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Learning for Better Healthcare



Healthcare and medicine are dynamic fields. Constant advancements in knowledge, techniques and technologies have made it easier for healthcare professionals to prevent, diagnose or treat many ailments. Thus, education cannot end once a healthcare professional starts their career. Continued Medical Education is important to stay abreast with the latest developments in the field and provide optimum care.

At the village level, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) are the first point of contact with the medical system. They work at Primary Health Centres or Health Sub-centres.

ANMs provide maternity care, childcare, counselling, immunisation and family planning, among other services. They qualify after a 2-year nursing course with a focus on maternity and newborn care. ANMs are crucial for public health. Since they work for decades after finishing their studies, it is essential that they receive Continued Medical Education (CME). This helps them learn about the latest advancements in the field and refreshes their knowledge.

RajPusht has been training ANMs to counsel pregnant women regarding the importance of proper nutrition and weight gain. The training modules reiterate the duties they have to perform and messages they have to share on the monthly Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN) days. The counselling ANMs provide on MCHN days is an integral part of RajPusht's Social & Behaviour Change Communication Strategy.

By emphasising proper nutrition and weight gain during pregnancy, we seek to reduce the prevalence of low birth weight and break the inter-generational cycle of malnutrition.



MS. NIRMAL RAWAL
(ANM SINCE 1989,
PHC-KUAN)

“The training held today was helpful as a refresher. But the best part were the supportive job aids that we received along with the training. These are easy to use and will help me deliver counselling better. Such refreshers should be organised every six months as it keeps us on point.”



MS SHANTI BHAMAT
(ANM SINCE 2016,
CHC-CHIKHALI)

“Today's training has been interesting and valuable. The emphasis on consuming iron, calcium and good food during pregnancy was crystal clear, and I will incorporate these messages in my counselling sessions with women on MCHN Days. Having such quarterly sessions would be beneficial in retaining top-of-the-mind recall of specific messaging.”



MS SHILPA DAMOR
(ANM SINCE 2010,
PHC-KOCHRI)

“Today's session was eye-opening, and I am excited about using the job aids given here during my counselling sessions! It would be great to reiterate such messages in each month's sector meeting where we (ANMs) gather; this will help reorient our focus to the right messaging.”

Sun, Sesame and Sankranti

Decoding the nutritional importance of this Harvest Festival



Priscilla Blesson,
Nutrition Specialist, RajPusht

Every year, 14th January is celebrated as Makar Sankranti in India to mark the start of an auspicious event. According to Hindu astrology, the Sun transits into Capricorn and the sun moves towards the north making the days longer than the nights.

In Rajasthan, Makar Sankranti is all about flying kites, eating sesame-jaggery sweets and social gatherings. Celebrated as a harvest festival, it marks the end of winters and brings joy to farmers. This festival is not just about fun but also has several health benefits:

Sesame: Rajasthan is the second highest producer of sesame (til) in India. Sesame seeds (white) are a rich source of calcium (1283 mg per 100g). Calcium is needed for healthy bones and breast milk production in pregnant women and lactating mothers.

Sunshine: Vitamin D is an essential nutrient required for many vital processes, including building and maintaining strong bones in our body. It is often referred to as “the sunshine vitamin” because the Sun is one of the best sources of this nutrient. Sunlight in this period is highly beneficial for the skin and body.

A study published in *Microbiome* journal found that sunlight kills bacteria in indoor spaces.

Kite flying is one of the best traditions followed by generations to leverage the benefits of sunshine, whether knowingly or unknowingly. In fact, on this day, a longer duration of kite flying is promoted as the human body can store vitamin D for up to a year and can use the reserves for quite some time. It is said that kite flying has become associated with Makar Sankranti so that people can spend time in the sun and get Vitamin D.

Sweets: Sesame and jaggery sweets, such as laddoos and chikki, are an integral part of the Makar Sankranti celebrations. Sesame provides warmth, calcium, and jaggery gives energy to the body in winters. Such sweets are popularly distributed and given for *daan-punya* on this day. The kite flying and distribution of sweets are an opportunity for communities to come together.



