

# **Maternal and Child Health Care**

## **Maternal and Child Health (MCH):**

It is one of the essential components of PHC which is concerned with the special needs and problems of mothers and children and more precisely the needs and problems arising from the process of human reproduction, growth and development.

## **MCH Services:**

Are the services concerned with the well-fare of mother, infants and pre-school children. These services are designed for the care of mothers from the time of conception to ensure that they have a normal pregnancy, normal delivery and proper care in the postnatal period. They also include the protection and supervision of the health of children from the time of conception to the time they enter school.

## **MCH Services have special priorities in the developing countries for the following Reasons :**

- 1-Mothers and children form the majority of population.
- 2-They are particularly vulnerable to diseases & death .
- 3-Most of the diseases are preventable.
- 4-Child illnesses and malnutrition reduce cognitive development and intellectual performance, school enrolment and attendance, which impair final educational achievement.
- 5-Intrauterine growth retardation and malnutrition during early childhood have long term effects on body size and strength with implications for productivity in adulthood.
- 6-Preventive services of mothers & children decrease childhood and mother disability & the resulting social burden.
- 7-Good health of mothers & children is an investment in social development & productivity of a nation.

## **In addition:**

- Annually, > 200 million women become pregnant all over the world. If the needs of these women are neither recognized nor acknowledged, many of these pregnancies may end in disability or death of the mother, the infant or both.
  - At least 15% of all pregnant women need skilled obstetric care some time during pregnancy, delivery or the puerperium.
- For 580,000 women, complications of pregnancy, child birth or the puerperium are fatal.

-Of the infants born alive, nearly 8.1 million die during the first year of their lives.

-One half of those (4 million) die during the first month of their lives.

Of those 2.8 million die during the first week of their lives.

An equal number to the above die in utero and are stillborn

### **Aims of MCH Services:**

1- Every pregnant women maintains good health, goes through a normal and safe delivery, and bears a healthy child.

2- Every child grows up in healthy environment, receives proper nourishment, and adequate protection from diseases

3- Communicable diseases are controlled.

4- Diseases are detected and treated before they become serious & chronic.

5- Statistical data is maintained.

### **Objectives:**

1-Health promotion of children

2- Prevention and control of health hazards to children

3- Treatment of common childhood diseases

4-Rehabilitation of handicapped children

5-Ensuring a favourable outcome of pregnancy and puerperium and dealing with factors leading to unfavourable outcomes (risk factors).

6-Ensuring secure relationships between parents themselves and parents and their children.

## **Phases of Maternity Care:**

### **1. Premarital Care:**

Is the health care given to girls and boys before they get married and is an essential part of adolescent health care. Basically it includes promotive health services such as education regarding proper nutrition, life style, STDs, and in some countries on contraception. It also includes preventive services such as immunization.

### **Preconception care**

A preconception care help married women take steps toward a healthy pregnancy before they even get pregnant or between pregnancies.

**Aims of premarital care:**

- 1-To assess woman general health & wellbeing.
- 2-Health education and risk assessment can be directed towards the planned pregnancy.
- 3-To optimize nutritional status of girls in preparation for pregnancy and lactation. Nutritional education, folate supplementation to reduce the risk of subsequent neural tube defect.
- 4-Promote & provide family planning methods .
- 5-Educate adolescents on reproduction & child care . .
- 6-Immunization (boostor doses of TT, rubella, hepatitis, and HIV status when indicated.)
- 7-For a woman with diabetes mellitus, abnormal blood glucose should be controlled.

**Premarital care includes the following services for the couple:**

- 1-History taking regarding past medical history especially on hereditary diseases.
- 2- Medical examination including the evaluation of the nutritional status of the female.
- 3-Investigations including blood group (ABO and Rh), serological tests for identifying STD like syphilis & AIDS, blood examination for early detection of haemoglobinopathies, and CXR for TB.
- 4-Health education.
- 5-Counseling on family planning, if requested by the couple.

Couples are, then provided with certificate for their fitness and suitability for marriage.