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## World Breastfeeding Week begins in AJK;



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MIRPUR ( AJK): Aug. 2: Like rest of the entire world. the World Breastfeeding Week Nutrition Program began in Azad Jammu Kashmir including lake district of Mirpur from August 1st to 7th, 2025, under the auspices of the AJK Health Services Department in collaboration with the World Food Program and UNICEF.

To mark the week long celebrations, an awareness seminar on the importance and efficacy of breast milk was hosted at a local hotel in Mirpur. The special guest was Director CDC Muzaffarabad Dr. Farooq Awan, while on this occasion, District Health Officer Dr. Fida Hussain Raja, Medical

Superintendent Divisional Teaching Hospital Mirpur Dr. Aamir Aziz, Additional District Health Officer CDC Dr. Maida Kausar, Focal Person Nutrition Program and Additional Principal Medical Officer Dr. Aktar Fatima Yaqoob, Deputy Medical Superintendent Divisional Headquarters Hospital Mirpur Dr. Maria Zulfiqar, Assistant District Health Officer Dr. Shumaila Karan, Head of Department of Gynecology Professor Dr. Shazia Ashfaq, Assistant Coordinator National Program Dr. Muhammad Ali, Medical Superintendent Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Chakswari Dr. Faria Javed, Dr. Sania Abbasi, Female Medical Officer, District Mufti Abdul Ghaffar Salafi, District Population Welfare Officer Kamran Hussain, District Education Officer (Women) Farrukh Owais, Salma Bukhari World Food Programme, Assistant Director Surveillance Muhammad Riyaz, Waqas Ahmed Khan Communication Focal Person and Assistant Director Training, Noman Shahzad Representative WHO, Data Focal Person Muhammad Ehsan, Lady Health Supervisors, Lady Health Workers from across the district, representatives of print and electronic media and representatives of civil society participated.

Addressing the World Breastfeeding Week, District Health Officer Dr. Fida Hussain Raja told the participants that breastfeeding is one of the most effective ways to ensure the health and survival of children. Breast milk is the ideal food for infants. It is safe, clean and contains antibodies that help protect against many common childhood diseases. A child should be fed only breast milk from

birth to six months. Breast milk provides all the energy and nutrients that a child needs for the first months of life. Healthy children are the valuable asset and future of our country.

Speaking at the seminar, Professor Dr. Shazia Ashfaq, Head of the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics, said that the newborn should be breastfed immediately after birth. The baby should be fed only breast milk for the first six months and not even water.

Complementary feeding should be started from the age of six months because after six months, the baby needs complementary feeding along with breast milk for good development.

Speaking at the seminar, Dr. Aamir Aziz, Medical Superintendent, Divisional Headquarters Hospital, Mirpur, said that even if the baby is born before the due date, the baby should be breastfed so that the baby can develop well. This will strengthen the bond between the mother and the child.

Speaking at the seminar, Dr. Fatima Yaqub, Focal Person, Nutrition Program and Additional Principal Medical Officer, said that breast milk is a complete food and every mother should breastfeed her child for two years. Breast milk is the best way to boost the immunity of a child and is the first natural vaccine against diseases. A mother who breastfeeds her child is also protected from diseases like breast cancer. And breast milk has many economic and social benefits and

breast milk makes the relationship between the child and the mother lasting. Finally, the special guest of the seminar, Director CDC Muzaffarabad Dr. Farooq Awan, said that I would like to pay tribute to the District Health Officer and his entire team for providing full services throughout the district. Talking about the benefits of breast milk, he said that mothers should breastfeed their children for two years so that a healthy society can be formed. He advised the lady health workers to provide information about the importance and benefits of breast milk to women in their respective areas so that our children can be protected from various diseases. These problems of maternal and child health can be solved with public participation and public awareness.

Keeping these factors in mind, UNICEF, World Food Program and BISP Nutrition Program, under the auspices of the AJK State Health Department are working towards better nutrition and a healthy lifestyle for the public. Also, the public would be made aware of the importance and efficacy of breast milk and better nutrition and information should be provided about solutions to health problems so that we could protect the coming generation from problems arising from nutritional deficiency.