

# AWARENESS ON BREASTFEEDING

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According to World Health Organisation's (WHO) calculations, every year, the untimely death of 15 lakh children can be prevented if they are only breast fed during the first six months after birth. In the last 5 years, our country has seen a rise from 47 percent to 64 percent in breast feeding to infants up to 6 months.

Immediately after birth, the new-born should be breast-fed at the earliest within half an hour. For the first 6 whole months (180 days), the infant should be breast-fed exclusively. After that, the child should be breast fed along with solid food side by side. The first milk produced by the mother after giving birth is called colostrum. Colostrum is dense, sticky, and pale yellow in colour. It is extremely beneficial for the infant and works as the child's first ever vaccine. Here are some of the benefits of colostrums:

- It is rich in protein
- It cleanses the child's stomach and helps in regular bowel movement
- It reduces the possibility of the infant developing neonatal jaundice
- After childbirth, the amount of milk produced in the first 2-3 days is sufficient for the newborn. Feeding the infant water, honey, or sugared water is extremely harmful. It increases the possibility of the infant getting diarrhoea. Moreover, its eagerness to feed on breast milk decreases.
- Breast milk contains all the necessary nutritional elements for the baby. Up till the age of 6 months, breast milk alone is sufficient. Besides nutritional elements, breast milk is comprised of 90 percent water, which is why the infant does not need any additional water during the first 6 months of life.
- Breast milk is clean and free of germs. It has no chance of being affected by airborne or waterborne germs.
- Moreover, breast milk capacitates the infant to prevent diseases, which is why the child becomes less vulnerable to diseases especially diarrhoea, ear infection, pneumonia, lung diseases, asthma, allergy, itching, etc.
- Breast milk enhances the child's growth. Also, it facilitates natural physical and mental growth.
- Even if the child catches any disease, the child recovers faster due to greater resistance to diseases.
- It reduces the mortality rate of infants.
- It is easily digestible.
- It contains optimum amount of Vitamin A, which eliminates the child's chances of catching night blindness.

**Immune system.** Responds better to vaccinations. Human milk helps to mature immune system. Decreased risk of childhood cancer.

**Skin.** Less allergic eczema in breastfed infants.

**Joints and muscles.** Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis is less common in children who were breastfed.

**Bowels.** Less constipation.

**Urinary tract.** Fewer infections in breastfed infants.

**Digestive system.** Less diarrhea, fewer gastrointestinal infections in babies who are breastfeeding. Six months or more of exclusive breastfeeding reduces risk of food allergies. Also, less risk of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis in adulthood.

## The Breastfed Baby

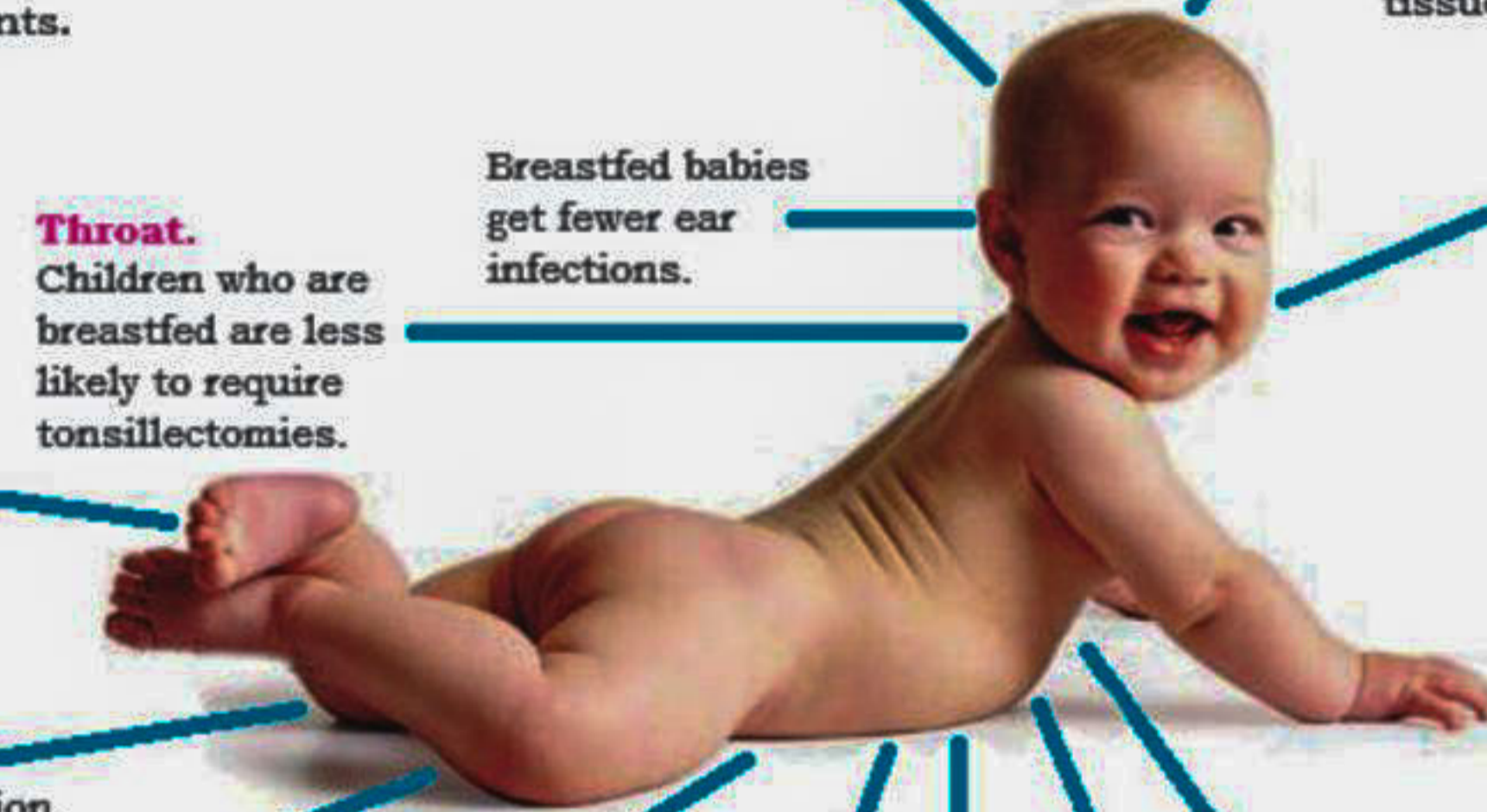
**Eyes.** Visual acuity is higher in babies fed human milk.

