

Celebrating World Breastfeeding Week

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With the slogan "Today's priority, tomorrow's health", world breastfeeding week is celebrated every year from the first to the seventh of August. The World Health Organization's recommendation generally emphasizes breastfeeding as a human right for children and mothers, which is a major factor in improving their health (1). Avicenna also recommended breastfeeding for up to two years (2). Based on the recommendation of the Holy Quran in verse 233 of Surah Al-Baqarah, mothers are required to breastfeed their children for two full years (3, 4). It has been repeatedly emphasized in other verses, and the Prophet of Islam said: There is no milk better for a child than breast milk (5). Breast milk is an ideal food for infants, full of nutrients, fat, protein, water, minerals, and especially immune factors, immunoglobulins, some vitamins, hormones, and various enzymes, which provide calories, reduce various infectious diseases, allergies, obesity, and some cancers. It is also the first vaccine and helps in psychomotor development, increase intelligence quotient, and especially enhance communication, love, and affection between mother and child, family, and society (6). If a baby starts breastfeeding within the first 60 minutes after birth, this will save the lives of one million babies in the world (7, 8). Its benefits for breastfeeding mothers in the short term include reduced postpartum hemorrhage and in the long term, which depends on the duration of breastfeeding, reduced obesity, diabetes, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, endometrial cancer, and thyroid cancer (9).

Therefore, the deputies of research and technology, research centers, and health deputies are advised to conduct field research on factors effective in increasing breastfeeding rates, including: 1. Maternal preparation and education before and during pregnancy, 2. Safe vaginal delivery and increasing mothers' awareness of the benefits of natural childbirth and their readiness to do so, 3. First contact between mother and infant at birth and starting the first breastfeeding as soon as possible after birth, especially in the first 60 minutes, 4. Exclusive breastfeeding, especially in the first 6 months of life (nothing else should be given to the infant except breast milk, vitamin A+D, and medication if needed), 5. Starting complementary feeding after 6 months of age, 6. Continuing breastfeeding until the age of two, and determining the factors and obstacles to breastfeeding in each of the ten poles of Iranian medical universities, as well as documenting and identifying the disadvantages of formula feeding, which is unfortunately widespread, so that health policymakers can inform families, society, and the country's health care providers about this unique natural and God-given blessing using various media in the country and the region and holding congresses and conferences.

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