

WCM-Q event offers expert advice on breastfeeding

Doha – March 20, 2016: The importance of breastfeeding for the health and development of infants was explained at the latest installment of Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar's (WCM-Q) Ask the Expert series.

Breastfeeding expert Dr. Mohammed Ilyas Khan of Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) was invited to deliver a presentation at the open public event, held at Doha's Diplomatic Club as part of WCM-Q's Sahtak Awalan: Your Health First campaign, a five-year initiative that aims to encourage members of both the expat and Qatari communities to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Dr. Khan stressed that breastfeeding should not be viewed as a supplement to a baby's diet, but as the basis of proper infant nutrition.

Breast milk contains a wide variety of nutrients essential to the healthy development of babies, including vital proteins, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates and fats. The milk also contains anti-infective components, many important hormones and special enzymes that aid digestion and absorption of nutrients.

Dr. Khan said: "There is simply no better form of nourishment for infants than their mother's breast milk. It is perfectly designed to provide all of the nutrition that babies need and it is therefore our duty as health professionals to encourage and support mothers to breast feed their children.

"While formula can provide basic nutrition, nothing is better for baby than his or her mother's own breast milk. For example, the special fatty acids that breast milk contains are optimal for healthy development and growth of the infant brain."

Dr. Khan is a Maternal and Child Health (MCH) specialist and a certified and registered Lactation Consultant at Breastfeeding Management, a regionally and internationally recognized resource center and Star of Excellence Honorable Mention award winner.

The center provides innovative, responsive and compassionate service to achieve optimal outcomes in the science of breastfeeding for healthcare providers, mothers, babies, and their families in accordance with international guidelines and protocols, and achieves the highest standards of patient safety and confidentiality at HMC's Al Khor Hospital and Al-Wakra Hospital.

Dr. Khan, whose center is based in the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department at Al Khor Hospital, manages the "Say Yes to Breastfeeding" initiative that provides comprehensive support from a dedicated multi-disciplinary team to help mothers breastfeed their children. The initiative is Qatar's first integrated breastfeeding management program and accords with international guidelines set out by the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

The initiative runs a twice-weekly post-natal and daily walk-in clinic to support working mothers, first-time mothers and urgent cases, and a scheduled Lactation Management Clinic once a week at Al-Wakra



Hospital. New mothers are helped with breastfeeding advice and practical care before the birth, in the crucial first moments after birth and then for as long as they need support.

Dr. Khan said: “Breastfeeding is so beneficial to the health of children that we are working hard to encourage it for all new mothers in Qatar. Qatar has a very diverse population and in some cultures the habit of breastfeeding has been lost.

“We can help to reintroduce it for the benefit of all newborns in Qatar by strengthening the ‘Say Yes to Breastfeeding’ initiative to achieve international and national goals.”

- Ends -

Pictures captions:

Photo1: Dr. Mohammed Ilyas Khan of Hamad Medical Corporation explains the importance of breastfeeding for the health and development of infants at WCM-Q’s Ask the Expert event, part of the Sahtak Awalan: Your Health First campaign.

Photos2&3: The audience heard about how breast milk contains a wide variety of nutrients essential for healthy growth.

About Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar

Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar is a partnership between Cornell University and Qatar Foundation. It offers a comprehensive six-year medical program leading to the Cornell University M.D. degree with teaching by Cornell and Weill Cornell faculty and by physicians at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and Aspetar Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Hospital who hold Weill Cornell appointments. Through its biomedical research program, WCM-Q is building a sustainable research community in Qatar while advancing basic science and clinical research. Through its medical college, WCM-Q seeks to provide the finest education possible for medical students, to improve health care both now and for future generations, and to provide high quality health care to the Qatari population.

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