AELAMA
Asociación Española de Lactancia Materna

Global Obesity Summit, Madrid

October 26–29, 2026

Breastfeeding and Obesity Prevention: Five Key Messages

1 **Breastfeeding is a protective factor against childhood overweight and obesity.** Epidemiological evidence shows a favorable association, with a trend related to breastfeeding duration. The limitations of studying continued breastfeeding should not be interpreted as an absence of benefits. [1]

2 **Breastfeeding contributes to establishing healthy eating patterns from the beginning of life.** It promotes the self-regulation of energy intake and plays a role in the development of dietary preferences, with potential long-term metabolic health implications for the mother–infant dyad. [2]

3 **Early exposure to ultra-processed products constitutes a public health concern.** Their introduction during early childhood can displace breastfeeding as well as fresh or minimally processed foods, promoting dietary patterns associated with a higher risk of obesity. [3,4]

4 **Prevention requires addressing the social and commercial determinants of health.** Social inequalities, living conditions, and food environments shape both the opportunities for breastfeeding and the risk of obesity. Prevention strategies must target these determinants, regulate commercial practices that promote the consumption of breast-milk substitutes and commercial complementary feeding products, and prevent conflicts of interest that compromise the independence of public policies, research, and healthcare professional education. [5]

5 **Obesity prevention requires both a public health and a gender perspective.** Protecting and facilitating breastfeeding is an intervention addressing the environments that shape health, rather than an individual responsibility that should fall upon mothers. Women's health and rights constitute goals in their own right. Integrating maternal metabolic health assessment starting from pregnancy, recognizing risk factors associated with breastfeeding difficulties, and ensuring appropriate care and follow-up provide an opportunity for prevention and for reducing the gender gap in health, with potential short- and long-term metabolic health benefits for the mother–infant dyad. [6,7]

References

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Lactancia materna y prevención de la obesidad: cinco ideas clave

1 **La lactancia materna es un factor protector frente al sobrepeso y la obesidad infantil.** La evidencia epidemiológica muestra una asociación favorable, con una tendencia relacionada con la duración de la lactancia. Las limitaciones para estudiar la lactancia prolongada no deben interpretarse como ausencia de beneficios. [1]

2 **La lactancia contribuye a establecer patrones de alimentación saludables desde el inicio de la vida.** Favorece la autorregulación de la ingesta y participa en el desarrollo de las preferencias alimentarias, con posibles repercusiones sobre la salud metabólica a largo plazo de la díada madre-lactante. [2]

3 **La exposición temprana a productos ultraprocesados constituye un problema de salud pública.** Su introducción durante la primera infancia puede desplazar la lactancia y los alimentos frescos o mínimamente procesados, favoreciendo patrones alimentarios asociados con mayor riesgo de obesidad. [3,4]

4 **La prevención exige abordar los determinantes sociales y comerciales de la salud.** Las desigualdades sociales, las condiciones de vida y los entornos alimentarios condicionan tanto las posibilidades de amamantar como el riesgo de obesidad. Las estrategias de prevención deben actuar sobre estos determinantes, regular las prácticas comerciales que favorecen el consumo de sucedáneos y productos alimentarios infantiles y prevenir los conflictos de interés que comprometen la independencia de las políticas públicas, la investigación y la formación sanitaria. [5]

5 **La prevención de la obesidad exige una perspectiva de salud pública y de género.** Proteger y facilitar la lactancia es una intervención sobre los entornos que condicionan la salud, no una responsabilidad individual que deba recaer sobre las madres. La salud y los derechos de las mujeres constituyen objetivos en sí mismos. Incorporar la evaluación de la salud metabólica materna desde el embarazo, reconocer los factores de riesgo asociados a las dificultades de lactancia y garantizar su atención y seguimiento constituye una oportunidad para la prevención y la reducción de la brecha de género en salud, con beneficios potenciales para la salud metabólica de la díada a corto y largo plazo. [6,7]

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