

NATIONAL NUTRITION ANEMIA PROPHYLAXIS PROGRAMME

- Available studies on prevalence of nutritional anemia in India show that 65% infant and toddlers, 60% 1-6 years of age, 88% adolescent girls (3.3% has hemoglobin <7 gm./dl; severe anemia) and 85% pregnant women (9.9% having severe anemia). The prevalence of anemia was marginally higher in lactating women as compared to pregnancy. The commonest is iron deficiency anemia.
- The programme was launched in 1970 to prevent nutritional anemia in mothers and children. Under this programme, the expected and nursing mothers as well as acceptors of family planning are given one tablet of iron and folic acid containing 60 mg elementary iron which was raised to 100 mg elementary iron, however folic acid content remained same (0.5 mg of folic acid) and children in the age group of 1-5 years are given one tablet of iron containing 20 mg elementary iron (60 mg of ferrous sulphate and 0.1 mg of folic acid) daily for a period of 100 days. This programme is being taken up by Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Division of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Now it is part of RCH programme.
- National programmes to control and prevent anemia have not been successful. Experiences from other countries in controlling moderately-severe anemia guide to adopt long term measures i.e. fortification of food items like milk, cereal, sugar, salt with iron. Nutrition education to improve dietary intakes in family for receiving needed macro/micro nutrients as protein, iron and vitamins like folic acid, B, B,C, etc. for hemoglobin synthesis is important. Nutritional Anemia Control Programme should be comprehensive and incorporate nutrition education through school health and ICDS infrastructure to promote regular intake of iron/ folic acid-rich foods, to promote intake of food which helps in absorption of iron and folic acid and adequate intake of food.