

Keeping newborn warm in winter

STAR HEALTH DESK

Immediately after birth, newborn infant starts losing heat. Unless heat loss is prevented, newborn will develop hypothermia (becomes cold) that can lead to many complications, even death. The smaller and more premature the baby, the greater the risk is. As newborn infant regulates body temperature less efficiently than does that of an adult, caregivers should take proper precaution to ensure that baby does not become too cold especially for premature babies.

Hypothermia (when body temperature is less than 97.7°F) is a common condition around the world and can occur in all climates. But the temperature of the environment during delivery and the postnatal period has significant effects on the risk to the newborn of developing hypothermia. Thus, we should be extra cautious in keeping babies warm in winter season.

In general, newborns need a much warmer environment than an adult. The smaller the newborn, the higher the temperature needs to be. Thus, to maintain optimum temperature in infants, experts from World Health



Organisation (WHO) and Saving Newborn Lives initiative of Save the Children have recommended the following actions:

- The newborn should be immediately dried and covered with a clean dry towel before the cord is cut. While the newborn is being dried, it should be on a warm surface such as the mother's chest or abdomen or a

prewarmed cloth on the bed. Newborn should be dried in a manner so that the white cheesy layer covering its skin is not wiped off.

- The baby should then be wrapped with a second, dry towel (discard the first towel) including its head. If the room temperature is less than optimal (less than 25°C/77°F), towels and cap

should be pre-warmed.

- Skin-to-skin contact is an effective method of preventing heat loss in newborns, whether they are full term or preterm babies. The contact in the form of Kangaroo Mother Care is lifesaving for infants who are born prematurely or have low birth weight. If skin-to-skin contact is not acceptable, the

baby could be wrapped after having been dried, and placed in its mother's arms.

- Breastfeeding should begin as soon as possible after delivery, preferably within an hour. The first milk, called colostrum, is rich in nutrients, antibodies, and is essential to provide the newborn with calories so that it can generate body heat. The baby should not be given any food or drink other than breast milk till 6 months.

- Bathing the newborn soon after birth causes a drop in the baby's body temperature and is not necessary. Thus, bathing the baby should be postponed for at least 3 days after birth.

- Newborns should be adequately protected from exposure to ambient temperature by clothing and bedding. As a general rule, newborns need one or two more layers of clothes and bedding than adults. In the first hours after birth, clothing should always include a cap, since as much as 25% of heat loss in a newborn baby may be from an uncovered head. Clothing and bedding should not be too tight to allow air spaces between the layers as trapped air is a very efficient insulator.

NEW GUIDELINE

To prevent and control deadly cervical cancer

Cervical cancer is one of the world's deadliest but most easily preventable forms of cancer for women that is responsible for more than 270000 deaths annually, 85% of which occur in developing countries like Bangladesh. In order to better prevent and control cervical cancer, World Health Organisation (WHO) recently released a new guideline entitled "Comprehensive cervical cancer control: a guide to essential practice".

The main elements in the new guidance are:

- Vaccinate 9 to 13-year-old girls with two doses of HPV vaccine to prevent infection by the Human papillomavirus (HPV), the virus responsible for most cases of cervical cancer. The reduced, 2-dose schedule has been shown to be as effective as the current 3-dose schedule. The change will make it easier to administer the vaccine. In addition, it reduces the cost, which is particularly important for low- and middle-income countries where national health budgets are constrained but where the need for HPV vaccine is the greatest.

- Use HPV tests to screen women for cervical cancer prevention. With HPV testing, the frequency of screening will decrease. Once a woman has been screened negative, she should not be rescreened for at least 5 years, but should be rescreened within 10. This represents a major cost saving for health systems, in comparison with other types of tests.

The new guidance also highlights the importance of addressing gender discrimination and other inequities in relation to a range of other social factors (such as wealth, class, education, religion and ethnicity), in the design of health policies and programmes.

HEALTH bulletin

Mom's obesity may affect newborn survival

Obesity during pregnancy is linked to an increased risk of newborn death, according to a new study published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ).

