



Ministry of Health & Family Welfare  
Government of India



Rashtriya Kishor  
Swasthya Karyakram  
राष्ट्रीय किशोर स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रम

# Peer Educator's Reference Booklet on Adolescent Health

Frequently Asked Questions





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## **Frequently Asked Questions**





## Acknowledgement

Adolescents represent a positive force in every society characterized by considerable diversity and play a crucial role in shaping a nation's future. Investing in their health and wellness will support in strengthening the nation as a whole, now and in the future.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare under National Health Mission is implementing a comprehensive programme for adolescents, 'Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK)' since 2014 which reaffirms the commitment to provide a comprehensive response to unique health needs and concerns of adolescents

Peer Educator Programme is a critical component of the entire package of interventions and services provided under RKSK. Peer Educators (PEs) are trained to transact weekly activities with their adolescent peers based on the six thematic areas of RKSK. The training package is aimed at enhancing the capacity of the PEs on knowledge and understanding of the core content areas, skills for mobilization, leadership, team building, conflict resolution, facilitation and use of interactive resource materials.

Over the past few years, the learnings from the field clearly suggested that Peer Educator Reference Book -FAQs developed at the time of launch need to be more updated and include the newer emerging issues pertinent to the adolescents namely Social Media and Internet use, Child Sexual Abuse, COVID 19 etc.

Against this backdrop Adolescent Health Division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has updated the PE Reference Book – FAQs to provide updated support to the our peer educators and support them to be better primary information providers. In the process of improving this document valuable contributions have been provided by our partners UNFPA, UNICEF, Arpan, CINI, MAMTA, C3 and NCEAR-AIIMS which are really appreciated.

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## Abbreviations

AB-HWCs	Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres
AFC	Adolescent Friendly Club
AFHCs	Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics
AFHS	Adolescent Friendly Health Services
AHWD	Adolescent Health and Wellness Day
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
ASHAs	Accredited Social Health Activists
AWC	Anganwadi Centre
AWW	Anganwadi Worker
BMI	Body Mass Index
CAB	COVID Appropriate Behaviour
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPO	Child Protection Officer
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECPs	Emergency Contraceptive Pills
FLWs	Frontline Workers
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GoI	Government of India
HCWs	Healthcare Workers
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFA	Iron and Folic Acid
IUCD	Intra-Uterine Contraceptive Device
IUDs	Intra-Uterine Devices
MHS	Menstrual Hygiene Scheme
MoHFW	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
MTP	Medical Termination of Pregnancy
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
NCPCR	National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
NHM	National Health Mission
NTQLS	National Tobacco Quit Line Services
OCPs	Oral Contraceptive Pills
PE	Peer Education/Educator
PID	Pelvic Inflammatory Disease
POSCO Act, 2012	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012
PPTCT	Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission
RKSK	Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram
RTIs	Reproductive Tract Infections
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
VHSNC	Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committee
WIFS	Weekly Iron Folic Acid Supplementation

## Contents

Acknowledgement	v
Abbreviations	vi
Introduction	ix
<b>Module 1</b> Adolescent Peer Education Programme	1
<b>Module 2</b> Growing Up	15
<b>Module 3</b> Health & Nutrition	27
<b>Module 4</b> Healthy Mind for Healthy Behaviour	37
<b>Module 5</b> Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health	47
<b>Module 6</b> Responding to Violence	57
<b>Module 7</b> My Rights and Entitlements	65
<b>Module 8</b> Health and Environment	69
<b>Module 9</b> Social Media and Internet Use	73
<b>Module 10</b> COVID-19	79



## Introduction

Adolescents (253 million) comprise nearly one-fifth (22%) of India's total population (Census 2011). Of the total adolescent population, 12 per cent belong to the 10–14 years age group and nearly 10 per cent are in the 15–19 years age group. Adolescence is a very promising phase of life. Government of India (GoI) recognizes the need to provide the best possible support and care to adolescents in the country so that they realize their full potential in life. Compulsory education at least up to 14 years of age, opportunities for higher education and learning vocational/professional skills, access to healthcare and protection from coercion or violence are some ways in which the government is committed to provide an enabling environment for adolescents. Our Constitution grants its children some special rights and to meet these rights, GoI has brought in several policies, programmes, schemes and legal acts to protect and promote their health and well-being.

