

Breastfeeding- Let's do it together!

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Opinion

Breastfeeding is a very natural and effective way of providing nutrition to the newborn for the optimal growth and development. In the earlier times, nobody could have even thought that there could be so many issues related to not breastfeeding which in turn would adversely affect our future generations and the overall nation's health. The Lancet reported that if almost every mother breastfed her children it could prevent more than 800,000 child deaths a year.

The importance of breastfeeding is very well documented. Breastfeeding is essential both for the child's survival and for the mothers' health. Breastfeeding not only helps to sustain the bond between the mother and the baby, also provides the perfect nutrition, helps in reducing the risk against various infections, decreases the risk of obesity and promotes optimal growth and development for the newborns. Benefits of breastfeeding for the mothers which are no lesser, include natural child-spacing through Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM); reducing their risk of developing breast and ovarian cancers. Breastfeeding naturally suppresses the release of hormones that are necessary for ovulation. Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM) in itself has many advantages such as

it does not involve any cost, promotes mother-baby bonding and provides time for the mother to prepare for using other spacing methods. Besides this, breastfeeding has got its economic profits for the nation as well.

All mothers can breastfeed, provided they have accurate information, and the much more needed is the support of their family, health care and society at large. Every year, world breastfeeding week is celebrated from 1st to 7th August. This year the theme for the world breastfeeding week 2017- "Sustaining Breastfeeding-Together" also emphasizes on the same fact. Nurses and Midwives can play a powerful role in improving health outcomes by encouraging, counseling and supporting mothers and their families regarding breastfeeding. Nurses can educate mothers about need and benefits of breast feeding and address potential obstacles to breastfeeding. Nurses need to collaborate with individuals, families, communities and policy makers to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. Nurses need to take a leadership role in promoting breastfeeding. This can be accomplished through initiatives aimed at fostering positive attitudes, enhanced education, and advocacy. Hence, the importance of breastfeeding should be acknowledged by all so as to make it a breastfeeding friendly nation.