

More than 200,000 children dying from diarrhoea each year

Safe, effective vaccines exist that can protect children from this disease.

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Diarrhoea is one of the world's leading causes of child illness and death, and rotavirus is the most common cause of severe diarrhoea.

Each year, rotavirus diarrhoea kills about 200,000 children in countries around the world and hospitalises hundreds of thousands more, despite the fact that safe, effective vaccines exist that can protect children from this disease.

Rotavirus is highly contagious, and every child is at risk. Infants and children under the age of 2 years face the greatest risk of infection. Rotavirus causes gastroenteritis, an inflammation of the stomach and intestines. It primarily infects the small intestine, destroying the surface tissue and preventing the absorption of nutrients, causing diarrhoea.

Typical symptoms can range from mild, watery diarrhoea to severe diarrhoea with vomiting and fever.

While mild to moderate dehydration caused by rotavirus infections can be treated with oral rehydration therapy (ORT), children who develop severe dehydration often require intravenous fluids and hospitalisation. 2 out of every 5 diarrhoea-related hospitalisations among children under age 5 are caused by rotavirus. For those who survive, rotavirus infections can have a lasting impact.

It can take up to 2 months for the intestine to fully repair itself after a moderate to severe case of rotavirus. As the intestine repairs, children cannot absorb nutrients as well, which means that during crucial stages of development, they grow significantly less than children who have not been sick with rotavirus diarrhoea.



Children who suffer from an episode of moderate-to-severe diarrhoea — from infections like rotavirus — are weakened and malnourished. They are more susceptible to the next illness that strikes, and have a more than eight-fold increase in their risk of

death from any cause in the 2-3 months following an episode of diarrhoea.

Treating rotavirus is expensive. In Bangladesh, treating just one episode of rotavirus can amount to nearly 85% of the average family's monthly income.

Because children can become infected with rotavirus and other causes of diarrhoea more than once, preventing illness in the first place is critical.

Rotavirus vaccines save lives and improve health. There are two World Health Organisation (WHO) prequalified,

orally administered rotavirus vaccines available.

Rotavirus vaccines are already saving lives and improving health in the countries where they are in use. Rotavirus vaccines have been shown to provide broad protection, even against strains not included in the vaccine. Rotavirus vaccines have also been shown to reduce hospitalisation from all-cause diarrhoea.

The benefits of vaccination are substantial and far exceed any low-level risk associated with vaccination. Not only does vaccination reduce the health burden of rotavirus, it also reduces the economic burden that families face when their children get sick.

WHO recommends that rotavirus vaccines be introduced into every country's national immunisation programme, particularly those where diarrhoea is a leading cause of child death.

While at least 80 countries have introduced rotavirus vaccines nationally, more than 100 have not including Bangladesh.

Over 94 million infants lack access to rotavirus vaccines. Less than 25% of infants in Gavi-eligible countries currently have access to the vaccine. More must be done to reach children living in the places where diarrhoea, such as rotavirus, is a major public health issue. Millions of illnesses and tens of thousands of deaths could be prevented through rotavirus vaccination.

NO TOBACCO DAY

Beating tobacco for good

Action to stamp out tobacco use can help countries prevent millions of people falling ill and dying from tobacco-related disease, combat poverty and, according to a first-ever World Health Organisation (WHO) report, reduce large-scale environmental degradation.

On World No Tobacco Day — May 31, 2017, WHO highlighted how tobacco threatens the development of nations worldwide, and is calling on governments to implement strong tobacco control measures. These include banning marketing and advertising of tobacco, promoting plain packaging of tobacco products, raising excise taxes, and making indoor public places and workplaces smoke-free.

Tobacco use kills more than 7 million people every year and costs households and governments over US\$ 1.4 trillion through healthcare expenditure and lost productivity. Tobacco waste contains over 7000 toxic chemicals that poison the environment, including human carcinogens.

Around 860 million adult smokers live in low- and middle-income countries. Many studies have shown that in the poorest households, spending on tobacco products often represents more than 10% of total household expenditure — meaning less money for food, education and healthcare. Tobacco contributes to 16% of all NCD deaths.

Governments collect nearly US\$ 270 billion in tobacco excise tax revenues each year, but this could increase by over 50%, generating an additional US\$ 141 billion, simply from raising taxes on cigarettes by just US\$ 0.80 per pack (equivalent to one international dollar) in all countries.

Increased tobacco taxation revenues will strengthen domestic resource mobilisation, creating the fiscal space needed for countries to meet development priorities under the 2030 Agenda.

HEALTH bulletin

Insomnia during Ramadan

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Ramadan times and present summer days seem to bring about many symptoms mainly due to the hot weather. The holy month with the late night meals changes the lifestyle of the community. There is also an increase in the frequency of gathering with relatives and friends. As a result, one faces an acute lack of sleep during the night. All this leads to laziness, sleepiness and mood swings during the day.

If these symptoms are not unknown to you then you are familiar with insomnia even if you do not name it. So, what is insomnia? We can basically define insomnia as the inability to fall asleep or remain asleep. It is also used to describe the condition of waking up not feeling restored or refreshed. Insomnia is the most common sleep complaint among people. It can be either acute, lasting one to several nights, or chronic, even lasting months to years.

During Ramadan, people more often experience chronic insomnia, which means difficulty sleeping for a few nights, followed by a few nights of adequate sleep before the problem returns. The problem may also be because of the habit of going straight to work after the morning meals in usual days.

