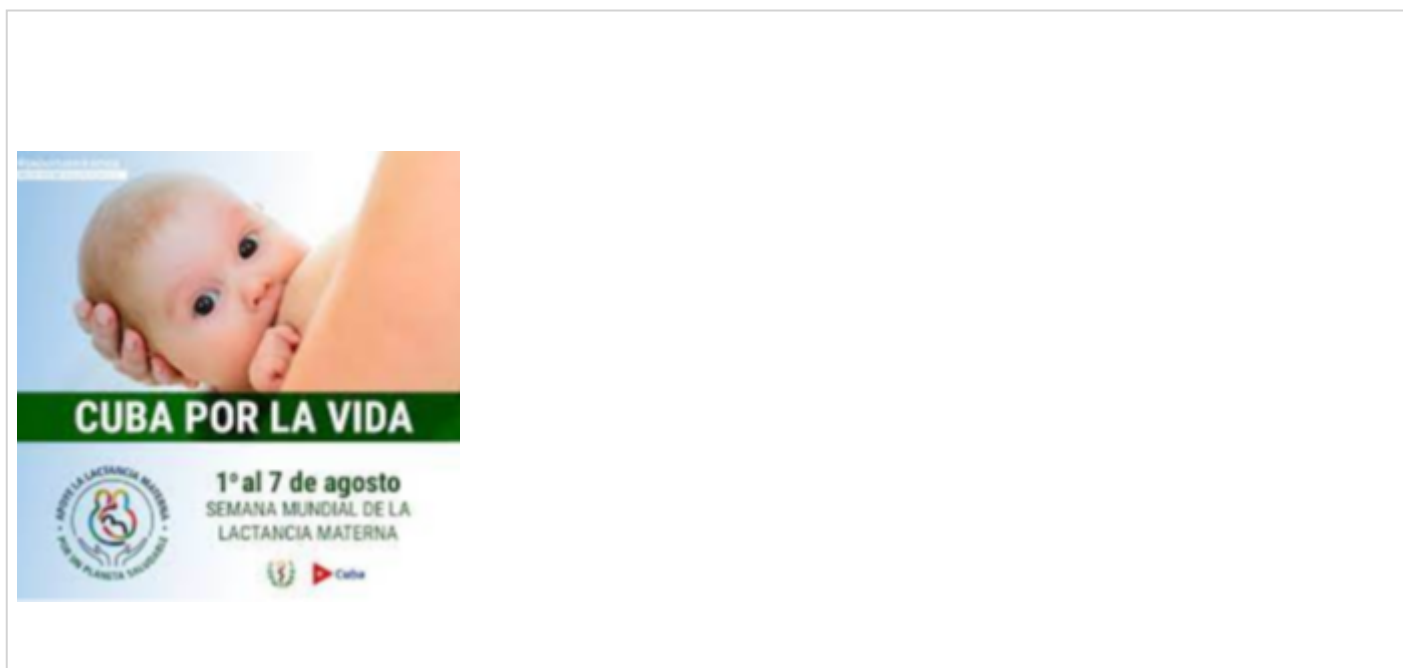


# *Cuba joins World Breastfeeding Week*

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By María Josefina Arce

As every year, Cuba joined the World Breastfeeding Week, which will be extended until the coming August 7th and has the purpose of raising awareness about the benefits of breast milk for the development of infants, as it is a safe source of nutrients and reduces the risk of neonatal mortality.

The WHO, World Health Organization, recommends it as the exclusive mode of feeding during the first six months of life, and thereafter advises to keep it until at least two years of age, supplemented with other safe foods.

According to specialists, this natural process is the first vaccine that a human being receives at birth to be protected against various diseases.

But breastfeeding also has a positive impact on women. Among its benefits is that it reduces the possibility of developing ovarian and breast cancer, it is economical and strengthens the mother-child bond.

Hence, promoting this beneficial act is a priority of the Mother and Child Program of the Cuban Ministry of Public Health.

And in this objective, the participation of health professionals at all levels who provide direct counseling to mothers, but also in meetings in the communities and with mass organizations such as the Federation of Cuban Women, is essential.

These are vital actions to make society and future parents aware of the importance of breast milk for their children, which is the safest food against colds, diarrhea, allergies and malnutrition.

Although campaigns are also being developed through the media, there is still a long way to go in this direction. This is not only a challenge for Cuba, but for the whole world, as more and more people resort to artificial formulas.

The existence of breast milk banks, which guarantee that the liquid reaches those children whose mothers are unable to breastfeed due to certain circumstances, speaks for the vitality of this natural food.

There are 14 of these facilities in the country, which have contributed to the optimal feeding of underweight babies or those who require surgery, mainly intestinal surgery.

Breastfeeding is an act of love, is to ensure the proper development of children, to protect them from diseases and to see them grow up healthy and strong.

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