



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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2 in 5 Indian children missing out on preventive Vitamin A dose: Study

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What's in News?

According to analysis of representative survey data published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) Global Health it is found that Two in five children in India are missing out on vitamin A supplements designed to prevent health problems associated with deficiency of the vitamin

Vitamin A:

Vitamin A is important for many cellular processes in the human body that are critical for eyesight, growth and development, wound healing, reproduction and immunity, among others.

Vitamin A also stimulates the production and activity of white blood cells, takes part in remodeling bone, helps maintain healthy endothelial cells (those lining the body's interior surfaces), and regulates cell growth and division such as needed for reproduction.

If left untreated, it leads to poor growth, chronic infection and night blindness and xerophthalmia (disease that causes dry eyes)

Good sources of vitamin A (retinol) include: cheese, eggs, oily fish, fortified low-fat spreads, milk and yoghurt, liver and liver products, yellow, red and green (leafy) vegetables, such as spinach, carrots, sweet potatoes and red peppers, yellow fruit, such as mango, papaya and apricots

Toxicity: Hypervitaminosis A is caused by consuming excessive amounts of preformed vitamin A, not the plant carotenoids. Preformed vitamin A is rapidly absorbed and slowly cleared from the body. Nausea, headache, fatigue, loss of appetite, dizziness, and dry skin can result. Excess intake while pregnant can cause birth defects.

News Highlights:

Data Collection - Overall, 123,836 (60.5%) of the 204,645 surveyed children aged 9 to 59 months (9 months to 5 years) had received vitamin supplements.

The survey made use of the data collected during the fourth round of the National Family and Health Survey 4 (NFHS-4) between January 2015 and December 2016.

Highest Coverage States - The highest vitamin A supplement (VAS) coverage was recorded in Goa followed by Sikkim

Least Coverage State - The coverage was least in Nagaland, followed by Manipur, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh.

Lowest Coverage State - The coverage was lowest in Rajasthan when compared district wise.

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Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

India's burden – Nationally, nearly two out of every five Indian children in the eligible age range were not supplemented with vitamin A during the reporting period.

Global Burden –Globally, an estimated 190 million (or one in three) children under the age of 5 years are afflicted by VAD (Vitamin A deficiency).

Vitamin A deficiency is common in children largely goes undiagnosed and undetected specially in developing nations.

Approximately 30-35% of children under the age of 5 years have some form of Vitamin A deficiency.

India's initiatives for Vitamin Deficiency:

Micronutrient deficiencies, especially Vitamin A and D, are prevalent in India.

Yet, these deficiencies often referred to as 'hidden hunger' go largely unnoticed and affect large populations.

Since 2006, the Central government has recommended high dose vitamin A supplements for all children aged 9 to 59 months.

Food Fortification is taken up, especially National Dairy Development Board has taken up fortification of milk with Vitamin A and D.

NITI Aayog signed a Statement of Intent with **United Nations World Food Program (WFP) in 2021** to strengthen the climate resilient agriculture for enhanced food and nutrition security in India.

POSHAN Abhiyan - National Nutrition Mission - targets to reduce Stunting, undernutrition, and Anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively. It emphasis on high impact essential nutrition-sensitive interventions, which indirectly impact mother, infant and young child nutrition.

National Nutrition Strategy aims to reduce all forms of malnutrition by 2030, with a focus on the most vulnerable and critical age groups. The Strategy also aims to assist in achieving the targets identified as part of the Sustainable Development Goals related to nutrition and health.

Under **multi-sectoral approach** for accelerated action on the determinants of malnutrition in targeting nutrition in schemes/programmes of all the sectors. The schemes/programmes include the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), National Health Mission (NHM), Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Schemes for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) namely SABLA, Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna (IGMSY) as direct targeted interventions. Besides, indirect Multi-sectoral interventions include Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), National Horticulture Mission, National Food Security Mission, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, National Rural Drinking Water Programme etc All these schemes address one or other aspect of nutrition.

Related PYQ (UPSC 2016 PRELIMS)

With reference to 'Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millets Promotion, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. This initiative aims to demonstrate the improved production and post-harvest technologies and to demonstrate value addition techniques, in an integrated manner, with a cluster approach.
2. Poor, small, marginal and tribal farmers have a larger stake in this scheme.

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3. An important objective of the scheme is to encourage farmers of commercial crops to shift to millet cultivation by offering them free kits of critical inputs of nutrients and micro-irrigation equipment.

Select the correct answer using the code given below

A. 1 only

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1 and 2 only

D. 1,2 and 3

Answer: C