



Become a champion: Motivate community members to ensure good health and nutrition of pregnant women

## Religious Leaders

Your leadership and active support matters!



## Ensuring adequate nutrition and health care of pregnant women and the unborn baby

Undernourished pregnant women give birth to small, low birth weight babies who are often born before time and are at high risk of illness and death. In long term, under nutrition contributes to lower IQ, poor school performance, frequent illness in childhood and low productivity/earnings in adult life.

Good nutrition during pregnancy helps a pregnant woman to have a safe pregnancy (less risk of complication) and deliver a healthy newborn.

As an esteemed religious leader, you can play a crucial role in reducing under nutrition by spreading awareness about the importance of maternal nutrition in the community and among the male members in particular. Your opinion as a religious leader will be easily accepted and followed by the members of the community.

### Benefits of adequate nutrition and proper health care of pregnant women:



Safe delivery



Reduces the risk of complication and even death during pregnancy or during delivery



Adequate physical, cognitive and mental development of the baby



SAVES Money. (No high expenses to manage complications in mother and baby)

### Five simple rules to ensure pregnant women's nutrition and health care needs:

A pregnant woman must:

1. Consume adequate (minimum 5 different food items) nutrient-rich, seasonal and locally available food items daily (with roti/rice), such as:
  - » Dark green leafy vegetables,
  - » Yellow or orange-colored fruits/vegetables such as (pumpkin, ripe mango, ripe papaya, etc.)
  - » Milk or milk products,
  - » Lentils/pulses, and
  - » Eggs (if acceptable in the family diet) and add fish or meat/chicken, if non-vegetarian, several times a week.
2. Consume 1 IFA tablet every day from the fourth month of pregnancy till delivery (180 tablets).
3. Consume 2 calcium tablets (1 tablet after breakfast and 1 tablet after lunch) every day from the fourth month of pregnancy till delivery (360 tablets).

4. Have antenatal care (ANC) check-ups during VHSND or at a nearby health center regularly and check whether gain in weight is adequate (1.5–2kg/ month or 10–12kg during pregnancy).
5. Adopt safe hygiene practices such as hand washing with soap before preparing and eating food, and after using toilet or cleaning child feces. Consume properly washed vegetables/fruits.

### What can you do?

#### You can:



1.

Build a supportive environment and awareness about the 'Five Golden Rules for Maternal Nutrition' and motivate especially, husbands/male members to:

- » Prioritize and give importance to pregnant women's nutrition and health care. Buy food from recommended food groups for consumption of pregnant women.
- » Remind pregnant women to consume 1 IFA and 2 calcium tablets daily and ensure availability of both at home.
- » Accompany pregnant women for regular antenatal check-ups and remain in touch with local ASHA, ANM for more help and information.
- » Arrange for institutional delivery.
- » Keep track, if a pregnant woman is gaining adequate weight (1.5-2 kg every month from fourth month onwards) and that she has adequate quantity of food every day.
- » Follow safe sanitation and hygiene practices at home.



2.

Support frontline workers such as ANM, AWW and ASHA in promoting awareness about maternal nutrition in your community by mobilizing elders, particularly the mothers-in-law and husbands/men.



3.

During 'Jumma' prayers, or 'Jamath/Khutba' or 'sermon/takreer', discuss about maternal nutrition and health care issues. Advise the community members to visit the nearest health facility if they require the assistance of a frontline worker.



4.

Discuss this issue during any gathering/festivity where people come for prayers or to seek blessings such as weddings, birthdays etc. so as to make it a social and community movement.

