

**ECLAMPSIA**

# Take prompt action, save lives

For most women and their families, giving birth should be a time for celebration; but, every minute for one woman, pregnancy and childbirth end in death and mourning (UNFPA 2009). Although Bangladesh has made a notable progress in reducing many causes of maternal mortality, eclampsia — a disease characterised by high blood pressure and convulsion in pregnancy remains a significant problem for us.

According to the 2010 Maternal Mortality Survey, eclampsia is the second most important cause of maternal death in Bangladesh. However, the condition can be easily treated if we take timely action during pregnancy.

In a developing country like Bangladesh, a woman is 7 times more likely to develop pre-eclampsia (hypertension in pregnancy associated with significant amounts of protein in the urine), 3 times more likely to progress to eclampsia and 14 times more likely to die of eclampsia (Balancing the scales, EngenderHealth, 2007).

Hypertension in pregnancy causes severe damage to the kidneys, heart, liver, brain and uterus — sometimes leading to fatal condition.

Pre-eclampsia is diagnosed by screening and lab test of urine (presence of protein). When the condition gets associated with convulsion, it is called eclampsia.



Calcium supplementation from the 4th month of pregnancy onwards is crucial for prevention of pre-eclampsia and eclampsia. Some drugs (Magnesium Sulfate) can reduce the occurrence of seizures in pregnant women with eclampsia by more than 50 percent and maternal death by 46 percent. It can also improve fetal maturity.

At the community level, immediate referral of cases with pre-eclampsia or eclampsia with a high dose of Magnesium Sulphate is crucial for maternal and newborn survival.

The article is compiled by Dr Malay Mridha and Dr Sabbir Ahmed.

**ENDEAVOUR**



Surgeons of "For Bangladesh" are performing reconstructive surgery at BSMMU.

## A Euro-Bangla initiative to provide life changing surgery

STAR HEALTH REPORT

With the aim to provide life changing plastic and reconstructive surgery locally and train more Bangladeshi doctors, an association named "For Bangladesh" has been formed and operated for a while. It is a non-Government and not for profit organisation formed in 2010 by Non Resident Bangladeshi (NRB), German and Hungarian people who care for Bangladesh.

Recently two plastic, aesthetic and reconstructive surgeons who are also the founding members of the association have visited Bangladesh and performed a number of complex and critical life changing surgeries at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

Hungarian surgeon Dr Greg Pataki, the medical advisor and Christian Schmitz from Germany, who is the Vice-chairman of the organisation expressed that they were very happy to provide such services to the people who could not afford it and also to the young doctors to improve their skill through hands on training.

Chairman of the initiative Hasnat Mia who is an NRB informed that the initiative will continue and will be started at a larger scale in near future.

## Complementary feeding crucial for child development

PROF DR M KARIM KHAN

Complementary feeding is very important issue for normal growth and development of young child. Up to six month of age, exclusive breast-feeding is enough; but after 6 month, we need to add some complementary food to the diet of baby to ensure healthy life. After 6 months, babies need more protein, Vitamin A and C, Zinc, Iron, which breast milk alone cannot provide in sufficient amount. If weaning food is not given to babies after 6 months, their weight may decrease, growth may be impaired, anemia may occur, intelligence and immunity may decrease. So, we should ensure complementary feeding to our child along with breast milk after six months.

Weaning or complementary food should be safe, adequate, energy dense, hygienic, appropriate and should contain all the macro and micro-nutrients along with vitamins and minerals. It should be preferably home made, cheap, easily available, easily digestible as well as socially acceptable. After six months, breast milk provides around 50 percent of energy and the rest half should come from complementary food.

In Bangladesh, complementary feeding is started with rice, Khichuri, banana, smashed potato, soup, noodles etc. Khichuri should



not contain too many ingredients at a time. Certain vegetables may not suit the baby. It should have one vegetable at a time and after a week, another should be added to identify the trouble making vegetables, if there is any. Food should contain few teaspoonful of soybean oil to make it energy dense.

Amount and frequency of weaning food is also important. It should not be more than 3-5 feeds per day and amount must be reasonable — not too much, not too less. No forceful feeding is allowed.

Now a days, probiotics in the form of food are added to the weaning food, which provide extra protection to baby by increasing immunity and decreasing invasion of harmful microorganisms. Many

milk companies are marketing different varieties of tasty weaning food, someone may try them if affordable.

Often in our society, especially uneducated and poor people do not know the importance about complementary feeding. Mostly it happens because of their ignorance and poverty, although it could be provided with locally available food. Hence, awareness regarding the complimentary food is crucial and we all should come forward to raise the issue. Take care of your sweet kids.

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**HEALTH** bulletin



### Walking could treat depression

Something as simple as going for a brisk stroll could play an important role in fighting depression — according to a study published in the journal Mental Health and Physical Activity.

The condition can be treated with drugs, but exercise is commonly prescribed by doctors for mild symptoms.



### Being happy may protect heart

Happy, optimistic people have a lower risk of heart disease and stroke — a Harvard School of Public Health review of more than 200 studies — reported in Psychological Bulletin — suggests.

While such people may be generally healthier, scientists think a sense of well-being may lower risk factors such as high blood pressure and cholesterol.

## Swine flu returns, stay cautioned

Swine flu or Influenza A (H1N1) has recently returned in Bangladesh. Experts urged to stay cautious and take preventive measures and seek treatment if anybody shows the signs and symptoms including fever, sore throat, cough, runny nose, headache, body-pain, difficulty in breathing, with general weakness, loss of appetite, diarrhoea or vomiting etc.

The following tips will help you to avoid catching swine flu.

- Frequent handwashing to reduce the risk of infection.
- Stay home when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Isolate sick persons, screen and limit visitors.



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