

# **GENERAL HEALTH AWARENESS**

**CHAPTER XV**  
**SOME COMMON AILMENTS**

**ANAEMIA**

**Causes**

- Fatigue and weakness on account of deficiency of iron in the body in women during menstruation, pregnancy, child birth and lactation.
- Decreased absorption due to disorders in the digestive system.

**Symptoms of Anaemia**

- **Headaches, weakness, fatigue,**
- **Breathlessness on exertion, palpitations,**
- **Poor concentration.**
- **Desire to eat sand and clay.**
- **Excessive menstrual bleeding.**

**Severe and prolonged iron deficiency leads to difficulty in swallowing, especially solids, in extreme cases also liquids - owing to thin membranous web in the lower part of the throat.**

**TREATMENT OF ANAEMIA**

Take iron tablets Cook in iron vessels. Eat bread, cereals, eggs and dry fruits.

## DIARRHOEA

Many stomach and intestinal infections can cause stomach aches, sometimes with vomiting, sometimes with diarrhoea, sometimes with both. Fever may or may not occur. Dehydration (excessive loss of water) is a common phenomenon during this period. Severe dehydration due to diarrhoea may even be fatal especially in children up to 3 years.

Common Symptoms of diarrhoea are:

- Loose Motions
- Less urine production
- Sunken, shadowed and dry eyes
- Dry and parched lips and mouth

### What to do?

Take a spoonful of sugar and half a spoon of salt and mix it thoroughly in a glass of water. Serve the mixture to the ailing person repeatedly. This is commonly known as ORT.



## **TUBERCULOSIS (TB)**

- **TB is an infectious disease but is curable**
- **Symptoms of TB**
  - cough for 3 weeks or more
  - Fatigue, loss of appetite, weight loss, fever especially in the evenings
- **Facts about TB**
  - Caused by a germ ‘
  - TB spreads when a patient with untreated pulmonary TB coughs or sneezes
  - TB is completely curable and patients need not be hospitalized
  - Treatment for TB is provided free of cost at all PHCs and Government hospitals. Medicines are also supplied free.

<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have sputum examinations done if you have cough of three weeks or more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't avoid medical care if you have cough of three weeks or more</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take all the medicines for the full prescribed period on regular basis</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Don't rely only on X-ray for diagnosis of TB</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand that TB can be cured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't stop medicines before your physician discontinues them</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use handkerchief when coughing or sneezing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't discriminate against TB patients</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spit in spittoons containing household germicides</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't spit indiscriminately</li> </ul>

## MALARIA

Malaria is caused by the biting of malaria-infected mosquitoes. Malaria is a potentially life threatening parasitic disease transmitted by mosquitoes. The affected person suffers from bouts of fever accompanied with shivering and cold sweats. The Malaria symptoms appear about 9 to 14 days after infectious mosquito bite.

Malaria in pregnancy poses a substantial risk to the mother, the foetus and the newborn infant, as pregnant women are less capable of coping with and clearing malaria infections.

Malaria can be prevented by avoiding contact with mosquitoes.

- Use mosquito nets.
- Eliminating mosquito breeding sites spraying households with insecticide to repel or kill mosquitoes.
- The common breeding places of anopheline mosquitoes which transmit malaria in rural areas are clean water collections, slow moving streams, wells, swamps, seepages, river beds, ponds, canal irrigation channels, near the quarries, Mining operations, near developmental projects etc., and in urban areas, are water containers, overhead tanks, barrels, rejected tyres, tins and utensils etc. Keeping such containers empty would reduce the mosquitoes in the area and thus reduce malaria.

- Remove discarded containers that might collect water. Emptying water from water coolers once a week
- Cover cisterns (water tanks) overhead tanks with lids or mosquito nets
- Introducing larvivorous fish that eat mosquito larvae also controls malaria.
- Drug Policy recommends the weekly administration of chloroquine to pregnant women from the fourth month onwards.
- You should immediately get Blood test done for Malaria, if symptoms are seen.
- Blood test for Malaria is done free of cost at all Government Hospitals and PHCs. Take treatment as advised by Doctor

## OSTEOPOROSIS

It is a decrease in bone mass per unit volume that can occur as you get older. It is considered to be the major cause of bone fractures in older people, especially post menopausal women.

### How does it occur?

- Prolonged bed rest during serious illness, or whose daily activity is reduced by disorders such as arthritis or multiple sclerosis.
- Imbalance in the body's natural acidity, and too much aluminium hydroxide, a chemical used to treat ulcers, in the body can also be a cause.
- Taking oral contraceptives during the reproductive years can also slow the rate of bone loss.
- Women who smoke or have a close relative with osteoporosis are more likely to develop this disease.
- Too little calcium in the diet is another risk factor.

### What are the Symptoms?

You may have no clear symptoms until a bone breaks except some physical changes. These physical changes, generally associated with aging, are in fact due to osteoporosis. They include:

- Gradual loss of height.
- Bending of the back (due to compression of the vertebra or fracture of the spine).

Usually after a minor stress or injury, painful

#### Calcium rich foods

- Cheese, milk and curd
- Dark-green leafy vegetables.
- Bread made with calcium fortified flour.
- Take calcium tablets during pregnancy, while breast feeding, and menopause.
- Vitamin D is also produced in the body in sunlight.

and spontaneous fractures occur in people with osteoporosis. The hip, arm, and wrist are common places for fractures.

**How can it be prevented?**

- Eat a balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D, throughout life.
- Expose yourself to sunlight.
- Consume milk regularly.
- Walk regularly.

## **BLINDNESS AND CAUSES**

Blindness is the inability of a person to count fingers from a distance of 6 meters or 20 feet. Common causes of blindness are:

- Cataract: Opacity in the lens of the eye leading to gradual diminution of vision.
- Refractive Errors: Inability to see near or distant objects clearly.
- Corneal Opacity: Clouding of transparent portion in front of the eye.