Infants of mothers who were overweight (BMI between 25 and 29.9) or mildly obese (BMI between 30 and 34.9) were 25 to 37 percent more likely to die than those of non-overweight women, the researchers found. Although the risk is relatively increased for obese mothers, the actual probability is small, researchers opined.



Antacids may improve head and neck cancer survival

Using antacids to control acid reflux may improve head and neck cancer patients' chances of survival, a new study published in the journal Cancer Prevention Research suggests.

The researchers examined the effects that two types of antacids — proton pump inhibitors and histamine 2 blockers — had on head and neck cancer patients.

Acid reflux — commonly known as heartburn — is a common side effect of chemotherapy or radiation treatment. Compared to patients who did not take antacids, those who took proton pump inhibitors had a 45 percent lower risk of death, according to the researchers. They also found that those who took histamine 2 blockers had a 33 percent lower risk of death.

Doctor's Experience

Persistent cough with whoop

PROF DR M KARIM KHAN

Yesterday Asif (not a real name), a two years old boy came to me with his mother having a history of very irritating cough for two weeks. His mother told me that Asif was having serious cough and could not sleep at night.

While he was at my chamber, suddenly he started coughing and I noticed that the cough was very irritating and there was whoop. His eyes became red. I enquired about the vaccination status of the boy. His mother showed me the vaccination card. According to that vaccination card he is completely immunised as per EPI schedule.

Asif was suffering from Pertussis (Whooping cough). Asif's mother argued with me that in spite of vaccination how he got pertussis. I tried to explain her the possibilities.

First the efficacy of the vaccine is not cent percent, development of the immunity is variable, vaccine adapted organisms may be a possibilities and new mutation of the organism sometimes to be considered as well. Anyway, vaccinated child do not suffer much in comparison to non-vaccinated child and early recovery is expected without complication if antibiotics like Azithromycin or Erythromycin could be started earlier.



Pertussis or whooping cough or hundred days cough is caused by a gram negative bacteria and it is very contagious. It spreads quickly from one person to another as droplet infection. Incubation period is 7 days to 21 days. There are three stages of the disease prodromal stage, paroxysmal stage and convalescent stage.

Complications of the disease sometimes may be very serious. There may be sub-conjunctival haemorrhage (bleeding underneath the conjunctiva), bronchopneumonia (a type of pneumonia, infection of the lungs), rectal prolapse (Rectal

prolapse is a condition in which the rectum, the lower end of the colon located just above the anus, becomes stretched out and protrudes out of the anus), encephalopathy (brain disease), otitis media (inflammation of the middle ear), apnea (suspension of external breathing), sudden death may even occur.

Vaccination and isolation of the affected person is an important strategy to prevent the spread of the disease.

The writer works in the Department of Paediatrics at Community Based Medical College (CBMC), Mymensingh. E-mail: mmukkh@gmail.com

Health Tips

Easing hand eczema

Working with harsh chemicals or doing heavy-duty work with your hands can worsen hand eczema, leaving hands dry and cracked. The National Eczema Association offers these preventive suggestions:

- If your hands get wet, use cotton glove liners and neoprene or vinyl gloves. Wash gloves frequently.
- If your hands remain dry, wear fabric or leather work gloves.
- Avoid industrial hand cleansers that may contain harsh, irritating ingredients.
- Bring to work a bottle of gentle hand cleanser, as well as moisturiser and any skin medication.
- Make sure all work surfaces, tools, protective gear and clothing are clean.
- Promptly care for any minor wounds on your hands.



/StarHealthBD

Knowing for better living

In Bangladesh

Anemia affects

46% of pregnant women

&

33% of non-pregnant women

Take plenty of Iron and Vitamin rich foods like fish, meat, fruits and green leafy vegetables.

Take care of pregnant women to ensure Iron and Vitamin rich diet everyday.

Consult your Doctor.



In Search of Excellence

www.orionpharmabd.com

ORION
Pharma Ltd.
Dhaka, Bangladesh