

Benefits Of Breast Milk– World Breast Feeding Week

Dr. Jessie Suneetha W1*, Dr. V. Chaitanya1, Dr. K. Ravi Kumar1 and Mrs. P. S. M. Phanisri1

1Krishi Vigyan Kendra, PJTS Agricultural University, Wyrā 507165, Khammam Dt.

*Corresponding author:wjsuneetha@yahoo.com

Manuscript No: KN-V2-08/004

India is the most populated country in the world with one-sixth of the world's population and as per UN estimates, India has overtaken China as the country with the largest populated country in the world. In this country with a current birth rate for 2024 being 16.750 births per one thousand population and infant mortality rates of 25.799 deaths per one thousand live birthsof infants under age 1 year per 1,000 live births. The number of newborn deaths between the ages of 0 and 27 days per 1,000 live births is known as the neonatal mortality rate. There are approximately 6500 newborn deaths every day accounting to 47.0% of all child deaths under the age of 5 years. Because of a variety of measures, the number of newborn deaths worldwide decreased from 5.0 million in 1990 to 2.3 million in 2022.

The likelihood that a child born in a certain year or timeframe would pass away before turning one is known as the infant mortality rate.India's infant mortality rate in 2024 is expected to be 25.799 deaths per 1000 live births, a decrease of 3.08% from 2023. In this context, feeding the baby with breastmilk is very important as it improves immunity. It contains specific nutrients that meets the baby's needs and the amount of milk supply fluctuates based on your baby's demand. It can help reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) in infants. The DHA, a polyunsaturated fatty acid found in breast milk helps in proper brain development, reducesthe risk of developing middle ear infections, chances of developing allergies and risk of developing diabetes as breast milk contained no artificial sugar.

Breastmilk is the perfect food for the baby as it contains just the right amount of nutrients. It is also gentle for baby's developing stomach, intestines and other body systems. It is recommended that the babies are to be breastfeed until 6 months old'exclusively' and then breastfeed with solid foods until at least 1 to 2 years old. The babies are not to be fed with water, sugar water, formula or solids during the first 6 months of age.Breastfed babies have lesser digestive, lung and ear infections. The premature born babies when breastfed are also less likely to get a serious infection of the intestines called necrotizing enterocolitis.

Colostrum, transitional milk, and mature milk are the three unique phases of breast milk. Colostrum is the first stage of breast milk, occurs during pregnancy and lasts for several days after the birth of the baby which is either yellowish or creamy in colour.It's nutrient-dense, rich in antibodies and antioxidants to build a newborn baby's immune system. Golden hour feed is that breastfeeding needs to be initiated within an hour of birth. If babies are not allowed to suckle at the breast due to medical issues, at least colostrum painting should happen.



Feeding the newborns is beneficial to mothers too as reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis, breast and ovarian cancer risk, the production of oxytocinhelps in contracting the uterus back to its pre-pregnancy size, burns calories by using mother's fat stores for her breast milk, lowers the chance of developing postpartum depression as breastfeeding enables pregnancy hormones to decrease slowly and instead of abruptly.



Breastfeeding can be challenging as it may take time for new mothers and babies to learn this skill. Many women of childbearing age weren't exposed to breastfeeding, either because the women in their lives didn't do it and for so many, it is a new concept. So, sometimes difficulties will arise. The mothers are exhausted and sore from delivering and baby will likely want to eat several times a night in the middle of the night during the first few weeks as baby's belly is very small. The baby needs small and frequent feedings during the first couple of weeks. In fact, a typical breastfed baby will eat 8 to 12 times in a 24-hour period. The breastfeeding can be challenging when the baby is not latching properly. A good latch means better milk transfer for the baby with less pain and discomfort for mother.

In view of the importance of breast feeding the new born infants exclusively, every year 'World breastfeeding week' was celebrated during the first week of August with the dual goal of improving the health of babies and promoting, protecting and supporting the rights of women to breastfeed anywhere and at any time. The theme for 2024 is 'Closing the gap: Breastfeeding support for all'. WHO 2025 breastfeeding goal is to ensure that there is no increase in childhood overweight, improve the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 50.0%, reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5.0%.



World Breastfeeding Week - 2024

As per National Guidelines on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life to achieve optimal growth, development and health for meeting their growing nutritional requirements of infants should receive nutritionally adequate and safe. "Mother's Absolute Affection" shortly called MAA is a nationwide programme by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India in an attempt to bring due focus on promotion of breastfeeding and provision of counselling services for supporting breastfeeding through healthcare systems. The goal of the 'MAA' programme is to revitalize efforts towards the promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding practices through healthcare systems for achieving higher breastfeeding rates.