

GE Healthcare creates awareness on prematurity day

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World Prematurity Day is observed on 17th November each year to raise awareness of pre-term birth and the concerns of pre-term babies and their families worldwide. On this occasion GE Healthcare has partnered with a few hospitals like Cloudnine in Gurgaon, Mumbai and Bangalore, Rosewalk Healthcare in Delhi, and Sahyadri Hospital in Pune to create awareness on how to deal with prematurity and the care to be taken to ensure a healthy life for a premature baby.

As per the National Health Portal of India, 3.5 million babies born are premature every year in India and creating awareness about caring for these babies is very important. All stable preemies should be nestled by their mother's breasts. To reach the goals of weight gain for preemies, adequate nutrition is needed. Minimal oral feeding should commence right from day one, if possible, and feeding advancement should be conducted based on the clinical course of each preemies. During hospitalization, oral feeding with Preemies formula and breast milk are the best practices to improve growth. After discharge, this should be individualized as per the nutritional requirements of the infant and modified continuously to achieve the target growth parameters.

Talking about the initiative, Ms. Terri Bresenham, President and CEO, GE Healthcare, Sustainable Healthcare Solutions, said "while parents' care and correct nutrition is imperative for the preemie's recovery, what also plays an important role is the hospital's NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit). Our advanced products and technologies ensure that our partners are equipped to deliver the best possible care of the preemies. Creating an environment similar to a mother's womb is critical in ensuring they have a better chance at not only surviving, but "intact survival"— meaning that the baby develops physically and mentally according to their age and is able to lead a healthy life. Our NICU portfolio, along with expert neonatal care from our customers helps us stay true to our motto of sending moms and babies home healthy."

Rosewalk Hospital, Delhi and GE Healthcare held an event on Early Delivery Care on 16th November, 2017. Dr. Atul Chopra, Head – Neonatology and Paediatrics who addressed the audience and spoke about the challenges of preterm births said, "We are a hospital with a strong philosophy of care. We acknowledge that when a baby is in the NICU, the mother and the family of the baby also need care and support. Many premature babies are born through a cesarean section, and the mother

is often in recovery. The maternal-infant separation is also a cause of stress”.

Dr.Kishore Founder Chairman of Cloudnine Hospitals addressed the expecting mothers in Bangalore and said,“ With technology and medical advancements, it is now easy to treat premature births. With breast feeding and appropriate care, we can ensure that premature babies get the necessary care to not only ensure a speedy recovery but also ensure a healthy life ahead”.

“While technology, infrastructure and doctors are critical to the care of premature babies, parents play a very important role while the baby is in the NICU and after. Even while the baby is in the NICU, parents should interact and hold the baby when the baby is stable and it is possible to do so. **Skin to skin contact, or Kangaroo care** is very important to promote the health and development of the baby. Another very important aspect where parent's involvement is very important for a baby's development is nutrition. Breast milk is of the utmost importance for the health of all infants; more so in the case of underdeveloped preemies. Breast feeding should therefore, be initiated at the earliest, either through the bottle or at the mother's breast, added Dr. Nandini Nagar: Neonatologist, Cloudnine Hospitals who was also present at the event in Bangalore.

Preemies are delivered before 40 weeks, making them premature in terms of gestational age, body weight and certain developmental features. They are deprived of valuable nutrition which they would have received had they been in the womb till term. The need of the hour is to provide optimized nutrition to these preemies till they achieve adequate growth and development for a normal and healthy lifestyle.