# Joint comment of multiple pediatric societies on the World Health Organization (WHO) 2023 Guideline on Complementary Feeding

The new WHO guideline aims to provide evidence-based recommendations on complementary feeding (CF) of healthy term infants and young children from all backgrounds, including both breastfed and non-breastfed children. Like WHO, our organisations aim to promote optimal infant and young child nutrition and health, with a focus on promoting breastfeeding (BF) as well as appropriate and timely CF. We welcome and agree with several of the recommendations made by WHO; however, we would like to raise concerns about other aspects. We suggest alternative or modified proposals in a call for all future guidance to follow good scientific practice.

Source of concerns:

## **Developmental process**

Lack of stakeholder engagement and public consultation meaning the opportunity for wider input was missed and factual inaccuracies persist.



#### **Context-specificity**

Attempt to make global recommendations with little mention of different contexts and health needs in low-, middle- and high-income countries.



cause confusion and potential unintended harm.

### **WHO** Guideline

"BF should continue up to 2 years or beyond."

"For infants (6-11 months) not fed breast milk, milk formula or animal milk can be fed. For young children (12-23 months) not fed breast milk, animal milk (no follow-up formula) should be fed."

"Infants should be introduced to CF at 6 months while continuing BF."

# **Our Proposal**

...the recommendations have the potential to

"Decision to BF beyond 2 years is contextdependent and should be left to mother & infant."

"Recommendations on animal milk and formula" milk should be context-specific and depend on availability, affordability, and nutrition levels."

age for introducing allergenic foods (e.g. egg/ introduced in age-appropriate form when CF is commenced any time from 4 months."

"Introduction to CF must also consider developmental readiness and the appropriate peanut) in affected populations, which may be

























WHO, WHO Guideline for Complementary feeding of infants and young children 6-23 months of age. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2023. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240081864. Published October 16, 2023. Accessed January 18, 2024.

ESPGHAN et al., World Health Organization (WHO) Guideline on the complementary feeding of infants and young children aged 6-23 months 2023: a multi-society response; 2024 [Manuscript submitted for publication



European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (ESPGHAN), European Academy of Paediatrics (EAP), European Society for Paediatric Research (ESPR), European Academy for Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI), Federation of International Societies for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology & Nutrition (FISPGHAN), Latin American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology & Nutrition (LASPGHAN), Pan Arab Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, and Nutrition (PASPGHAN), Asian Pan-Pacific Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN), World Allergy Organization (WAO), Asia Pacific Academy of Pediatric Allergy, Respirology & Immunology (APAPARI)