The health and well-being of the adolescent population is a key determinant of any country's overall development. Supporting adolescents in reducing barriers to access education, health and opportunities for growth and development will help India realize its demographic bonus, as healthy adolescents are an important resource for the economy.

The Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) is one such initiative in this direction. The programme has six priorities:

1. Improve Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)
2. Enhance Mental Health
3. Address Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)
4. Prevent Injuries and Violence including Gender Based Violence (GBV)
5. Improve Nutrition
6. Prevent Substance Misuse

RKSK is being implemented under the National Health Mission (NHM) of GoI. The programme has a range of services for adolescents to be delivered through both service delivery points and outreach activities. This means that an adolescent can access these services at the health facilities and through the service providers available in the community.

Some of the interventions under the programme are:

- Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHCs) providing Adolescent Friendly Health Services (AFHS)
- Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (MHS)
- Weekly Iron Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS)
- Peer Education (PE) Programme including Adolescent Health and Wellness Day (AHWD) and Adolescent Friendly Club (AFC)

Provision of AFHS ensures respecting the rights of adolescents to privacy, confidentiality, non-judgmental attitude, non-discrimination and acceptance of their health needs as any client of health, is the key to this programme.

The PE Programme was introduced to reach adolescents where they remain, within the community or schools irrespective of their age, sex, culture, caste, religion, marital status or social status. It aims to ensure that adolescents get benefits from regular and sustained peer education covering all six areas of RKSK.

This will facilitate the following:

- Promote learning from trained peers
- Promote support seeking through these peers
- Help reduce fears or barriers experienced otherwise by adolescents
- Help to establish information and support network among adolescents across the country
- Increased access to scientific and reliable sources of information.

The PEs in the programme are adolescents usually between 15 and 19 years of age who will be selected by members of Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committee (VHSNC) based on their educational qualifications, communication skills, motivation and interest to lead such an activity. The process is facilitated by Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs). After the selection process, these PEs will undergo six days of non-residential training covering various components of RKSK. These trained PEs will be the most important link between service providers and adolescents in the community and hence will be the key to the success of RKSK.

## Module 1

# Adolescent Peer Educator Programme







## Introduction

Adolescence is a promising but delicate phase of life when children need the utmost care and support to realize their full potential. Yet, some of their concerns often go unnoticed. Our culture inhibits an open dialogue between adolescents and adults like parents and teachers, especially on personal subjects like those related to bodily changes, love, marriage and relationships. In such matters adolescents are found to be more comfortable with their peers. During this phase, adolescents also experience frequent mood swings. The feeling of isolation and likelihood of being misunderstood by elders and parents is relatively high.

We recognize that adolescents (irrespective of sex, age, caste, religion, marital status), like adults, have the right to access information, counselling and services on concerns that may impact their health, education, safety and overall well-being.

Hence, RKSK aims to reach out to this special group through their own peers who can be trained on a range of issues and concerns that may be perplexing adolescent minds. The approach adapted will take care to maintain privacy, confidentiality and a non-judgmental attitude towards adolescents seeking help. The approach will focus on enhancing the skills and capacities of adolescents by providing them with information, counselling, curative and preventive services.

## What is Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram?

RKSK covers six broad themes as priority for adolescents. SRH; Mental and emotional well-being; NCDs; Injuries and violence (including gender-based violence); Nutrition; Substance misuse.

The focus is on building the skills and capacities of adolescent girls and boys to resolve their health concerns through rights-based access to service of choice (information, counselling, curative, preventive and/or referral for legal aid in case of violence).



## What is peer education?

Peer education means learning from one's peers or 'education of young people by young people'. It is the process of sharing information among members of a specific community or group of young people to achieve positive outcomes for health and well-being.

## What is the need for peer education in adolescent health?

- During adolescence, one spends or likes to spend maximum time with one's peers.
- Adolescents make friends fast and in large numbers.
- There is a bond with friends that becomes even stronger than other relations. Adolescents often trust the wisdom of friends more than that of the elders including parents.
- If one has to seek help, one approaches a friend who may also be uninformed or may have incorrect information, which could be dangerous. A friend who is informed and trained is an asset.
- This is an effort by the government to reach out to all adolescents in the community through trained PEs who are trusted friends and will be an asset to any adolescent.

