

Preventing Anemia in Women

Takeaway 7

An Iron Tablet A Day Keeps Anemia At Bay



Story of Sarla and Pinky
Sarla lives with her 2 year old daughter Komal, 12 year old sister-in-law Pinky and husband Ravi in a village in district Dhar. Sarla is five months pregnant. She was preparing dinner and Pinky was reading one of her school books...

Now leave this book and look for your brother, Pinky.

He will be here, Bhabhi.

I feel very tired these days.

I have read that this happens due to blood deficiency. Look Bhabhi, the book says- anemia happens when hemoglobin falls below a certain level in blood, which causes tiredness and other problems.

At that point, Anganwadi Didi arrived.

Hello there, what are the two sisters-in-law discussing?

Come, Didi, and listen to what Pinky is saying that I have blood deficiency.

What are you saying, Pinky! How can there be deficiency of blood in our body?

Is it so? Show me your eyes... Why Sarla, Your eyes and palms are quite pale?

Yes, Didi, and Pinky says that this is because of anemia.

Tell me, what foods do you eat and when do you eat?

I eat everything, Didi. Even now, I will be serving dinner to her brother and others, and then I will have my meals at the end, comfortably.

Then Pinky is right. To eat last in the family and that too the left overs, and not taking iron tablets is bound to lead to anemia.

Is it so, Didi? So what should I do now?

Do not worry, Sarla. Instead of taking the iron tablet in morning, take the tablet after dinner or right before going to sleep. Do not drink tea/coffee for 1 to 2 hours before or after consuming the tablet.

I will do that, Didi, now please tell me what should I include in my diet?

Yes, Chachi! Now I will also take care of Bhabhi's diet and consumption of tablets on time.

All right, and do you take the iron tablets, which I gave?

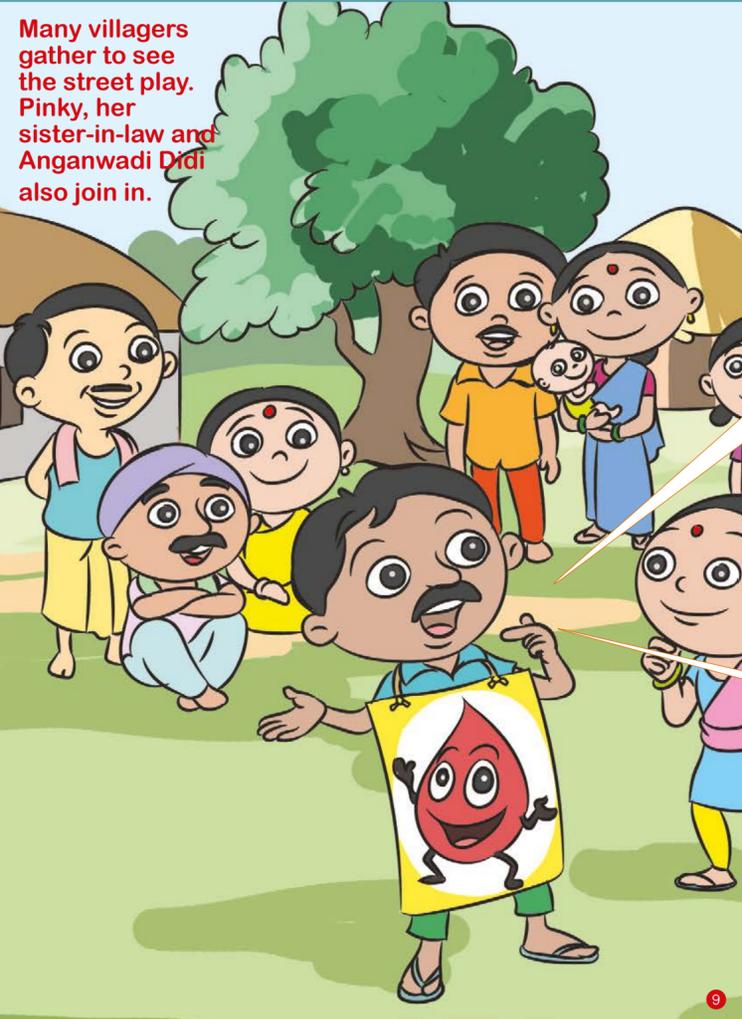
Well, no Didi; actually I did start taking the tablets in the morning but it caused nausea so I stopped.

Sarla you should drink milk, and eat green leafy vegetables and fruits. Since you are non-vegetarian, you should include in your diet food items that are good sources of high quality protein, Vitamin A and D. Add citrus foods such as lemon, amla, etc, which help improve the absorption of iron from the food that you eat. Do one more thing - take deworming tablet in the second trimester, to kill the intestinal worms.



Explain to us in detail Didi, how deficiency of blood occurs?

