

Importance of breastfeeding stressed

OUR STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD – Experts at a seminar on Wednesday said that in Pakistan, 72 infants die out of 1000 births every year and out of these 72 deaths, 53 are those who die before reaching the age of one month due to diarrhea, pneumonia, respiratory infections and malnutrition.

A major source of those diseases was lack of exclusive breastfeeding, use of unhygienic bottles, formula milk and teats, they said.

The infants could be saved if they were protected by means of feeding through mother's milk without use of any other food item like ghutti, honey or water up to first six months after their birth, they opined.

Dr Rafeh, a health expert, said that according to a research, if mothers breastfeed their new born babies from first hour of their life then 22 percent of infant deaths could be prevented.

Breastfeeding is beneficial for both baby and mother. It protects the baby from various diseases, develops bond



between mother and baby, protects mother from breast cancer and is a source of nat-

ural birth spacing. Internationally, a lot of efforts are being made to emphasise exclusive

breastfeeding.

Unfortunately, 'Breastfeeding practice' among mothers

in Pakistan is alarmingly low, according to the report issued at the end of the year

2009.

Exclusive breastfeeding, as well as the duration for which a child is breastfed, is lowest in Pakistan, compared to our neighbouring South Asian countries including India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

"National Alliance for Promotion and Protection of Breastfeeding" is jointly organising different activities for creating mass awareness for the promotion and protection of breastfeeding during the weeklong BF celebration.

This national Alliance includes Nutrition Wing, Ministry of Health, Govt of Pakistan, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, MI, TheNetwork for Consumer Protection, SPARC, NRSP, Plan-Pakistan, FPAP, SUNGI Development Foundation, BINA, PAIMAN, PIEDAR, Blue Veins, Save the Children UK, Save the Children US, Islamabad Medical and Dental College, APNA SEHAT, BEHBUD Association of Pakistan, Rasti Pakistan, Batool Welfare Foundation and Sultana Foundation.