



Exclusive breastfeeding is a right of the child. The benefits of exclusive breastfeeding are enormous not only to the baby, but also in many other ways to the family and nation.

FARIA SHABNAM

Seema, a mother of 2 month old boy lives at Kamrangirchar slum and works at a garments factory. When she was asked about exclusive breastfeeding, she smiled and said, "I know that, I need to breastfeed exclusively for first six months, but I have to resume work 2 months after. I will have to start from home at 7 am and will return on 7 pm. How can I breastfeed my baby?"

Rashida, a mother of 5 month old girl works at a private company. She angrily throw a lot of questions — "Are you joking? Will I go home during lunch time or will I bring her at office? Do you think my office will allow this? How can I breastfeed my daughter while I already joined my office?"

Mira, another worker of a reputed garments factory is blessed that her factory has crèche as per buyer compliance.

Exclusive Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding by working mother

She said, "We have crèche but it is at another block. We are allowed to spend half an hour with our babies at crèche, but I dare to go and the reason is floor supervisor shouts and indirectly shows fear of taking out portions of salary!"

Bangladesh is still far away to provide working mothers with the knowledge, support and tools they need to apply exclusive breastfeeding and raise healthy children. However, various community interventions have been initiated with multifaceted programmers for behaviour changing, educating and counselling families on breastfeeding and household work sharing, providing girls with education, life skill and discouraging the harmful practices regarding exclusive breastfeeding.

According to Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) 2014 preliminary findings, 55% of infants under the age of 6 months are exclusively breastfed. This lowered proportion than that of reported in 2011 BDHS (64%) is a staggering chasm.

A very welcomed move by the Government of Bangladesh was to extend paid maternity leave to six month from four months. The

step was taken to combat malnutrition and to ensure the healthy growth of the newer generation. According to the Bangladesh Service Rules, a public servant can enjoy full paid maternity leave for six-months twice during the tenure of her service. But are the temporary workers at state owned office and private sectors can enjoy this leave? The answer is mostly NO. Few of the basic causes of this deprivation are the inactiveness of relevant Acts and lack of enforcement of the existing laws. Maternity leave is still an issue of mercy and sometimes viewed as special benefit or privilege for the women employee.

Another reason for not meeting exclusive breastfeeding is less confidence of the right holders (read, Mothers). Much more voice should be raised and self-confidence should be built up by the working mothers. They should keep in mind that their working status should not lead to the lower rate of breastfeeding.

Women employed away from home can continue exclusive breastfeeding feeding through a variety of approaches. A mother should breastfeed as often as possible when she is with her

infant — she can express her breast milk in a clean covered bowl and ask caregiver to feed the infant with spoon during her absence; she can take a breastfeeding break at office to express her breast milk and store in a glass bottle.

Duty bearers (read Employer) should take into account that maternity leave benefits not only increase the chances of women employee to get back to their work and play an important role to increase organisational fidelity, efficiency, job satisfaction but also develop productive, healthy future human resources for the nation.

Much more needs to be done to support mothers — good counselling and support, providing lactation kit for pumping and storing milk, breastfeeding breaks, establishment of a good quality crèche or workplace breastfeeding room, allowing women to spend time with infant at crèche will help to create conducive environment in families in the community and at workplace to make a significant difference.

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HAVE A NICE DAY

Importance of electrolytes - 1



Dr Rubaiul Murshed

Almost all forms of life including humans cannot exist without electrolytes. These regulate our muscle and nerve function, hydration, blood pH, blood pressure and what not! Electrolyte levels are kept constant by our kidneys and several hormones.

Older people are more susceptible to dehydration and over-hydration. They are also more at risk to abnormal electrolyte levels. This is because their kidneys do not work so well when they become older. Also when people exercise or go through strenuous hard work — they sweat and lose electrolytes, mainly sodium and potassium.

These must be replaced to maintain electrolyte concentrations. Fresh fruits and vegetables are good sources of sodium and potassium. Excess electrolyte levels in our blood are filtered out by normal kidneys.

Our heart muscles and nerve cells use electrolytes to maintain voltage across their cell membranes. The level of an electrolyte in the blood can become too high or too low. Wrong electrolyte levels can lead to either weak muscles or muscles that contract too severely.

Body electrolyte levels also tend to alter when water level in the body changes. If our consumption of necessary electrolytes is imbalanced, there can be severe health consequences. The most common imbalances are excessive or too little sodium and potassium. Another very common phenomenon that can reduce the ability to absorb these minerals includes drinking high amount of beverage that contains caffeine. If a person has any of the potassium deficiency symptoms, s/he has to take action to change their dietary habit and begin eating healthier alternatives.

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HEALTH bulletin



Happy friends could help teenagers beat depression

For teenagers, surrounding themselves with friends, particularly friends in a good mood could significantly reduce their risk of developing depression, and improve their ability to recover from it.