**Higher IQ.** Cholesterol and other types of fat in human milk support the growth of nerve tissue.

**Endocrine system.** Reduced risk of getting diabetes.

Breastfed babies get fewer ear infections.

**Mouth.** Less need for orthodontics in children breastfed more than a year. Improved muscle development of face from suckling at the breast. Subtle changes in the taste of human milk prepare babies to accept a variety of solid foods.



**Appendix.** Children with acute appendicitis are less likely to have been breastfed.

**Kidneys.** With less salt and less protein, human milk is easier on a baby's kidneys.

**Respiratory system.** Breastfed babies have fewer and less severe upper respiratory infections, less wheezing, less pneumonia and less influenza.

**Heart and circulatory system.** Breastfed children have lower cholesterol as adults. Heart rates are lower in breastfed infants.

PHOTO: INTERNET

However, breast feeding is not only beneficial for the child, it is necessary for the mother as well.

- It creates an emotional attachment between the mother and child.
- Breastfeeding the child helps rescue the mother's body from post-partum complications.
- Breastfeeding helps the mother's uterus recover faster from the disturbances during pregnancy. In addition, to an extent it controls the post-partum bleeding. Moreover, it paves a beautiful way to strengthen the bond with the

child and develops positive feelings within a mother. Breastfeeding reduces the chances of developing breast and ovarian cancer, and helps the mother reduce her weight after childbirth.

The Government of Bangladesh has taken various initiatives to ensure proper nutrition for mothers and their children. In addition to government initiatives, private organisations such as different hospitals have come forward to establish lactation corners and are playing a significant role, also conducting various scientific

workshops to raise awareness about the benefits of breast milk. Greater awareness is needed to ensure achievement of millennium development goals for the large population of this country. In this age, where half of the working population consists of women, a greater mother-friendly workplace is extremely important.

Today's children are tomorrow's future. Come, let us work together to build an excellent future with these children, and let us build a beautiful Bangladesh.

The writer is the Company Doctor for Nestlé Bangladesh Ltd.