A street play is going on in the village, Pinky, which explains about anemia. Come; let us all go there. ANM didi will be there too.



Many villagers gather to see the street play. Pinky, her sister-in-law and Anganwadi Didi also join in.

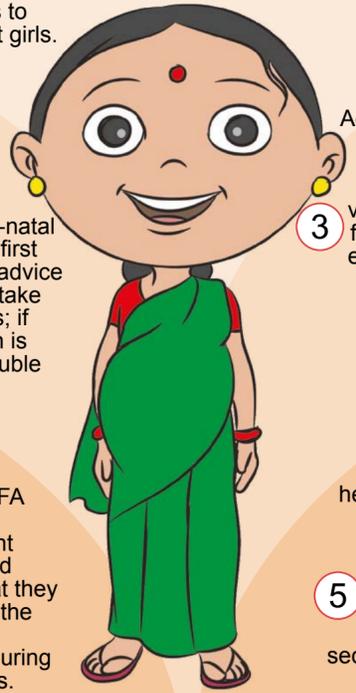
I am hemoglobin. I am the substance that makes the blood red and helps transport oxygen from our lungs to all organs of our body. If there is not enough hemoglobin in our blood, oxygen does not reach the organs in sufficient amount and the work of the organs suffers. As a result, our body starts to get tired easily and we are not able to work to our full potential. Our neural activity tends to slow down and we feel mentally exhausted. Therefore, when hemoglobin falls below a certain level in blood we call it blood deficiency or anemia.

The amount of hemoglobin in our blood may be less due to various reasons:

- When we do not consume enough nutrients required for making hemoglobin, such as iron, folic acid, vitamin B12 and protein, which we get from green leafy vegetables, pulses, milk and milk products and other protein rich foods.
- Even though we consume enough iron, but it does not get absorbed from the intestines. Many food items, such as tea and coffee, have substances that prevent iron in the food from being absorbed in the blood.
- Some long- standing diseases also prevent production of enough protein in the hemoglobin, such as TB or kidney disease, or diseases of the blood like sickle cell disease or thalassemia and piles, malaria, etc.

Action Points for Anganwadi Worker:

- 1 Ensure early registration of every pregnant woman.
- 2 Make home visit to review dietary habits and continue these visits until delivery.
- 3 Advise on foods – urge women to eat more green leafy vegetables and fruits; non-vegetarians should continue intake of protein rich foods.
- 4 Ensure hemoglobin test at each ANC.
- 5 Provide deworming tablet during second trimester.
- 6 Make available IFA tablets to all pregnant women and ensure that they are taking the tablets regularly during home visits.
- 7 Make post-natal visit in the first week and advise women to take iron tablets; if the woman is anemic double the dose.
- 8 Administer one IFA tablet every week and a deworming tablet once in six months to adolescent girls.



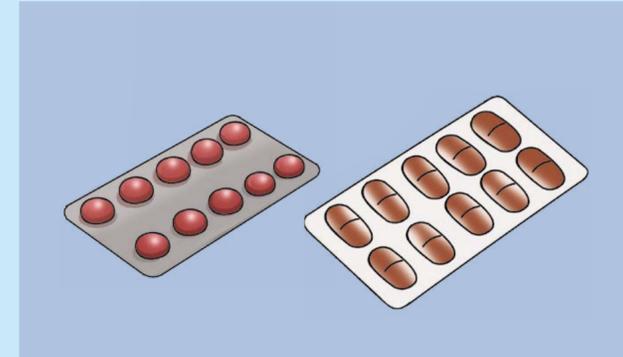
Advice to Pregnant Women



- Include green leafy vegetables, milk, curd and protein rich foods in your diet.
- Take deworming medicine by the end of every quarter from Anganwadi Center.
- Take IFA tablet before you go to sleep and get new stock of tablets from Anganwadi before the old stock ends.
- Remember that iron is necessary for physical development and making blood in you and your baby.

- Do not drink tea or coffee before and after meals.
- Do not take calcium and iron tablets together. Take calcium tablet in the morning and iron tablet in the evening.
- Ensure spacing between two births, avoid early pregnancy.
- Do not stop taking iron tablets.

Iron and Deworming Tablets



- Take one IFA tablet per day during pregnancy and for six months at least post pregnancy.
- Take one deworming tablet in the second trimester of pregnancy.

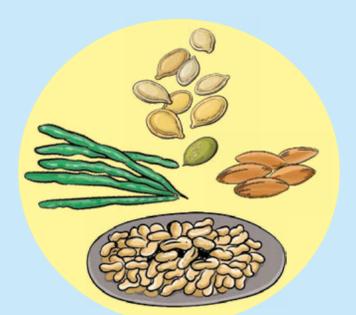
Things to Eat



Green leafy vegetables with citrus food



Cereals and Millets



Beans and Dry Fruits