



Child Health & Nutrition

1. Infant and Young Child Feeding

Objectives of the session

By the end of the session, the ASHA will learn about:

- Communicate essential messages for prevention of malnutrition, advice on feeding and on prevention of illness, and on access to health and nutrition services.
- Analyse the causes of malnutrition in a specific child – the role of feeding practices, role of illnesses, of familial and economic factors and of access to services.
- Counsel families to prevent malnutrition and to reverse malnutrition in children below five years.



One-third of the world's undernourished children live in India. About 46% of the children below three years in India are underweight. This means that roughly one out of two children weigh less than they should for their age. Under nutrition in early child hood is associated with poor academic performance, reduced work capacity, and poor health and nutrition status through childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

Facts about Malnutrition in Young Children

- Malnutrition increases susceptibility to disease. Malnutrition is one of the contributory factors to over half of all child deaths.
- Malnutrition is highly related to poverty. Poor families have less money to spend to get the quantity and variety of food, they find it more difficult to get healthcare and also there is less time for child care.
- Counselling can help the family in making the right choices on using their scarce resources to feed their children and protect them from malnutrition.
- Families are more comfortable when issues of feeding are discussed in their homes. Also at the home, not only the mother, but the father and the grandparents of the child, all become part of the dialogue.