## What is the PE Programme in RKSK?



PEs are adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age from the community/village. Each village (1,000 population) is expected to have four PEs, of which two PEs (one male and one female) will be selected to work with adolescents in school, and two PEs will be selected to work with adolescents who are out of school.

The PE Programme aims to reach adolescents in a friendly way through trained adolescent PEs from the community. The Programme will:

- Promote learning from trained peers
- Promote support seeking through these peers
- Help reduce fears or barriers experienced otherwise by adolescents
- Increase access to scientific and reliable sources
- Help establish an information and support network among adolescents across the country

## Who are PEs and how can they help us?

The trained PEs will help adolescents learn about different issues that are important for their health and development, clarify their doubts on various topics and resolve their concerns through scientific facts. PEs can also help adolescents access medical or legal help, if required, without breaching confidentiality.

## What are the roles of a PE?



- To identify and reach out to adolescents between 10 and 19 years of age irrespective of gender, caste, religion or marital status
- To respect every adolescent and assure him/her that you are his/her friend
- To inform and educate adolescents about issues important for their health and development
- To build a rapport in the community and win the trust of peers
- To inform and educate adolescents about RKSK
- To seek support from respected members of the community and parents to carry out his/her role
- To support organization of AHWDs in their community
- To refer adolescents to AFHCs or the nearest Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) as per need
- To form groups of adolescents and hold weekly sessions with them on various themes of RKSK
- To attend the monthly AFC meetings at the sub centre organized by the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM)

Adolescents knowingly or unknowingly spend more time with their friends and peers. Self-initiated interactions with adults are minimal. Some adults look at peer influence with concern while some take their help to reach out to their children. Friends can be good or bad, informed or misinformed, and so their influence may be positive or negative. However, the PE Programme endeavours to utilize the positive aspect of peer influence.

Adolescent peer education is a process whereby well trained and motivated adolescents carry out informal or organized educational activities with their peers (those similar to themselves in age, background or interest). This is carried out over a period of time through either small group interactions or through one-to-one interaction or even when someone seeks help to resolve an issue. It aims at developing knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and skills among peers on a range of issues relevant to them and enables them to be responsible for and protect their own health. It can be conducted in a variety of safe settings like schools, playgrounds, a friend's house, Anganwadi Centre (AWC), Panchayat Bhawan, a tea stall and/or any place where adolescents gather for recreation/leisure. An adolescent health PE has the potential to become a good friend to his/her peers. As a PE one should remember that 'trust' and 'confidence' are the pillars of peer education.

## What is friendly health service?



### 'Friendly' adolescent health service is the one that:

- Respects adolescent clients
- Is equipped to provide adolescents with services as they need and are appealing to them
- Ensures their privacy while discussing problem/s with the service providers
- Tries to minimize waiting hours
- Maintains strict confidentiality about the concerns of the adolescent client
- Is considerate when dealing with adolescents and does not stigmatize them
- Does not make judgments about their behaviour
- Promotes adolescent health check-up to lead a healthy future
- Helps adolescent clients identify the root cause and take positive steps to avoid such situations in future

## What are the qualities of a PE?



A PE is a 'trusted friend' who helps adolescent friends learn about issues pertaining to their health, which they otherwise may not be comfortable discussing with adults or service providers. This trusted friend will never breach trust, will provide privacy, maintain confidentiality and will not have a judgmental attitude. One should also support or protect those who are being targeted.

Some of the other qualities of a PE are given below:

- Ability to keep abreast of new information and knowledge
- Ability to listen and communicate effectively
- Ability to build trust and comfort with peers
- Ability to deal with emotions and difficult situations
- Ability to express emotions
- Adaptive and flexible nature
- Ability to encourage and provide support
- Ability to lead by example
- Ability to look at things from various perspectives
- Sensitivity to gender issues

## How can I become a good PE?

As a PE or a true friend, one has to cultivate and reach out to a large number of adolescents. Some knowledge about them and being sensitive to their likes and dislikes irrespective of their social, educational or economic background would help bring them closer. This further reinforces trust between two people. As a true PE, one should not discriminate against anyone and always try to include all those in the larger youth group who are otherwise excluded in the community. Remembering the names of peers is a step towards this. This shows that you value them and their friendship.

