

Breastfeeding: A step up in improving IYCF

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Breast milk ensures a child's right to survive, develop, participate and be protected. Promoting breastfeeding is essential, because it reduces the risk of unacceptable functional consequences due to lack of breastfeeding and it reduces child and maternal mortality.

Exclusive breastfeeding has the global potential to save millions of infants. Breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding are the keys to adequate nutrition and human development.

Malnutrition plays an evil role in transmitting poverty from one generation to the next. Once a child is malnourished, the health and developmental consequences are irreversible — the health consequences and costs persist throughout the life and are transferred through generations.

Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) plays a crucial role in determining the optimal growth and development of the infant. In Bangladesh, poor infant feeding practice, along with frequent illness, restrict child growth from six months onwards. During this period, weight gains generally falter and development is hindered.

Bangladesh Government recognises the importance of proper nutrition for infant and young children. As a result the rate of



exclusive breastfeeding is gradually increasing. Currently 55% Bangladeshi mothers are breastfeeding exclusively for the first six months of age.

Breast milk is naturally produced at the breast when a child is born. This milk provides important nutritional vitamins and minerals that are necessary for child development and contribute to the child's health beyond their first year of life. Children who are breastfed between 6 and 12 months receive over half of their total energy from breast milk.

Breast milk naturally forms in a mother's body, requires little

preparation, is naturally sterile and is available to the child at the correct temperature.

Optimal breastfeeding is the best strategy for ensuring that the child is well-fed and benefiting from all the nutritional effects of breastfeeding. Optimal breastfeeding requires that mothers initiate breastfeeding within a half an hour to an hour of birth, give frequent and on-demand feeding (which include night feeds) and that they exclusively breastfeed the baby until it is about 6 months of age, with the option to continue breastfeeding until the baby is 2 years and beyond.

Breast milk has been shown to reduce the tendency of childhood obesity, contains antimicrobial factors and provides several biochemical advantages.

Additionally a breast fed child suffers less from infections, diarrhoeal disease and acute respiratory tract and ear infections. In fact, breastfeeding during diarrhoea reduces dehydration and its duration.

Research shows that a child who has been exclusively breastfed has a 25 times less chance of death from diarrhoea and 4 times reduced chance of having an acute respiratory tract infection in comparison to a child who is bottle fed.

It is important that we create awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding and that we provide messages to mothers and families with infants and young children.

An advocacy plan designed and implemented collaboratively by the government, NGOs with set objectives, audiences, format, messengers, time of delivery and action would provide the necessary support for mothers and families with infants and young children.

World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated every year from 1 to 7 August to encourage breastfeeding and improve the health of babies around the world. It commemorates the Innocenti Declaration signed in August 1990 by government policymakers, WHO, UNICEF and other organisations to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. This year, WHO is encouraging people to "Support mums to breastfeed anytime, anywhere," as all of society has a role to play in making our communities more breastfeeding-friendly.

It is urgent and most imperative that all our efforts, policies and strategies are put together to promote and protect breastfeeding for healthy, wealthy and nutritionally well future generation.

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IMMUNISATION

Global immunisation coverage sustained in the past five years

The latest WHO and UNICEF data on global immunisation coverage show that 86% of the world's children received the required 3 doses of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis containing vaccines (DTP3) in 2015, a coverage level that has been sustained above 85% since 2010.

As a result, the number of children who did not receive routine vaccinations has dropped to an estimated 19.4 million, down from 33.8 million in 2000.

However, this progress falls short of global immunisation targets of the Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP) for the Decade of Vaccines of achieving 90% or more DTP3 vaccination coverage at the national level and 80% or more in all districts by 2015.

Among the 194 WHO Member States, 126 countries achieved and sustained the 90% immunization target for DTP3, up from 63 in 2000. Many of these countries, especially the low and middle income countries, need to continue strengthening their health systems as they add vaccines to their national programmes so that coverage with all vaccines reach and sustain at the 90% or more target.



HEALTH bulletin

Avoiding chronic back pain

STAR HEALTH DESK

If you have been sidelined by a sore back, you are not alone. Four out of five people experience back pain at some point, making it the fifth most common reason for visiting the doctor.

