

ANEMIC CHILDREN CARE BY PARENTS**Mr. Anil Kumar R V* | Dr. Amandeep Kaur****

* Research Scholar in Himalayan University, Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, India.

** Research Supervisor in Himalayan University, Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, India.

ABSTRACT

Anemia is the most common and widespread health condition in children in the world in both developing and developed countries. Anemic children parents remain worried about the fact that their child is affected with this disease. Parents may gain knowledge by a number of contextual factors, including children's characteristics (e.g., gender, temperament); parents' own experiences (e.g., those from their own childhood) and circumstances; expectations learned from others and cultural systems. Parenting knowledge on anemia in children, attitudes, and practices is must. Mothers who are knowledgeable about anaemia respond more sensitively to their child's health. The knowledge regarding care of anemic children among parents can save lives of many children.

Key Words: Anemic children, parental care, hospitals etc.

About Authors:

Author, Mr. Anil Kumar R V is a Ph.D. Scholar at Himalayan University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, India.



Author, Dr. Amandeep Kaur is Ph.D. Guide at Himalayan University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, India. She has effective administrative and leadership skills. She is active researcher with many publications in her name. She has attended and organised various National and International conferences.

INTRODUCTION:

In Anemia there are not enough red blood cells in the body. Red blood cells are made up of hemoglobin. It is a special pigmented protein which carries and delivers oxygen to other cells in the body. The cells in child's muscles and organs need oxygen to survive, and decreased numbers of red blood cells can place stress on the body. Arora, Sunita et al. (2018) conducted a study in 200 anemic children aged 1-5 years to check their serum folate, vitamin B12 levels and their correlation with sociodemographic parameters and clinicohaematological profile. Study subjects included 200 anemic children aged 1-5 years attending paediatric OPD or admitted in IPD of paediatrics department of SGRDIMSAR, Amritsar.

Parental knowledge of child development is major factor related to child healthy development. Mothers who are knowledgeable about anaemia respond more sensitively to their child's initiations.

Facts parents need to know regarding anaemia development in their children

1. Infants who are given cow's milk too early (before 1 year of age) often develop anemia because there is very little iron in cow's milk. Also, it is difficult for young infants to digest cow's milk. Cow's milk can irritate a young infant's bowel and cause slight bleeding. This bleeding lowers the number of red blood cells, and can result in anemia.
2. A lack of other nutrients in the diet can also cause anemia. Too little folic acid may lead to anemia, though this is very rare. It is most often seen in children fed on goat's milk, which contains very little folic acid. Sometimes, too little vitamin B12, vitamin E, or copper can also cause anemia.
3. Hemolytic anemia is the condition when the red blood cells are easily destroyed. Sickle-cell anemia, a very severe hemolytic anemia, is very common in African kids.
4. Thalassemia, another hemolytic anemia, is most common in children of Mediterranean or East Asian origin. If parent have a history of sickle-cell anemia or thalassemia in their family, then it needs to be told to pediatrician so that child is tested for it.
5. Blood loss can also cause anemia. Blood loss caused by illness or injury can become fatal to child. In some rare cases, the blood does not clot properly in new born. It can cause a newborn infant to bleed heavily from his circumcision or a minor injury. Many times newborns often lack vitamin K, which helps the blood clot; infants generally get a vitamin K injection right after birth.

Parents can look for the following Signs & Symptoms of Anemia in children

Firstly, children with iron-deficiency anemia may not have any symptoms (asymptomatic). When symptoms appear, a child might:

1. looks pale
2. shows mood swings
3. lethargic
4. feel dizzy or lightheaded
5. have a fast heartbeat
6. have developmental delays and behavioral problems
7. tiring easily
8. swollen hands and feet

Imtiaz ET al (2017) studied anemia resulting from severe iron deficiency. According to this study it is the most prevalent and widespread nutrition related health problem among infants/ children because their rapid growth increase iron needs. The children were screened for iron deficiency anemia on the basis of hemoglobin, hematocrit, RBC indices and serum iron levels. They reported that a high prevalence of IDA and poor nutritional status of children aged 12-18 months as majority of the wasted (63%), underweight (58%) and stunted children (54%) belonged to this age group. Clinical assessment of the children indicated the presence of multiple nutrient deficiencies. Breastfeeding was not continued till the recommended duration by the majority. Delayed weaning was associated with low weight-for-age. Majority had a low intake of calories and iron, and a high intake of protein. Vegetables were consumed the least except for starchy vegetables. High susceptibility of children to iron deficiency due to their increased iron needs for rapid growth and relatively low iron content in the diets of

majority of the children necessitates a need to plan effective dietary strategies that could help prevent IDA among children.

Role of Parents in caring for anemic children

Parents need to assure that child takes the iron supplements exactly as prescribed. Parents need to note that reason of extreme caution while giving iron supplement is that Iron medications are extremely poisonous if too much is taken. Iron is one of the most common causes of poisoning in children less than 5 years of age.

Following are a few tips for parents concerning iron medication:

- Never give iron with milk. Milk blocks the absorption of iron.
- Vitamin C increases iron absorption so child may take the dose of iron with a glass of orange juice.
- Liquid iron can turn the teeth a grayish-black color. So child may be asked to swallow it quickly and then rinse his/her mouth with water.
- Iron can cause the stools to become a dark black color. Need not be worried by this change.

Include iron-rich foods in the family's diet. Good sources of iron include:

- Fe-fortified cereals
- lean meat, poultry, and fish
- tofu
- egg yolks
- beans

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

It was concluded that parents should not give baby cow's milk until he is over 12 months old. If child is breast-fed, he should be given foods with added iron, such as cereal. Parents should assure older child eats a well-balanced diet with foods that contain iron. Many grains and cereals have added iron (check labels to be sure). Other good sources of iron include egg yolks, red meat, potatoes, tomatoes, molasses, and raisins. Also, to increase the iron in your family's diet, use the fruit pulp in juices, and cook potatoes with the skins on.

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