Baran District Collector Mr. Narendra Gupta inaugurating Digital Weighing Machine at the District Hospital



BPM Mr. Amit Chourasia receiving appreciation certificate from Baran District Administration



RCHO Dr K.L. Palat interacting with ANM during 2nd batch ANM training, Dungarpur



PW Weight Monitoring during MCHN Observation session, Udaipur



PC Mr. Chandra Prakash Meghwal giving nutrition counselling to Pregnant Beneficiary, Naya Kunwa Village, Girwa, Udaipur

Nutrition Champion of the Month

Tulsiram Prajapat has been a POSHAN Champion with RajPusht since 1 April 2020 in Baran district. He oversees 44 Anganwadi Centres in Kelwada sector of Shahabad block. Shahabad has a significant proportion of Garasiyas, the only community in Rajasthan designated as a 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group'.

Tulsiram has registered 1,021 mothers under RajPusht and counselled them 1,483 times since he joined the programme. Since villages in the region are usually quite spread out, he has to walk long distances to meet beneficiaries. In his catchment area, 65 mothers have received payments under the Indira Gandhi Matritva Poshan Yojana.

Tulsiram has a firm grasp of nutrition, hygiene, immunisation and related topics.

He works well with Anganwadi Workers, ASHAs and Lady Supervisors. He has participated in 8 camps organised by the Block administration, such as during the Prashasan Gaon ke Sang Abhiyaan (Government with Villages Campaign).

His handholding initiatives have been exemplary. He counsels women to get their Jan-Aadhaar card made, provides support regarding bank accounts and mobile numbers (pre-requisites to receive benefits under IGMPY), shares information about government schemes and Covid-19 relief measures and motivates people to wear masks.

In a year when he faced personal setbacks, these achievements are even more remarkable. Tulsiram is indeed a Nutrition Champion.



Congratulations!



PW Counselling and weight monitoring



Counselling to beneficiaries through video screening



Child weight measurement



Beneficiary family counselling for IGMPY by Poshan Champion Mr. Vijay, Baran



Poshan Champion Mr. Raju Lal taking child MUAC measurement, Pipalkhunt, Pratapgarh



BPM Mr. Bhupender Kumar Shakyawal conducting meeting with PRI Members, Baran



Maternal health and nutrition counselling by BPM Mr. Rohit Sharma, Dhariawad, Pratapgarh.



ANM training session on Nutrition counselling during pregnancy by Dr. M.S. Jhakad, Dungarpur

Uniting to Defeat Malnutrition

Across villages in Banswara, Baran, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh and Udaipur, people have been convening monthly for Village Health, Sanitation & Nutrition Committee (VHSNC) meetings since December 2021. As they organise themselves in circles, the ASHA holds out a bunch of sticks and starts the day's session. After a 90-minute meeting, the group reiterates the power of collective action with "Ek se bhale do; do se bhale chaar (Two is better than one; four is better than two)".

Participatory Learning & Action (PLA) is a time-tested technique that relies on the collective strength of people to drive social change. National Health Mission - Rajasthan is rolling out the first set of PLA-powered VHSNC meetings to revive the practically defunct committees and use the platform to counter undernutrition. Over a series of 18 meetings anchored by ASHAs, VHSNC members are being encouraged, through activities and discussions, to think beyond individual worries and build consensus towards a better, healthier tomorrow.

More than **6,500** meetings have been completed so far. Watch this space for stories of change from these meetings.



TRAINING



STATE TOT, SHIFW



SARADA, UDAIPUR



BARAN



STATE TRAINERS, SHIFW



SARADA, UDAIPUR



BARAN



PRATAPGARH



DUNGARPUR



DUNGARPUR



DHAULPURA, UDAIPUR



BANSWARA



SARADA, UDAIPUR



BHINDER, UDAIPUR



DHAMOTTAR, PRATAPGARH

MEETINGS