In a study published this week, scientists analysed the data of more than 2,000 high school students in the United States to investigate whether the moods of students influenced one another and if this could in turn impact levels of depression among teens. The teams modeled the spread of moods among the students over six to 12 months, using techniques similar to modeling the spread of an infectious disease.

"We classified people as ill (depressed) or not and looked at how that changed over time," says Thomas Moore, a lecturer in applied mathematics at the University of Manchester, who worked on the study. Moore says previous studies have found depressed people tend to group into clusters, implying that this frame of mind could be spread. But the team found the opposite.

ICAAP12

International congress on AIDS to be held in Bangladesh

DR MAHMOOD KAZI MOHAMMED

The world is embarking on a fast-track strategy to end the AIDS epidemic by the year 2030. To reach this visionary goal after three decades of the most serious epidemic in living memory, countries will need to use the powerful tools available, hold one another accountable for results and make sure that no one is left behind.

For over two decades, the International Congress on AIDS in Asia Pacific (ICAAP) has become a leading venue for AIDS activists, people living with HIV/AIDS, policy makers, government ministries, academics, clinicians, researchers, pharmaceutical companies, and international agencies from Asia Pacific to gather together.

The 12th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP12) will take place in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 20 to 23 November 2015 under the theme "Be the Change for an AIDS Free Generation, Our right to health."

This congress will be hosted by the Government of Bangladesh in collaboration with Partners in Population and Development (PPD) as co-host. The congress will bring together over 3,500 delegates from the region and beyond. More than 200 high level Government officials; several UN mission heads and distinguished national and interna-

Bangladesh is the first country in the Asia Pacific region to start a nationally approved AIDS policy.



tional HIV and AIDS researchers, advocates, policy and community leaders and representatives of NGOs, key affected populations, civil society and people living with HIV will take active part in the congress.

The ICAAP12 will highlight Bangladesh's and the region's aim to achieve an AIDS-free generation through science, innovation, and community involvement with government leadership.

The Honourable Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is expected to inaugurate this Congress that will attract around 400 speakers who will contribute to various sessions during the three days of ICAAP12.

26 Government Ministers from the region from the health and other related sectors are expected to attend the congress and participate in the inter-ministerial conference on Every Woman, Every Child and Every Adolescent that will culminate in the Dhaka Declaration capturing political commitment and guidance for further acceleration of regional efforts on HIV and AIDS towards ending AIDS by 2030.

The preparation for the conference is in full swing. As part of the conference preparation, a 'Marathon meeting' was held at BRAC CDM at Khagan, Ashulia, Savar on 17-18 of August 2015.

The inaugural session of the marathon meeting was chaired by Dr Joe Thomas, Secretary General of ICAAP12 and Executive Director, Partners of Population and Development (PPD).

Syed Monjurul Islam, Hon'ble Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare & Chairman, Local Organizing Committee (LOC) was present as the Chief Guest.

The session was addressed by the Co-Chairman of ICAAP12 Prof Nurun Nabi; Dr Tasnim Azim; Habiba Akter and Prof Dr Kamrul Hasan Khan. Regional Director of Communicable Diseases of WHO, Dr Swarup Sarker and UNAIDS country Coordinator Leo Kenny also spoke in the opening session.

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Health Events



Thyrocare Bangladesh Limited recently organised an awareness programme at Gulshan Club. Prof Dr M Iqbal Arslan, Secretary General, Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) was present at the event as the Chief Guest. BMA leaders, renowned doctors and top management of Thyrocare Bangladesh Limited were present at the programme. Speakers congratulated Thyrocare Bangladesh Limited for their righteous effort to contribute to the society.



Children from various districts joined Save the Children's Race for Survival in Dhaka which took place recently with Md Fazole Rabbi Miah, MP, Honourable Deputy Speaker of National Parliament of Bangladesh as the Chief Guest at his residence. The children presented a letter in appreciation of his hard work to achieve MDG 4. The letter had 4 additional demands stated on behalf of the children of Bangladesh.



/StarHealthBD

THE HEART HEALTH

Globally **17.3 million** deaths occur due to Heart disease, according to report from the "American Heart Association". Within **2015 to 2030** the number will rise to more than **23.6 million**

Avoid

- ♥ Avoid relying on processed foods
- ♥ Avoid using too much salt
- ♥ Avoid Stress
- ♥ Quit smoking

Be More Active

- ♥ Exercise, it keeps your metabolism active
- ♥ Have a low calorie diet if you're overweight
- ♥ Vegetables and low GI foods provide important
- ♥ Nutrition and won't adversely affect blood sugar levels

Check up

- ♥ Cholesterol Test
- ♥ HbA1c Test
- ♥ Blood Pressure Check



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