



Prevention of malnutrition during pregnancy and lactation

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Importance of nutrition for pregnant and lactating women

- Maternal under nutrition is the major factor for the intrauterine growth retardation (IUGR).
- By identifying mothers at risk and supplementing them with calories and nutrients we can reduce the incidence of low birth weight.
- Nutritionally high risk factors are maternal weight below 40kg, weight gain of < 6 kg during whole of pregnancy, hemoglobin < 9gms, maternal age < 18 or above 35 years, and earlier history of still birth and abortions. After screening, such mothers can be supplemented with proteins and calories. Even maternal obesity is a high risk for congenital malformations
- Correction of anemia with proper iron and folic acid tablets can reduce incidence of complications related to anemia.
- Nutrition education regarding the importance of balanced diets which can be obtained from the traditional Indian diets and locally available foods can go a long way in improving the nutritional status of the mother and the child
- During early infancy exclusive breastfeeding is found to be protective against malnutrition as milk from well nourished mother is a complete food to a great extent.
- Hence, quantum of breastfeed determines growth, ability to resist disease, mental development and survival But in an under nourished mother even though the output of milk is adequate, after three months her infant may have growth faltering. Such infants may need multivitamin and mineral supplementation along with exclusive breast feeds.

Area-wise Diet Charts developed for Pregnant Women and Malnourished Pregnant Women in reproductive age

1. [Diet Chart for Normal Pregnant Woman and Malnourished \(Undernourished/Overweight\) Pregnant Woman - South India](#)
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