Abstract by Dr Nour El Hoda Ezzeddine

Benefits of Human Milk for Human Babies

Humans are the only species that drink milk from other mammals. Each species produce milk that is specifically designed for their young babies to support their development. While whales' milk is higher in fat, cows' milk is higher in protein vs human milk. In order to make cow's milk consumable by infants, humans created a long process to produce formula. Though formula can be consumed by human infants, this recent practice is not "risk free". Nowadays, the global breastfeeding advocacy groups are shifting the mindset from talking about the benefits of human breast milk into exposing the risks of formula. After all, breast milk is the norm and the natural way to feed and nurture our babies. Baby formula might cover the basic nutritional needs but it lacks a lot of components that are present in human milk like enzymes, hormones immunological factors, stem cells, etc. Moreover, the composition of breast milk is dynamic and constantly changing to meet babies' needs.

Based on the importance of breastfeeding, the world health organization, as well as major health authorities worldwide, recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life. Afterwards, complementary food is introduced, and breastfeeding is continued for up to 2 years and beyond. Breastfeeding not only promotes babies' development and well-being, it also has a lot of benefits for mothers, society in general, and the environment. In this session, we will cover an overview about the risks of formula and thus some of the breastfeeding benefits for mothers and babies.

Some references:

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Biography:

Dr. Nour El Hoda earned her B.Sc in Pharmacy, 2015 and Pharm.D, 2016 from Saint-Joseph University in Beirut. A breastfeeding advocate since 2014, she became a Certified Breastfeeding Specialist from Lactation Education Resources, USA in 2015. She integrated a breastfeeding centred project into her clinical hospital residency program where she successfully implemented a lactation objective into the central pharmacy operational goals. This project included counselling women in breastfeeding post-partum, providing the pharmacy with resources on medications' compatibility with lactation and training the pharmacy staff on navigating these resources. She is passionate about spreading breastfeeding knowledge among peers and professionals as well as through her direct work with mothers. She continued her contribution to the breastfeeding community as a volunteer with different local NGOs: lactation educator with Lactica (2018-2019) breastfeeding specialist with LAECD (2019), Lactica board member since 2019. She is currently an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant, IBCLC working in private practice.

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