

CAUSES AND PREVENTION

Understanding the cause of disability can help us to prevent them. Disabilities can occur at any of the following stages – During conception, Pregnancy, at birth or after birth. At each of these stages, there can be various causes

Table 1: Causes during Conception and Prevention

CAUSES	PREVENTION
- Age of the mother: if the mother age is less than 20 years or more than 40 years of age, the chances of having a child with disabilities is high	The mother's age between 20-35 years is the most appropriate period for bearing healthy children.
-Previous history of disability in family, Genetic/Chromosomal abnormalities: This can occur when the parents have defective genes that are transmitted, or an abnormality occurs in the genes during cell division at the time of conception (Down Syndrome, PKU, Galactosaemia are caused due to these factors and lead to mental retardation.	-If there is a previous history of disability in the family, couples should go for genetic counselling which may involve tests like amniocentesis. -Marriage between close relatives should be avoided, if there is a history of disability in the family.
-Rh incompatibility- If the Rh factor of the mother and foetus is not the same, then while the first child is not affected, the second child is affected if the condition is not treated.	Mother should find out if she is Rh -ve before conception. If mother is Rh -ve, then she should consult doctor.

Table 2: Causes during Pregnancy (Pre-Natal) and their Prevention

CAUSES	PREVENTION
-Ill health due to metabolic disorders such as diabetes, high blood pressure, blood poisoning (toxaemia) hypo-thyroidism and hyperthyroidism hormone disorders	Consult doctor regularly and stay under doctor's medication during the entire period of pregnancy.
-Consumption of alcohol and smoking, using drugs by mother or in the environment	Mother should avoid use of smoking and use of alcohol
-Infectious diseases like German measles (rubella), HIV, syphilis, hepatitis	-Get timely vaccinations before conception. -Get 3 antenatal checkups done -Take tetanus injections to prevent infections
-Mal-nutrition of the mother, especially lack of Vitamin A can lead to blindness	Take balanced diet
-Self-medication without consulting doctor	Take any medication only on prescription
-Exposure to radiation, environmental pollutants, poisonous gases in the environment	Avoid such exposure
-Trauma, injury and accidents, bleeding	Avoid emotional stress and remain in a happy and balanced state of mind

Table 3: Causes during birth and their Prevention

Causes	Prevention
-Prolonged birth	
-Pre-mature delivery	
-Birth complications (cord around neck, head injury such as the use of forceps, assisted delivery, no birt cry, lack of oxygen, strong medications, delivery ny inexperienced and untrained people, negligence	-Take medical advice -Ensure delivery at health centre under the supervision of a trained medical professional
-Low weight at birth (less than 2.5 Kg)	Eat balanced and nutritious food during pregnancy

Table 4: Causes after birth and their Prevention

Causes	Prevention
-Ill health such as diarrhoea and dehydration, severe jaundice, high fever with fits, measles, mumps, diphtheria, whooping cough, eye and ear infections.	-Immediate medical treatment from trained medical professional. -If baby has high fever, cooln infant's feet, forehead and hands with wet cloth immediately and take the child to the doctor. -Regular immunization at recommended ages. -Observe hygiene to prevent infections -In case child has diarrhoea include foods rich in Vitamin A -Keep child's eyes and ear clean -Treat infections immediately -Do not bathe or swim in dirty water
-Malnutrition: Deficiency in protein and calories leading to mental retardation; vitamin A deficiency leading to blindness. Give the child balanced die.	-Breast feed the baby as long as possible. Supplementary feeding from 4 months. -Give child foods rich in Vitamin A such as milk products, fish, livers, eggs and other yellow foods.
-Trauma (fall, head injury, physical punishment such as hitting on the head)	-Seek immediate medical help -Do not hit children -Do not leave infants unattended on the bed or near stair case or others places where they can fall.
-PKU (Phenylketoneuria)	-Immediate screening and detection and start treatment
-Feeding the infant in lying position causes milk to enter the middle ear and can cause rupture of ear drum	Feed the child in sitting position
Injury to eye or ear, tumor in the eye leading to visual impairment	Keep sharp objects like knives, drugs, acids out of reach. Do not allow children to throw stones at each other especially at eyes.
Infections of the brain and spinal cord such as meningitis, encephalitis, cerebral malaria	Immediate medical treatment from trained medical professional
Brain tumors indicated by fits, headache, increased head size, sudden change in sense of	Immediate medical treatment from trained medical professional

vision or smell

Common ... eating both and their presence

REFERENCES:

<p>Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid the child's contact with the contaminated object • avoid the child's contact with the contaminated object • avoid the child's contact with the contaminated object 	<p>• avoid the child's contact with the contaminated object</p> <p>• avoid the child's contact with the contaminated object</p> <p>• avoid the child's contact with the contaminated object</p>
<p>Treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid the child's contact with the contaminated object • avoid the child's contact with the contaminated object • avoid the child's contact with the contaminated object 	<p>• avoid the child's contact with the contaminated object</p> <p>• avoid the child's contact with the contaminated object</p> <p>• avoid the child's contact with the contaminated object</p>