## How can I start my work as a PE?



- As a first step, you need to identify adolescent girls and boys in your community or in a given area. ASHA *didi* will help you in this.
- Establish contact with the adolescents and their families and introduce yourself and the purpose of your work.
- Reach out to adolescents who are out of school or those from marginalized communities. Include all irrespective of religion, caste, class, gender and marital status. Be respectful to them. Record their name, age, education and livelihood, if any.
- Ask for their contact details, address and phone number if they have a phone.
- Form small groups with 15–20 members in each group. There are eight modules which will be covered over a time period of 15 weeks (conducting one session a week for each peer group). Once 15 sessions with a group are completed, you can initiate similar sessions with a new

group and meet the previous group once in two weeks or as required. You can also take the help of some of the members of the previous group in reaching out to new adolescents.

- With the consensus of group members select one volunteer member to assist you in coordinating the group in your absence. He/she will have the contact details of all group members and will convey messages like session days and timing to all members and gather them for the group session. Each group member can act as a volunteer in rotation so that everyone has a chance to practise leadership.
- Fix a date and time for group sessions for each of your groups.
- During the introductory session take assurance from all members that they will attend all 15 sessions. With the consensus of all members, give the group a name. This will help group members share ownership of the group they belong to.
- Both male and female PEs along with their PE coordinator (ASHA *didi*) should contact the village *Sarpanch* or *Mukhiya* and other well-known people like the school principal to provide a clean and safe space for your group sessions such as the Panchayat Bhavan, the local school, the AWC or even a peer's house. The PEs can decide separate days or timings for their group sessions and inform their groups accordingly.

- Along with ASHA *didi* ensure that the space is safe and easily accessible so that group members do not face resistance from parents in visiting the place. The Panchayat Bhavan or the local school would be ideal. Invite your peer mentors - ASHA *didi*, Anganwadi Worker (AWW) *didi*, teacher or others as assigned to join you as this will provide credibility to your work.
- Though most of the sessions are to be conducted separately, with the support of the ASHA *didi* or AWW *didi* or teacher or any person assigned, the male and female PEs can collaborate and organize a joint session, cultural programme, quiz or debates between the male and female members of the two groups on the issues learnt.
- Put up a Question Box for adolescents to drop their queries into. Fix a date to open the Question Box and answer queries with the help of the ASHA/ANM *didi*. Inform all group members in the locality about the day the queries will be answered.

### How shall I introduce myself?

It is important to introduce yourself and your purpose clearly to avoid any confusion among adolescents and their families. Tell them your name and share your address and/or telephone number. Inform them about RKSK, show your badge/cap or an identity that has been provided by the State Health Department. Inform them briefly about your work and how and when you will be contacting them for sessions. Also inform them that, if necessary, the adolescents can contact you for help. Inform the village *Sarpanch/Mukhiya* or other elderly people before starting your work. You can also invite the village elders for an introductory session and invite your mentors to help you with this.



### What is my role as a PE with respect to my peer group members and community?

As a PE, you will be required to play various roles in the community and among your peers:

- Build a rapport with adolescents, tell them that you are new, but may be of some help to them and that you can also put them in touch with the right people if any help or service is required.
- Invite them for sessions or try to establish informal dialogue with them.
- Share your name, work and contact details.