### **CATARACT**

Cataract commonly occurs in old age. It may, however, affect young persons too. Cataract usually presents a gradual loss of vision in one or both eyes. This is age related and usually occurs after 50 years of age.

#### **Signs and symptoms of cataract**

Early symptoms of cataract may be blurring of near and distant objects.

There is no headache, pain or redness of eyes. In the course of years, the eyesight is considerably affected and the patient finds it difficult to move about for his daily routine. A time comes when he can see only the light of a lamp or torch. This can happen when cataract gets matured. Untreated mature cataract may result in incurable blindness due to complications.



## **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (STDs)**

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) are diseases that can be transmitted through body contact during sex. This is an infection, which can be caught by having sexual contact with someone who is infected

STDs can be easily passed onto sexual partners, and from a mother to her unborn Child

### **Who can I talk to?**

Go to the Health Sub Centre or Primary Health Centre and talk to a doctor. Tell her or him everything about your problems.

### **What will they do?**

They may take a urine sample, a blood sample or a swab from the vagina or penis. Don't have sexual contact with anyone while you wait for the result of the test. Also do not have sexual contact with anyone if doctor confirms that you have STD. Take full treatment as advised by the doctor.

### **So how can I protect myself?**

Use Nirodh during sex. Other ways to reduce the risk include cleaning your hands and genital organs after having sex.

#### ***Signs and symptoms of STDs:***

- Pain in lower abdomen (women)
- Painful urination (pain while passing urine)
- unusual discharge from the vagina with foul smell
- Pain in the pelvic area
- Burning or itching around the vagina

#### ***Signs in both men and women***

- Ulcers at the lip of the penis or at the mouth of vagina. Pus discharge from penis.

# CANCER

## What Is Cancer?

Cancer is a group of many related diseases that begin in cells, the body's basic unit of life. To understand cancer, it is helpful to know what happens when normal cells become cancerous. The body is made up of many types of cells. Normally, cells grow and divide to produce more cells only when the body needs them. This orderly process helps keep the body healthy. Sometimes, however, cells keep dividing when new cells are not needed. These extra cells form a mass of tissue, called a growth or tumour. Tumours can be benign or malignant

**Malignant tumours are cancer.**

**CANCER IS CURABLE, GET IT EXAMINED IN TIME**

## Sign and Symptoms of Cancer

1. Lump or swelling in the body.
2. Wound that does not heal.
3. Recent change in wart/mole.
4. Unusual bleeding or secretion
5. Change in urinary or bowel habits.
6. Nagging cough or hoarseness in voice.
7. Difficulty in swallowing or digestion.

***Diagnosis in time leads to effective treatment of cancer***

## Common Cancers

- Oral cavity, throat, and food pipe cancer.
- Breast Cancer, Cervix Cancer, Lung Cancer, Cancer of Oral Cavity
- **Cancer of oral cavity**
- Use of tobacco of any type may cause cancer of oral cavity.

- This type of cancer is more common to the people who use raw tobacco.
- The risk of this type of cancer is six times more in cigarette or bidi smokers.
- Cancer of oral cavity starts with a white or red spot.
- Get that spot examined immediately and avoid cancer.
- Stop use of all types of tobacco and prevent cancer.
- **Cervix Cancer**
  - This type of cancer is most common in women. This kind of cancer is found in those women who have had sexual relationship in early age and with more than one man and in excess.
  - This kind of cancer is more common in those women who get married and give birth to their first child in tender age and frequently do so at small intervals.
  - Use of condom/diaphragm reduces the risk of cancer.
  - Foul smelling bloody water secretion of blood before and after menstrual cycle or after intercourse are the symptoms of such type of cancer.
  - In case of having these symptoms, contact the doctor immediately.
  - Detection of this type of cancer in early stage is curable by surgery or chemotherapy treatment.
  - Pap smear test indicates the cancer before it develops into obvious disease.

### **Prevention**

- Don't get married/have intercourse in early age.
- Use condom
- Have less children
- Get examined yourself by doctor and get pap smear done from time to time.

## **Breast Cancer**

Breast cancer is one of the common cancers found in females. Early detection of the case has more possibility of cure. In the following circumstances, possibility of occurrence of this disease increases:

1. Age: - After the age of 20 years the possibility of occurring cancer increases with the age. Especially, after the age of 45 years this possibility increases more.
2. Gender:- Cancer may also occur in males apart from females.
3. Hereditary:- If mother or sister of any woman is suffering from cancer then there is possibility of her getting this disease.
4. Breast cancer in females occurs mostly in the following types of women:
  - (i) The women who has not given birth to a child or given the birth in late age.
  - (ii) If after delivery, she does not breast feed the child, there is more possibility of occurrence of cancer in said circumstances.
5. The woman who has a history of any chronic breast disease, has 1-2 percent more possibility of occurring in her than others.

### **Main Symptoms of Breast Cancer:**

- Any small or large lump in the breast may be cancerous. This lump can be painless or painful.
- Dirty discharge from breast-nipple.
- Blood discharge from breast nipple.
- Inversion of nipple or shrinking of skin of the breast may be the symptom of this disease.
- Glands in armpits is also a major symptom of the disease. Woman should get herself examined by a

doctor immediately on observing the above cited symptoms. Every woman should examine her breast herself in each month after the menstrual cycle is over

The woman should get herself checked up by the physician at any of the health center or higher institution including medical colleges.

**Meera Didi informed that all women have the right to**

- Free advice on health matters to expectant and lactating mothers and children at Anganwadi Centres
- Free treatment and medicines at Health sub-Centres, PHCs and all Government hospitals.
- Access to our complete medical record.