According to American Psychiatric Association, there are some criteria to diagnose insomnia. The predominant complaint is difficulty initiating or maintaining sleep, or non-restorative sleep, for at least one month. The sleep disturbance (or

associated daytime fatigue) causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. The sleep disturbance does not occur exclusively during the course of narcolepsy, breathing-related circadian rhythm sleep disorder, or parasomnia.

The disturbance does not occur exclusively during the course of another mental disorder (e.g., major depressive disorder, generalised anxiety disorder or a delirium).

Students as well as working people must maintain a healthy eating and sleeping habit. There is no need at all to stay up awake after morning meals during Ramadan just because one cannot sleep. Try reading the Holy Quran or some other book that usually soothes the nerves. Going to bed and getting up

at roughly the same time every day will programme your body to sleep better. Choose a time when you are most likely to feel sleepy. We love our tea and are addicted to coffee. Cut down on the caffeine, especially in the evening. It interferes with the process of falling asleep and prevents deep sleep.

The effects of caffeine can last a long time (up to 24 hours) so the chances of it affecting sleep are significant. Have a warm, milky drink or herbal tea instead. If you are a regular smoker, it is hard to abstain from smoking for at least 16 hours during Ramadan, but it is very bad for sleep and not to forget other health concerns. Keep all the above in mind and be 'don't worry be happy' in bed while sleeping.

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International variation on definition of brain death must be cleared up

A session at this year's Euroanaesthesia congress in Geneva, Switzerland (3-5 June) will focus on the international variation in the definition of death, which experts say must be cleared up to restore both public and professional confidence, and also to help improve management of patients at the end of life to improve successful organ donation.

"With all the modern technology that exists today, one would think that determination of death should be a straightforward matter," says Giuseppe Citerio, Professor of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care at the Milano Bicocca University, School of Medicine and Surgery, Milan, Italy.

"Despite it being more than 40 years since the concept of 'brain death' was first introduced into clinical practice, many of the controversies that surround the determination of death by neurological criteria (DNC) have not been settled and this presents an opportunity for future research and education to clarify outstanding issues in order to reduce professional and public disquiet."

Bangladesh scored 52 out of 195 countries on healthcare index

Bangladesh scored 52 at a healthcare index as per the new Global Burden of Disease study published in the medical journal The Lancet.

China, with a score of 74 on the index, has been ranked at 82 — far ahead of India which came at 154th position in the ranking of healthcare quality in 195 countries. Sri Lanka scored 73 on the index. Switzerland topped the health index, followed by Sweden and Norway.

The index based on death rates for 32 diseases that can be avoided or effectively treated with proper medical care, also tracked progress in each nation compared to the baseline year 1990.

PERCH publishes papers on pneumonia etiology

The foundational basis for the pneumonia etiology results from the PERCH (Pneumonia Etiology Research for Child Health) project have been published in a 23-paper supplement in the Clinical Infectious Diseases. The publication details the context, methods, and preparatory results that will inform the final pneumonia etiology estimates, expected to be available in late 2017.

PERCH is the largest pneumonia etiology study conducted encompassing nine sites in seven countries and with total enrollment of over 4,000 pneumonia cases and 5,000 controls.

The etiology estimates are critical for decision makers involved in the fight against pneumonia; quantitative information about etiology allows researchers, policy makers, funders, and pharmaceutical manufacturers to strategically target the bacterial and viral causes of pneumonia that are most significant.



A Healthy Ramadan

"In the end, the focus shouldn't be entirely on body weight, but rather on being mindful of how you fast and how you break your fast," said Solomon

To maintain a balanced and nutritious diet, a person should consume food from all the major food groups, equally distributed between the two meal times.

- The major food groups are:
- Fruits and vegetables
 - Breads, cereals, and potatoes
 - Meat, fish and chicken
 - Dairy products such as milk and cheese
 - Foods containing fat and sugar

Pre-dawn meal

Suhoor (the pre-dawn meal) should encompass a wholesome meal that provides long-lasting energy throughout the day. Foods that provide long-lasting energy are complex carbohydrates and high-fibre foods.

Foods that are rich in fibre and are also digested slowly include fruits(raw and unpeeled) and vegetables.

Also don't forget the all-important fluids as they maintain water and salt levels in the body. Water and fluids with vitamins - like fresh fruit juices - should replace caffeinated drinks.

Caffeine - cold drinks, tea, and coffee - is a diuretic and promotes faster water loss through urination, which can lead to dehydration.

Post-dusk meal

It is customary for Muslims to break their fast - Iftar (the post-dusk meal) - with dates & water. This helps restore sugar and salt levels in the body. It also rehydrates the body.

The benefits of dates are:

- Easy to digest
- Prepare the stomach to receive food after many hours of fasting
- Rich in sugar and energy, restoring nutrients in the body
- Prevent constipation as a result of altered meal times

Foods to avoid

- Deep fried foods - fried samosas, fried chicken, fried spring rolls and fried potato chips
- High sugar and high fat foods - Indian sweetmeats like gulab jamun, jalebi, badam halwa and barfi
- High-fat cooked foods - oily curries and greasy pastries

Healthy alternatives

- Baked samosas, baked spring rolls, oven baked potato chips
- Dry frying" - using a non-stick pan or non-stick food sprays
- Grilled or baked meat, chicken, fish as a healthier alternative-while retaining the flavour and taste of the food.

"This can help to improve your overall health, and to maintain that behaviour - making it a lifestyle that can be continued even after the fast has passed."