- Conduct weekly sessions as given in the Resource Book (15 sessions over a period of 15 weeks).
- Help adolescents clarify myths and misconceptions with regard to health and protection issues.
- Set up a Question Box in front of the Panchayat Bhavan and school for adolescents to drop their concerns and queries regarding their health. During the first session introduce the Question Box and inform members that no adolescent is expected to write his/her name in the query as answers will be discussed in a group session. During these days the ASHA *didi*, AWW *didi*, ANM *didi* or any other informed person will be available to help answer the queries. Even if by mistake someone writes his/her name, the PE or the invited guest will not disclose it and will maintain confidentiality of the person. All queries, if required, will be neatly typed with answers for the group members to learn from them. The posted queries will be destroyed after they are answered and recorded.
- Provide referral service with regard to medical or protection needs of adolescents in crisis.
- Maintain confidentiality all through.
- Organize awareness activities on issues with the help of group members, and ASHA, AWW, teachers or any person assigned as coordinator/facilitator/mentor and other respected members of the village.
- Inform mentors, the village elders, police or Child Protection Officer (CPO) if you come to know of cases of violence (like child marriage, domestic violence, eve teasing, molestation etc.) in the community, especially against children and adolescents.
- Help victims of violence reach medical care and counselling and gain access to legal aid.

## Who will guide me in my work?

You are not alone in completing this task. You will be supported by the ASHA *didi*, teacher, counsellor, ANM *didi*, AWW *didi*, or any other informed person in the community, who has been oriented on your role as a PE. They will be your mentors and are named peer mentors.

Introduce yourself to your peer mentors, who can be contacted any day with their permission. You can also invite them for the introductory session with your peer group. They can help you in addressing queries posted by the group members in the Question Box. The role of the peer mentors is:

- To support PEs in carrying out their duties
- To help PEs reach out to adolescents (especially those out of school and most marginalized)





- To help PEs introduce their work to village elders including the *Sarpanch/Mukhiya*
- To help PEs get a safe space in the community to conduct groups sessions and peer group interactions, such as the Panchayat Bhavan, the local school or the AWC, that is easily accessible, safe and acceptable to community members
- To help PEs resolve any problem in carrying out their work
- To ensure correctness of messages being delivered by PEs
- To help adolescents clarify myths and misconceptions and answer queries posted by them in the Question Box
- To provide referral to adolescent clients brought by the PEs, if necessary
- To help PEs maintain a daily diary of their work and report at the end of every month

## How will I conduct sessions with identified peers?

You can carry out your role in the following manner:

- Formal group sessions
- Informal small group interactions or one-to-one interactions



You need to conduct group sessions as given in the PE Activity Book over the 12 months. You are expected to take one formal group session once a month. You will also be provided with a checklist to keep track of topics discussed with each of your peer groups.

You can coordinate two groups (if possible) with 15–20 members in each group simultaneously every month.

## What are AFCs?

Adolescent Friendly Clubs are formed at the sub-centre level and meetings organized once a month under the overall guidance of ANM.

These typically cover five villages/5000 population composed of 10-20 PEs/*Saathiyas* each. During these meetings, *Saathiyas* from different villages will meet and clarify issues which they have encountered during their weekly sessions with the help of ANM and other PEs. They can also plan for upcoming sessions and AHWDs.



## What are AHWDs?

AHWD is one of the interventions under RKSK to improve coverage with preventive and promotive interventions for adolescents and increase awareness among them, their parents, families, and community about issues and needs related to adolescent health.



AHWDs are conducted once in every quarter at AWCs/schools/other easily reachable spaces. As a PE, you can help:

- ASHA *didi* in listing all adolescents
- Work closely with ASHA *didi* to conduct village sensitization and mobilize adolescents, parents, families, school teachers for participating in AHWD
- Link back to adolescents in the community for follow-up on specific issues/problems

## How am I expected to report to the PE Coordinator about my work?

You are required to meet the PE Coordinator every week and fill out some forms. These are easy to fill, and in case you have any difficulty your PE Coordinator will help you complete it. You will be provided with the forms by your peer mentors.

