

Support for Breastfeeding for Healthier Planet

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Breastfeeding is the baby's birth right. Breast milk is the best milk. This year WABA (World Assembly of Breastfeeding Action) given the theme "Support Breastfeeding for developing of a Healthier Planet". Though we observe only a Day for all other activities like World Diabetic Day, World TB Day, Yoga Day, Water Conservation Day etc. but for Breastfeeding whole 1 Week was Observed. Every year August 1 - 7 (First Week) celebrated as World Breastfeeding Week. Today in all Health centers, ICDS Centers, Hospitals, Teaching Institutes are doing various activities on this occasion. In our Institute MTPG and RIHS myself Prof. DR. Manjubala Dash, HOD, Department of OBG organized 1 week online webinar along with various competitions to motivate the students. Due to lockdown there was no physical meeting but nothing is a barrier to share knowledge. So, one interactive session also conducted with mothers through ICDS Anganwadi worker.

The main concept is support breastfeeding. Who will support and how they need to support?

Let us discuss....

Support for breastfeeding require from Basic to top level that is from public to administrative and from Government level.

Support from public:

- Support the mother to feed baby in public places like bus stop, malls, railway station, airport, etc. they should be supported such way that, no mother should hesitate to feed their child.
- All public must aware about the consequences/disadvantages of formula feed so that they can avoid getting formula milk powder for their village, city as well as for their own children.

- Support the Mother to be with her child 24hrs even during this time of COVID, which helps protection to baby, psychological bonding and healthy atmosphere.

Support from family:

- Family members need to support the mother for continue of breastfeeding.
- As you all know baby need to take feed on average 8 to 10 times in a day and night feeding is must for continue secretion of breast milk, so mother/mother in Law, especially husband must share the responsibility of parenting.
- They need to understand mothers' feelings and need to support for her physically, mentally so that mother will not feel burden and happily continue feeding.

Support from health personnel (ANM, nursing officers, medical officers):

- Support in terms of educating the mother (preferable couples) during the antenatal period itself so that they are self-empowered regarding the value of breastfeeding.
- Continue support during labor for early initiation by breast crawl method which will prevent delay and also prevent hypoglycemia.
- Further their role to support mothers during postnatal period to understand their skill for breastfeeding the newborn. Each mother must be supervised by trained, skilled health personnel at least once during their hospital stay to confirm that mother is able to do herself the appropriate techniques of breastfeeding.

- During this period very important is good latching by the newborn to mothers' breast. Good latch is called areola suckling that is, when most of the lower areola inside baby's mouth. Every mother need to understand this aspect so there will be continuity of exclusive breastfeeding.
- Most of the mother will discontinue due to difficulties in breastfeeding like pain in the nipple (sore nipple), perception of inadequate milk secretion (not enough milk), excessive crying of the baby (dis-satisfaction feeding), all these occurs only due to poor latching.

Support from the administrative level: Being Administrators of hospital one has greater responsibility towards supporting breastfeeding:

- To make the hospital as baby friendly.
- Provide training to their staffs to update their knowledge and skills.
- Implement rules/norms to follow rooming in/bedding in.
- To support IMS (Infant Milk Substitute) ACT so that they can appoint one dedicated Medical officer/Nursing officer to monitor any violation.
- Appoint dedicated lactation counselor in the antenatal and postnatal ward, who can stay along the mother always only for this purpose.

Support from Government: Above all if the Govt support is must for better implementation and to support breastfeeding.

- Provide funding to organize training for the health personnel in the maternity hospitals.
- Appointment of State IMS Act officer, who can implement IMS Act and monitor violation of ACT.
- Support mothers by enforcing law- no mother should get discharge from hospital without learning the proper techniques.
- Enforcing law against prescription of formula milk whenever medically not indicated.

- Enforcing law to get written consent (after explaining the disadvantages of formula for baby) from mothers' (couples') whenever prescribing formula milk powder.
- Enforcing law not to keep the formula power in the front row of medical shops.
- Enforcing law that no one should get sponsor from the formula company for any reason.
- Creation and appointment of Trained Lactation counselors/practitioners in the maternal and child hospitals who are especially counseling to mothers from antenatal to postnatal period.
- Develop mother tracking system once the mothers were discharged from the hospital so that they can continue getting support from the health personnel to continue exclusive breastfeeding.

If above all support mother will get surely we can achieve 100% exclusive breastfeeding and there after continue feeding till 2 yrs of age. This will not only help us to achieve our theme support breastfeeding to develop healthier planet but also prevent malnutrition and under five morbidity, mortality.

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