



Health Ministry launches Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDCF)

Intensified efforts to reduce child deaths due to diarrhoea

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The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched the Intensified Diarrhea Control Fortnight (IDCF) in order to intensify efforts to reduce child deaths due to diarrhoea. The Ministry has made it a national priority to bring health outcomes among children to a level equitable with the rest of the world. Through this initiative, the Ministry will mobilize health personnel, State Governments and other stakeholders to prioritize investment in control of diarrhea, one of the most common childhood illnesses. It aims to create mass awareness about the most effective and low-cost diarrhoea treatment— a combination of Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) solution and Zinc tablets.

During the fortnight, intensified community awareness campaigns on hygiene and promotion of ORS and Zinc therapy will be conducted at state, district and village levels. Nearly 12 crore under 5-children will be covered during the program across the country.

Almost all the deaths due to diarrhoea can be averted by preventing and treating dehydration by use of ORS (Oral Rehydration Solution), administration of Zinc tablets along with adequate nutritional intake by the child. Diarrhoea can be prevented with safe drinking water, sanitation, breastfeeding/appropriate nutrition and hand-washing.

ASHA worker would undertake distribution of ORS packets to households with under-five children in her village. ORS-Zinc Corners will be set-up at health care facilities and non-health facilities such as Schools and Anganwadi centres. Frontline workers will hold demonstration of ORS preparation, along with counselling on feeding during diarrhea and hygiene and sanitation. The activities are also being supported by other ministries of the Government of India, especially the Education, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Women and Child Development, and Water and Sanitation.

India has realized impressive gains in child survival over the last two decades. There has been a consistent decline in Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Under-Five Mortality Rate (U5MR). Increased access to immunization and child healthcare services during this period have greatly contributed to this decline. Yet, an estimated 1.1 million children die each year in India, including approximately 1.1 lakh deaths due to diarrhoea.

A range of preventive and promotive interventions are already being implemented such as Vitamin A supplementation, promoting early initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months and appropriate complementary feeding apart from capacity building and service provision of staff for management of childhood diarrhoea in all government health facilities. Besides this, introduction of Rotavirus vaccine under UIP will also help in reducing diarrhoea mortality due to rotavirus disease.

MV/SK

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