

WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK (1-7 August 2013)

More than fourteen hundred years ago, before any medical knowledge on health values and the benefits of breastfeeding was available, Islam recommended every mother to BREASTFEED her children up to the age of two years if the lactation period was to be completed. Similarly, the final prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) demanded that every mother BREASTFEED her child when he said "BREASTFEED your child even from the water of your eyes !". Evidence suggests that different prophets and the last prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them), were all breastfed. It is such a noble Divinely-inspired act to do that Islam allows a mother to be paid financially for breastfeeding if she so wishes! However every Muslim mother will be paid by ALLAH/GOD as the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has said: "...for every mouthful and for every suck, (the woman) receives the reward of one good deed..!" Today, as the slogan BREAST IS BEST is displayed in every clinic, we know that there are an increasing number of scientific and medical studies proving the great health and psychological benefits for both :mother and baby in breastfeeding. Conversely, we are increasingly aware of the harm, damage and susceptibility to diseases affecting children who are bottle-fed:

skin and allergic diseases, diarrhea, colic, gastro-intestinal diseases, obesity, kidney damage, lower IQ, cot death etc....It is also known that breastfeeding prevents the death of six million infants annually by giving them: greater resistance against infections and diseases, especially because of COLOSTRUM, in the first few days of breastfeeding, as it is highly nutritious and full of antibodies (giving the child: strong and permanent immunity against diseases: BEST IMMUNISATION..!). Breastfeeding is important for the psychological health of children helping them to grow up stable, mature, loving caring, and intelligent. It is essential for BONDING between mother and child and through skin-to-skin contact! Breastfeeding is very beneficial to the mother too for the followings: Lower chance of breast and ovarian cancer, less chance of obesity and osteoporosis, and it helps to bring back the womb to its natural size after childbirth. Latest medical reports and studies proved new benefits from Breastfeeding: Halving the death of children from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) Reducing HIV infections in the babies Reducing the risk of breast cancer, heart disease, stroke and Diabetes. .And the World Health Organisation (WHO) has replaced lately the standard child growth rate which was based on bottle fed babies, to a new child growth rate which is based on breastfeeding as it is more accurate! Proper and full breastfeeding is one way of NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING if needed, and is ideal for spacing children (LACTATION AMENORRHEA/LAM). Breastfeeding is a HUMAN RIGHT for every woman! Breastfeeding is very ECONOMICAL and saves us a lot of money! UNICEF in Dhaka reported in 1996 that: Mother's milk can save Bangladesh \$500 million per year! Breast milk is a natural wholesome pure healthy diet with the right formula and constituents to the child..it is convenient, easy and at the right temperature! It is safe, easy to digest and is free! It is great for the environment and to save waste !If ,for some reasons, the natural mother cannot give her own milk, Islam recommends that a "wet nurse"(another lactating woman) to breastfeeds her baby..but precaution should be made to avoid the marriage between the children of both women/mothers later.

LATEST NEW HEALTH BENEFITS AND DISCOVERIES IN BREASTFEEDING IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS:

- Breastfeeding improves a child's chance of climbing the social ladder and having a successful adult life according to a longterm study (The Medical Journal Archives of diseases in childhood)
- Breastfeeding will make the brain of the child grow by 30% more and lead to better language and emotion.
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk to the mother of having high blood pressure.
- Breastfeeding reduces Attention-deficit/Hyperactive children (ADHD)
- Breastfeeding lowers the transmission of HIV from the mother to the child.
- Breastfeeding cuts the risk of mothers dying from cancers or heart attacks.
- Breastfeeding lowers the risk to the mother of having Ovarian cancer by 2/3.
- Breastfeeding save the life of 830 000 lives annually (Save the children)

Muslim mothers in Britain and all Muslim women in the world should join in the celebration/activities of this blessed WEEK which is very much loved by ALLAH, the final prophet Muhammad(peace be upon him) and by Islam and the child.

THE NEEDED ACTIONS :

- Friday Sermon/Khutba in the mosques this week should be on Breastfeeding in Islam and the health benefits
- Muslim doctors/Imams should educate all Muslim sisters/ all women about the importance of Breastfeeding and the many health benefits resulting from breastfeeding to both: the child and mother.

- All doctors and hospitals should facilitate and promote: BREASTFEEDING.
- Muslim TVs, radios, magazines and newspapers should be discussing the importance of breastfeeding.
- Muslim mothers should educate well their daughters about the importance of Breastfeeding
- Seminars and Conferences should be organised in different cities in order to discuss and publicise Breastfeeding
- Muslim women Counsellors should be organised in every city in order to educate and deal with any difficulty related to Breastfeeding.
- Muslim organisations should cooperate with many nonMuslim organisations in the UK/abroad, who campaign vigorously for breastfeeding!

ALLAH Almighty has said, in the final Holy Book AL QUR'AN, more than 1400 years ago:

In the name of Allah, the most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

"AND THE MOTHERS GIVING BIRTH TO THEIR CHILDREN SHOULD BREASTFEED THEM UP TO TWO YEARS,IF THEY WANT TO COMPLETE THE LACTATION PERIOD"

(AL QUR'AN: chapter 2,verse 233)

Finally: It is worth mentioning that we are having today a rising number of breast cancers, many of it will be prevented in breastfeeding?

The common known other RISK FACTORS are:

Lack of breastfeeding, alcohol, smoking, obesity, abortion, having children late in life, saturated fats, stress of working mothers, use of contraceptive pills

All women should avoid these risk factors in order to keep healthy breasts and to be able to breastfeed their own children.

Included below some Websites on BREASTFEEDING:

- www.breastfeedingmanifesto.org.uk
- www.abm.me.uk
- www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk
- www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk
- www.laleche.org.uk
- www.nctpregnancyandbabycare.com
- www.ibfan.org
- www.who.int
- www.waba.org.my

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