

are to be given. Even pregnant women and lactating mothers up to six months are entitled to get food supplements in the anganwadi centres.

- ◆ Weighing the baby and informing the family of the level of malnutrition is another important anganwadi service.
- ◆ The anganwadi is also the site where the Village Health and Nutrition Day (VHND) is conducted. The ANM visits every month and the child is given immunisation, Vitamin A, paediatric iron tablets, Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) packets or drugs needed for illness management.

Note

Wasted expenditure on unnecessary services is also an issue. Families tend to spend a lot of money in commercial health foods which are very costly. This money is better spent in buying cheap, lower cost locally available nutritious foods. Tonics and health drinks are also a waste for the poor family. Unnecessary and costly treatments by local doctors for the recurrent bouts of diarrhoea and minor colds and coughs could also be a drain. One of the important services that you can perform is in making people aware that such expenditures are unnecessary.

Counselling on Malnutrition

All the above messages are important for managing malnutrition also. But there are too many points to list out and the family members may not register it. Also, many of the messages may not be applicable to that particular child, or may not be possible for that family. For these reasons, we have to do it in two steps – first an analysis of why a child is malnourished and once we have an understanding of this, then a dialogue with the family to see what can be done.

For an analysis, we need to know the following:

- What is the nutritional status of child – is it normal, underweight, moderately underweight or severely underweight?
- What is the child being fed as compared to what needs to be given?
- What is the recent history of child's illness, and whether enough has been done to treat it promptly and to prevent further illness?
- What is the family's access to the three key services? (ICDS, Health Services and Public Distribution Services)

Skill in Eliciting Information

There is a skill of asking each question so as to get the right information.

What the child is being fed

- Ask specifically what was fed in the last one day, starting from now and recalling backwards, till the previous day.

