



REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

The physical and mental well-being of an individual is regarded as an individual's health. The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined the reproductive health as the total well-being of behavioural, emotional, physical and social aspects of adolescence. To keep the body healthy, every human being, at any age, needs to have a diet, exercise and personal hygiene. The following are some of the measures that girls and boys need to take.

CLEANLINESS

- Have bath once or twice a day, paying special attention to underarms, groins and genitals.
- Change the underwear daily. It should be made of cotton and washed and cleaned every day.
- For teenagers, the increased activity of sweat glands sometimes enhances body odour.

If cleanliness is not maintained there are chances of having fungal, bacterial and other infections.

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE

- Girls should take special care of cleanliness during the time of menstrual cycle.
- Making use of disposable napkins or tampons may reduce chances of infections.
- First of all, girls should realize that menstruation is as natural as any regular physiological activities like breathing, drinking, eating, urinating and defecation.
- Girls are advised to use sanitary napkins or tampons rather than cloth.
- It should be changed frequently depending upon the menstrual flow.
- If a cloth is being used repeatedly, it should be cleaned with soap and hot water and dried in sunlight for reuse.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

- Walking and playing in fresh air keeps the body fit and healthy.
- **All young boys and girls should take a walk, exercise and play outdoor games.**
- Physical activity leads to the conditions of better health, sound sleep and thereby mental peace.
- Mental peace promotes happiness in day to day existence.

NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS



- Adolescence is a stage of rapid growth and development. Hence a diet with proper calories and other nutrients is needed for proper growth and physical activity.
- Balanced diet is very much important during adolescence.
- Balanced diet includes proteins, carbohydrates, fats and vitamins in requisite proportions.
- Our Indian meal of roti / rice, dal (pulses), milk, fruits and vegetables forms a balanced food.
- The nutritional deficiencies during this period not only retard the physical growth, but also impair the intellectual development and may also delay sexual maturation.
- A very good amount of proteins and carbohydrates is necessary during this growth period.
- Apart from that, adolescents need the following dietary component

MINERALS

- Since there is an increase in skeletal mass and blood volume during adolescence, the body needs calcium, phosphorus and iron.

CALCIUM

- Calcium intake needs to be increased to prevent osteoporosis in later life. It is present in milk and milk products or other equivalents.

IODINE

- It helps to prevent thyroid gland related diseases.

IRON

- Iron builds blood, and iron-rich foods such as green leafy vegetables, jaggery, meat, dates, fish, chicken, citrus, Indian gooseberry (Nelli) and whole pulses are good for



adolescents.

- Lack of iron in the diet results in anemia.
- To make up for the loss of iron, adolescents need to have a diet rich in iron.
- In boys, iron deficiency occurs due to muscle spurt whereas in girls it occurs due to menstruation in addition to the muscular growth.

PERSONAL HYGIENE FOR ADOLESCENCE

- During adolescence, growing children need special attention towards diet, exercise and personal hygiene.
- Personal hygiene is a clear indicator of man's personality.
- Personal hygiene starts from the hair tip and ends down at the toes.

PERSONAL HYGIENE HABITS FOR THE ADOLESCENCE

They are,

- ✚ Shower or bath daily.
- ✚ Always wash your hands before and after meals.
- ✚ Keep finger nails clean and avoid nail polish.
- ✚ Wash your teeth and mouth before and after each meal.
- ✚ Avoid touching your face, nose or mouth while preparing food.
- ✚ Avoid coughing or sneezing around food. Close your mouth by using hand kerchief while you cough in public places.
- ✚ If you want to taste the food, use a clean spoon.
- ✚ Change your clothes regularly and wash them cleanly, especially undergarments.
- ✚ Do not defecate in open field. Use clean toilets for defecation.
- ✚ If you are not well, avoid self-medication and consult a doctor.