

## QLD weather disasters highlight difficulties with feeding babies

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(Medical Xpress) -- Infant feeding was an unseen casualty of the recent Queensland natural disasters and researchers at The University of Queensland (UQ) want mothers to help them find out about the challenges they faced to help improve disaster planning.

Infant nutrition researcher Ruth Newby, from the UQ Children's Nutrition Research Centre, said the aim of the study is to identify any shortcomings in [emergency response](#) protocols as they apply to [infant feeding](#).

“The results will provide useful information in helping governments and non-government organisations in Australia to plan and deliver services to families affected by natural disasters in the future, for the safe [feeding](#) of their [infants](#) and young children,” Ms Newby said.

Researchers were alerted to the difficulties being faced by families with infants when a number of mothers participating in The Feeding Queensland Babies Study reported difficulties with safely feeding their infants during the recent Queensland floods and Cyclone Yasi.

The study aims to determine just how decisions about feeding infants are being made in the 21st century.

Now, researchers have expanded this study and are calling for mothers, foster parents or carers of children younger than 24 months who had their family life disrupted in any way by these [natural disasters](#). Around

1000 participants are needed. They will be asked to complete a single online questionnaire.

“The women's stories highlighted the need for specific understanding of the difficulties experienced by families and the potential for affects on the wellbeing of our youngest Queenslanders,” Ms Newby said.

“Young children, and in particular infants younger than 12 months, are critically vulnerable to interruptions in the supply of safe and appropriate foods and fluids,” Ms Newby said.

“Infants in their first weeks and months of life may need to be fed by their parents or carers as often as every 2 hours. Accessing safe nutrition for infants can certainly be a challenge for parents under emergency conditions.”

This research is likely to have worldwide application, with tens of millions of people affected by emergencies each year, placing infants at risk of illness and even death.

**More information:** Interested families can complete the online questionnaire at [psy.uq.edu.au/fed](https://psy.uq.edu.au/fed)

Provided by University of Queensland

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