The good news is that most lower back pain usually gets better within a few days or weeks, and surgery is rarely necessary. What is more, simple self-help strategies such as these can be surprisingly effective at preventing back pain and keeping it from returning:

Get more exercise. If your back is hurting, you may think the best way to get relief is to limit exercise and to rest. But experts now know that regular physical activity can help ease inflammation and muscle tension.

Watch your weight. Extra pounds, specially in your mid-section, can make back pain worse by shifting your center of gravity and putting strain on your lower back. Staying within 10 pounds of your ideal weight may help control back pain.

If you smoke, stop. Smoking restricts the flow of nutrient-containing blood to spinal discs, so smokers are specially vulnerable to back pain.

Sleeping position. If you are prone to back pain, talk with your doctor about the best sleeping



position. Sleeping on your side with your knees pulled up slightly toward your chest is sometimes suggested.

Pay attention to your posture. The best chair for preventing back pain is one with a straight back or low-back support. Keep your knees a bit higher than your hips while seated. Prop your feet on a stool if you need to.

Be careful how you lift. Don't bend over from the waist to lift heavy objects. Bend your knees and squat, pulling in your stomach muscles and holding the object close to your body as you stand up. Don't twist your body while lifting.

If you can, push rather than pull heavy objects. Pushing is easier on the back.

Avoid high heels. They can shift your center of gravity and strain your lower back. Stick to a one-inch heel. If you have to go higher, bring along a pair of low-heeled shoes and slip into them if you become uncomfortable.

Stash the skinny jeans. Clothing so tight that it interferes with bending, sitting or walking can aggravate back pain.

Lighten your wallet. Sitting on an overstuffed wallet may cause discomfort and back pain. If you are going to be sitting for a prolonged period — while driving, for example, take your wallet out of your back pocket.

Pick the right handbag or briefcase. Buy a bag or briefcase with a wide, adjustable strap that is long enough to reach over your head. When carrying a heavy bag or case without straps, switch hands frequently to avoid putting all the stress on one side of the body. To lighten the load, periodically purge bags, cases, backpacks, and other carriers of things you don't need.

Forget about back braces. Various back supports are available, from elastic bands to special corsets. They can be helpful after certain kinds of surgery, but there is not much evidence that they help treat chronic back pain.

Top health benefits of eating seafood

From saltwater and freshwater fish to deep water shellfish, seafood is a beloved delicacy. Seafood is nutrient-rich, serves as a good source of protein, vitamins and minerals and is rich in omega-3 fatty acids and in the reduction of common diseases. Here are the top health benefits of eating seafood.

Provides essential nutrients: Though the specifics depend upon which type seafood you consume, seafood is known for being a natural source of vitamins and minerals. B-complex vitamins, vitamin D and vitamin B.

Promotes heart health: Seafood's greatest health benefit lies in its abundant source of omega-3 fatty acids that significantly reduce cardiovascular risks.

Good for your joints: Eating seafood on a regular basis has been proven to ease the symptoms of arthritis.

Maintains eyesight: Sea fish and shellfish can boost your night vision.

Good skin: The omega-3 fatty acids in seafood protect the skin against UV rays from the sun and can help reduce the prevalence of acne.

Boosts brainpower: Seafood omega-3s may lower the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. A sufficient intake of omega-3 fatty acids promotes proper brain growth in infants and children.

Fights against depression: Consuming more seafood can help you have more positive outlook on life.

Pregnancy benefits: Seafood consumption aid in reducing preterm delivery and is essential for central nervous system development.

Improves immune function: Increased omega-3 consumption can reduce the symptoms of asthma and certain allergies.



Rheumatic fever is an inflammatory disease that can develop as a complication of inadequately treated strep throat or scarlet fever

Rheumatic fever is most common in **5 to 15** year-old children, though it can develop in younger children and adults.

Risk Factor

- Family history.
- Type of strep bacteria.
- Environmental factors.

Practicing proper hygiene methods can help prevent strep throat.

These include:

- covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing
- washing your hands
- avoiding contact with people who are sick
- avoiding sharing personal items with people who are sick

Complication

- valve stenosis, which is a narrowing of a valve
- valve regurgitation, which is a leak in the valve that causes blood to flow in the wrong direction
- heart muscle damage, which is an inflammation that can weaken the heart muscle and decrease the heart's ability to pump blood effectively
- atrial fibrillation, which is an irregular heart beat in the upper chambers of the heart
- heart failure, which happens when the heart can no longer pump blood to all parts of the body

