involving all parties involved in regulating and actively monitoring this issue at all levels. Parallel to this, consumer and advocacy organisations'

expectations for governments, policymakers, business, researchers, and healthcare professionals to have a more active and interventionist role in this area of public health have developed. They want the decision-making parties to address food safety concerns and come up with sufficient answers and activities that will further safeguard the health of food consumers. The idea that food safety is not absolute and that it relates to a "reasonable certainty that no damage will arise from intended uses under the anticipated conditions of consumption" is currently well-established and widely accepted. According to this concept, it is realistically not possible to have zero tolerance for hazards in the majority of food contexts and safety contexts, including food chains.

**Key Words:** *Paediatricians; obstetricians; Lactation consultants; Paradigm shift; Global awareness*

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### INTRODUCTION

Child nutrition, specifically all natural and commercial items that are related to the food fed to newborns during the first thousand days of life, is a particularly sensitive topic of food safety due to its social ramifications. Consequently, this includes foods consumed by moms during pregnancy, infant formula, and foods made from cereal, fruit, vegetables, and meat that are consumed by newborns and young children throughout their first two years of life. In order to safeguard the mother-child binomial<sup>5</sup>, the requirement for efficient and consistently updated techniques of monitoring food safety throughout the critical first 1000 days of life is becoming increasingly recognised as being of utmost importance. The baby food chain is covered by the monitoring of food safety risks, starting with the manufacturing of primary

products (fruits, vegetables, and animal-derived raw materials), and continuing through consumer usage (process, storage, packing). This article's purpose is to draw the attention of decision-makers, healthcare officers, and professionals, such as paediatricians, paediatric surgeons, obstetricians, nurses, midwives, dieticians, and lactation consultants, to the significance of safeguarding newborns and their families during a crucial time for the mother-child binomial. In particular, authors encourage the adoption of integrated strategies, useful at establishing adequate preventive efforts and a paradigm shift to develop and adopt effective monitoring strategies and procedures able to minimize the risks due to hazards in food during the first 1000 days of life, as the first line of prevention in children's health. the core stages of development that make up the first 1000 days. The

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first thousand days can be divided into three separate periods. Preconception, pregnancy, and infancy are some of them. These have all been noted as being crucial in fostering better outcomes for children's lives. Evidence has shown the effects that unhealthy parental conditions might have on the conceptus both before and after conception. To address gestational and paediatric adverse illnesses, specific programmes and strategies have been developed to make sure that during the preconception period, biomedical, behavioural, and social risks can be identified and modified to protect women's health or pregnancy outcomes through appropriate prevention and management measures<sup>5</sup>. Preconception care programmes use a variety of ways to ensure that moms and their growing foetus have the nutritional and physiological support they need for optimum health. Another crucial aspect of preconception care programmes is the reduction of toxic exposures and the monitoring of the risk of any form of danger that could predispose to unfavourable results. Preconception is also seen as a chance for mothers to make lifestyle adjustments. Interconception care, which is given to women from delivery through the birth of a second child, is a subset of preconception care for moms planning further pregnancies. It talks about how dangers carry over from one pregnancy to the next. Since quite some time, there has been a growing awareness of the significance of healthy growth during the nine months of pregnancy. Diet, stress, and exposure to pollutants from the environment are the factors that have the biggest effects on the conceptus's health and growth during pregnancy<sup>3</sup>. Last but not least, it has been highlighted for decades<sup>5</sup> how crucial it is to help new parents and infants throughout the first two years following delivery. Many nations have implemented public health interventions in this area, and a great deal of research has been done on the variables that affect health and development during this time. The vast amount of information that is currently available, however, does not appear to have been effectively translated into comprehensive and integrated programmes that enable adequate support for parents and infants during this period, despite the importance of establishing effective health services during a critical period for the mother-child

pair. The majority of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), such as cardiovascular diseases (such as myocardial infarction, stroke), cancer, chronic respiratory diseases (such as asthma and obstructive pulmonary diseases), and diabetes, which causes about 38 million deaths annually worldwide, can be prevented with an appropriate and adequate nutritional lifestyle in terms of quality and quantity. The first 1000 days of a child's existence are crucial for their physical development as well as their future cerebral progress. Additionally, a growing body of research highlights the crucial role that nutrients play in the development of the immune system and in the make-up of the gut microbiota, which is increasingly recognised as a true metabolically and immunologically active organ. Given that the crucial "1000 days" span not only the first 24 months of a child's life but also the time leading up to conception and during pregnancy, attention must be given to both maternal and child nutrition, which necessitates a shift in how we think about nutrition strategies for mother and child pairs during this vulnerable time in their lives. Even before the baby is born, the mother starts to care for her lifestyle and diet. Therefore, early childhood offers both a window of greatest vulnerability and a significant chance for a child's development. The body is actually changeable at this time, especially the central nervous system (CNS), making them vulnerable to long-term epigenetic changes that can alter the risk of disease. Diet and lifestyle, which are both the primary cause and the "easiest" element on which to intervene to stop the detrimental effects, have a substantial impact on NCDs in this regard<sup>16</sup>. Introducing a healthy lifestyle and a balanced food to children at a young age paves the way for their future wellbeing. It is also crucial to keep in mind that a child is never a small adult, and that this is especially true during the first few years of life<sup>16</sup>. To guarantee that possibilities for appropriate and secure growth are offered to infants and children, the authorities in charge of food safety must therefore make providing customers with safe and high-quality food one of their primary goals.