

Maternal Health & Avoiding Maternal Mortality - Nutritional Perspectives in Pregnant Women - Through Community Responsiveness

Geetha N A

Librarian Government First Grade College Udayapura Channarayana pattana Taluk Hassan district Karnataka state

Abstract: *This paper examines the issues relating to maternal health & nutrition. The article focuses on the need for community responsiveness towards building a health society.*

Keywords: *Maternal health, nutritional perspectives, healthy society, community responsiveness, challenges*

I. Introduction

The need of the hour is that

Nutrition for women –

An Average man & woman of healthy weight should consume 2500 calories for men 2000 cal for a women . The women need Iron , calcium , folic acid in their daily food intake . When women reach child bearing age blood loss through menstruation can lead to iron deficiency or anemia Women require more than men. Iron rich foods including meat fish poultry & non animal products such as spinach lentils & fortified grains Vitamin C will help body to absorb more iron including all these foods broccoli tomatoes citrus foods.

Calcium intake requirement - Nearly 700 mg of calcium is needed for every individual. The diet should include 700 mg calcium daily. Women start to lose bone density during post pregnancy & during repeated reproductive time. Hence, she requires calcium from the diet Foods that contains calcium include dairy products, green leafy vegetables, nuts, soya beans and fish. Vitamin D helps the absorption of calcium from foods which comes from sunlight & food such as oils, fish ,eggs ,dairy products and other related foods that are fortified with the vitamin D.

Women need folic acid which is essential for both women. It is necessary to eat food during pregnancy, eat more whole grains , sprouted grams, fermented foods, milk, meat, eggs in adequate amounts The eating plenty of vegetables & fruits is also required during this period. Taking iron foliate & calcium supplements regularly after 14-16 weeks of pregnancy & continue the same during lactation is very essential. Pregnant women are required to eat a variety of foods includes all types of minerals & vitamins. There is a need for pregnant women & lactating women. The quantity & frequency of food for pregnant women needs to increase & creating awareness about this is also required. A pregnant women can derive maximum amount of energy nearly 60% from rice wheat millets cooking oil is a concentrated source of both energy & poly un saturated fatty acids. Pregnant women derives good quality protein is derived from milk fish meat poultry & eggs She should know that a good combination of cereals pulses & nuts also derives provides adequate proteins. They should eat fermented & sprouted grams & foods rich in vitamin C such as citrus fruits. They need to know that milk is the best source of calcium.

A pregnant women always need to take balanced food & there needs to be supplement of iron folic acid vitamin B and calcium in this balanced food diet. She should take adequate food at regular intervals. A pregnant woman should choose foods rich in fiber like whole grain cereals pulses vegetables to avoid constipation.

A pregnant woman should take plenty of fluids drinking 8-12 glasses of water per day. Salt intake should be very much regulated as there are chances of hypertension & pre eclampsia among them.. Any excess intake of beverages containing caffeine like coffee & tea adversely affect fetus growth has to be avoided. The most important food safety problem is microbial food borne illness and its prevention.

During pregnancy is Folic acid is essential for the synthesis of hemoglobin. Folic acid deficiency leads to macro-cystic anemia. Pregnant women need more of folic acid. Folic acid supplements increase birth weight and reduce congenital anomalies. Green leafy vegetables, legumes, nuts and liver are good sources of folic acid. 500 mg (0.5mg) folic acid supplementation is advised pre-conceptionally and throughout pregnancy for women with history of congenital anomalies (neural tube defects, cleft palate).

Iron is needed for hemoglobin synthesis, mental function and to provide immunity against diseases. Deficiency of iron leads to anaemia. Iron deficiency is common particularly in women of reproductive age and

children. Iron deficiency during pregnancy increases maternal mortality and low birth weight infants. In children, it increases susceptibility to infection and impairs learning ability. Plant foods like green leafy vegetables, legumes and dry fruits contain iron. Iron is also obtained through meat, fish and poultry products. Iron bio-availability is poor from plant foods but is good from animal foods. Vitamin C - rich fruits like gooseberries (Amla), guava and citrus improve iron absorption from plant foods. Beverages like tea bind dietary iron and make it unavailable. Hence, they should be avoided before during or soon after a meal. Commonly consumed plant based diets provide around 18mg of iron as against recommended intake of 35mg per day. Therefore, supplementation of iron (100 mg elemental iron, 0.5 mg folic acid) is recommended for 100 days during pregnancy from 16th week onwards to meet the demands of pregnancy.

Regular health checkups- A pregnant women need to undergo periodic health check up. She should get checked up for weight gain blood pressure anemia. A pregnant women need to get u immunization such as tetanus toxoid. She requires enough physical exercise with adequate rest for 2-3 hrs during day time

Healthy habits- A pregnant women needs to stay away from taking any type of drugs as this habit would harm the fetus & the health of the mother. She should avoid from habits of smoking & taking alcohol too. Any type of wrong food habits & wrong drinking habits will have negative impact on health & directly affects her baby's health in the long run..

Stay away from forbidden thoughts - Above all these , a pregnant women needs to know that her health is now not individual but it includes two of them. She should stay away from wrong beliefs, wrong food suggestions . Some people advise pregnant women to stay from sun light stay from walking stay away from drinking water etc But these ill advises are to be discarded.

Good support from community A pregnant women should know that any bad decision during a pregnancy can be dangerous & she needs good advises during this period . Community can help her with good advises. The role of community is very important. Sometimes the ill advises or taunts discourage pregnant women & they take fatal decisions. Be it getting checked up regularly or be it taking highly nutritious food , the community should stand as a supportive pillar & encourage the women towards getting the best of the health during pregnancy period.

Self -stimulation- A pregnant women has to listen to herself during this sensitive period. Pregnancy is a very dear period in any women's life hence she needs to be attentive all the time. She needs to take extra care in protein fortified food ,nutrition intake , medicines, regular health checkups. Sometimes she may face problems from her in-Laws about knowing the sex of the child , or there may be pressures about her getting aborted , or there may be selfish motives from husband towards begetting a male progeny. Pregnant women have to stand courageously & take stances which are supportive to her heart & health

The role o community in creating an aware mother hood is very significant. The role of community is very important because community's stake holdership is supportive for women. Sometimes the ill advises or taunts discourage pregnant women & they take fatal decisions a community can stand supportive to women in such conditions. . Be it getting checked up regularly or be it taking highly nutritious food, the community should act as a supportive pillar & encourage the women towards getting the best of the health during pregnancy period. An attentive community can create further awareness to women on health related issues& create a healthy generation.

II. Conclusion

Thus there is a need to create an awareness from women with community stakeholder's support. The role of community is empowering women with awareness about pregnancy pre pregnancy & spot pregnancy health issues needs to be delivered through self help groups. Awareness camps, literacy related adult educational courses, Women suffer from social & economic constraints to save them from health short falls It is required that they get good social & cultural support to become more health focused & watchful. During pregnancy, a woman's body goes through many changes even though changes are entirely normal, but may become very important in case there are complications or problems. Hence affects a whole new born generation. Thus community needs to take responsibility in creating awareness for pregnant women.

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