

Weaning practices: Rural and Urban differences

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■ **ABSTRACT :** The study was undertaken to assess the prevalence of recommended weaning among randomly selected (n=160) urban and rural respondents (mothers) of the Palanpur Taluka, Banaskantha district of Gujarat State. The findings revealed that that 40 per cent of urban mothers and 46.25 per cent of rural mothers initiated weaning either too early or too late. Higher per cent of rural mothers (88.75 %) in comparison to urban mothers (57.05 %) continued breast milk besides giving additional food while weaning. Merely, 27.50 per cent of urban and 38.75 of rural mothers continued breastfeeding till the child reached the age of two years. It was found that only half of the urban mothers and 66.25 per cent of rural mothers practiced child led weaning. Very less per cent of mothers introduced the recommended food at right age. Honey was introduced to child's food at recommended age by merely 16.25 % and 1.25 % of urban and rural mothers, respectively. Curd was correctly introduced by only 33.75 % of urban and 30 % and rural mothers. It was found that with increase in age of the child there was decrease in feeding frequency. The decline was observed to be steadier among rural mothers. It was found that tea was the most common mal-practice was that among beverage, tea was given by 86.25 per cent and 93.75 per cent of urban and rural mothers, respectively. Regarding basic hygiene during weaning it was found that 46.25 per cent of urban respondents sterilized the milk bottles by boiling for 10 -15 minutes before use where as only 5 per cent of rural respondents followed the sterilization process. It was also found that 82.50 per cent of urban and 67.50 per cent of rural respondents washed hand before weaning preparation. But only 8.75 per cent of urban and 27.50 per cent of rural mothers do not taste food by using infant spoon. Weaning practice had positive and highly significant association with age ($z = 0.374$) and annual income ($z = 0.457$) while was significantly associated with family type ($z = 0.146$), number of animals ($z = 0.174$) and mass media exposure ($z = 0.100$). The study suggests extensive extension of recommended weaning among mothers.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Weaning, Practice, Urban, Rural, Mother

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