SHUTTERSTORIES

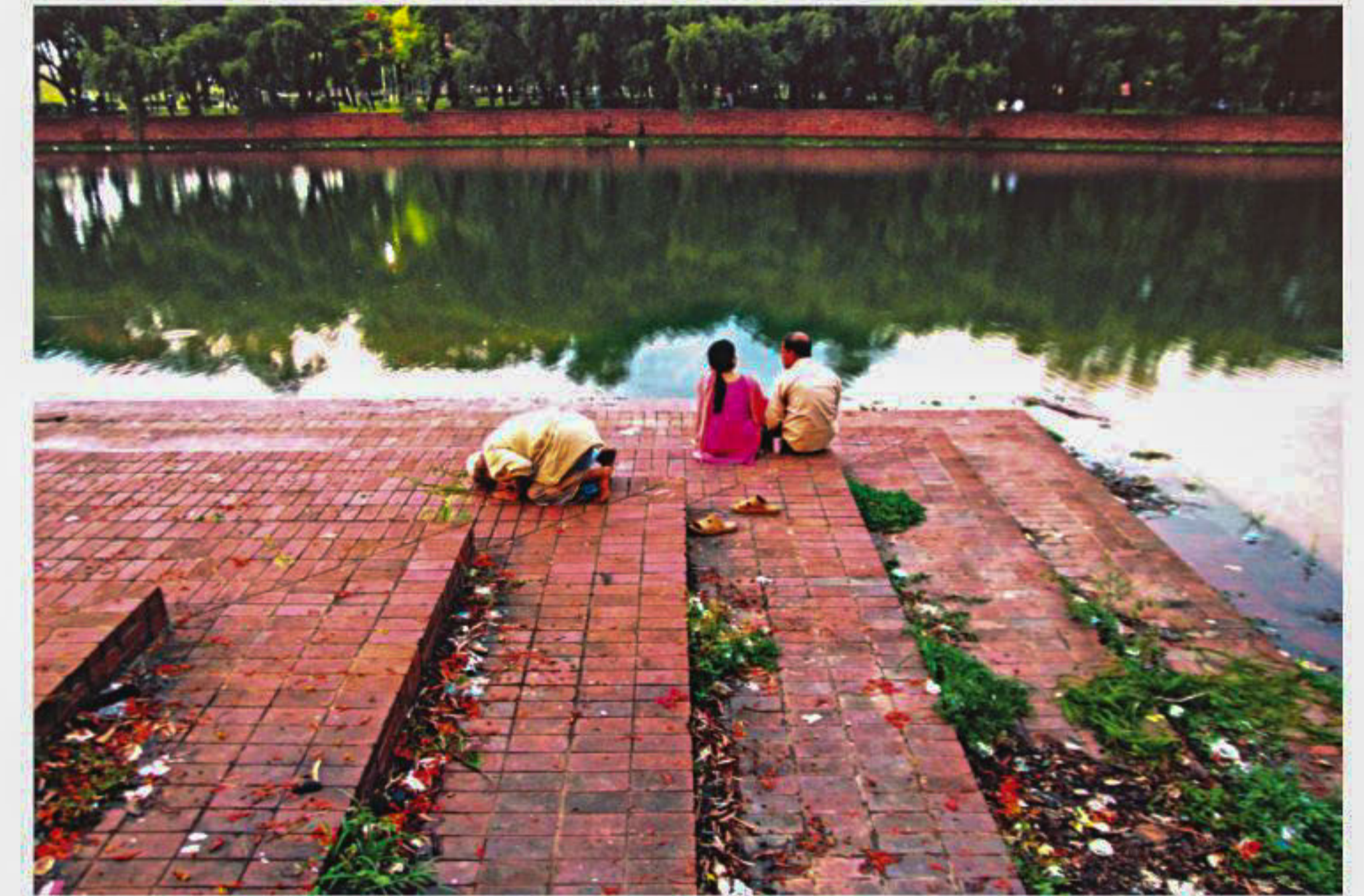


## BEYOND THE FOUR WALLS

Photos: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

There's life beyond our four walls. Whether the walls are of our homes, of our schools or of our offices—there is life blooming beyond it, life quite different from the ones we lead in our four cornered boxes. When one takes a stroll through the park, he or she can witness tid-bits of that life—uncles exercising to keep fit after having wonderful breakfasts cooked by their wives, lovers holding hands and discussing their future of a home with a garden and the number of children they will have— one argues 2, the other says 3, children running and playing with animals without the feelings of hate or fear instilled in them yet. A park is a wonderful place to not only witness the hidden beauties of life; it is also an ideal place to find your own. Take a stroll, start your life beyond your four walls.

— NAZIBA BASHER



**ABOUT TOWN**

**ANAMNESIS**  
JOINT ART EXHIBITION BY ISKINDAR MIRZA AND MAZHARUL ISLAM  
October 6 to 21, 2015, 7 pm to 10 pm  
Peda Ting Ting, House 69, Road 26, Gulshan

**GODS AND BEATS**  
SOLO EXHIBITION BY RONNI AHMMED  
September 12 to October 17, 12 pm to 8 PM  
Bengal Art Lounge

**RAGA TASTING**  
October 16, 2015, 7:30 pm  
Longitude latitude, Banani 11