### A. For One-to-One Interactions

Date/Month/Year

S. No.	Name of adolescent/stakeholder reached (To be kept confidential)	Sex (M/F)	Age	Issue/problem discussed	Referrals, if any
1.	Sagar	M	15	Effects of smoking	No
2.	Anil	M	17	RTIs and STIs Pain during urination	Yes

### B. For Group Interactions

Date/Month/Year

S. No.	Venue	Name of Participants	Sex	Age	Issues discussed	Referrals, if any

## C. Weekly/Monthly Compilation Sheet

Month and Year

Week	Days							
	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	Total
<b>Week 1</b>								
No. of adolescents reached in the age group 10–14 years (male)								
No. of adolescents reached in the age group 10–14 years (female)								
No. of adolescents reached in the age group 15–19 years (male)								
No. of adolescents reached in the age group 15–19 years (female)								
No. of group sessions conducted								
No. of adolescents referred for AFHC services (male)								
No. of adolescents referred for AFHC services (female)								
No. of cases of GBV reported (male and female)								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child marriage</li> <li>• Sexual abuse</li> <li>• Domestic violence (including torture for dowry)</li> <li>• Corporal punishment</li> </ul>								
No. of community awareness and advocacy campaigns organized								
<b>Week 2</b>								

### D. Action Plan/Content Check List for Peer Educator

(to be maintained for one or more peer groups being facilitated by each PE)

Peer Group: (Name of the group as chosen by the group members)

Sessions/Topics to be covered by PE through Group Sessions (Those covered should be ticked and those not covered can be crossed)

Pubertal changes	Menstruation	Nightfall	Personal hygiene
Gender identity	Respecting diversity	Undernutrition and anaemia	Risk factors for health conditions related to lifestyle
Dealing with peer pressure	Preventing substance misuse (alcohol and smoking)	Managing emotion and stress	Minimizing risks to prevent accidents and injuries
Child marriage	Preventing adolescent pregnancy	RTIs and STIs	Preventing HIV and AIDS
Responding to violence against children/adolescents	Preventing gender-based violence (violence against adolescent girls and women)	Knowing our rights and entitlements	Community sanitation and hygiene

Pre and post-session information:

1. About RKSK, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW)
2. Introducing PEs and peer mentors (ASHA, ANM)
3. Informing about providers and service delivery points (including referral service) to seek services and help if required

## Who can I contact?

Name	Contact No.
ANM	
ASHA	

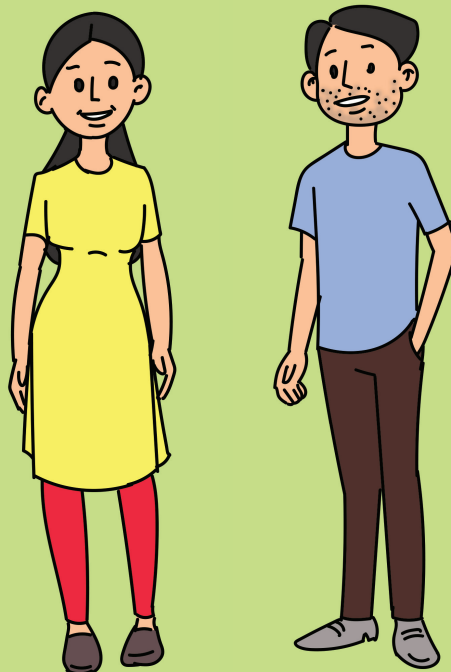
## Module 2

# Growing Up

Pubertal Changes

Menstruation

Genital Hygiene





## What is puberty? What happens during puberty in both girls and boys?

Puberty is the time when the body begins to develop and change from being a child to an adult. Puberty is controlled by hormones, and these hormones affect emotions as well as body.

### Changes that take place in both girls and boys:

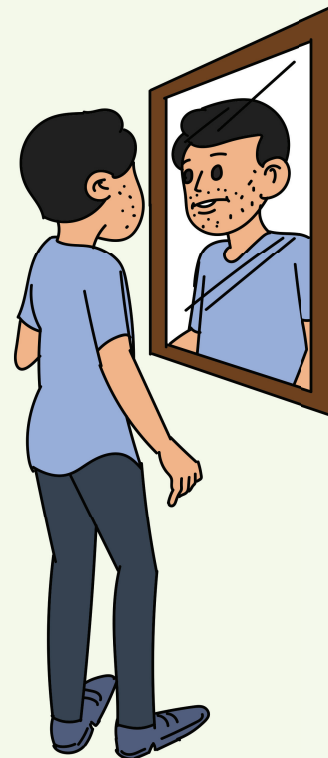
- Skin and hair become oily
- Acne also known as zits or pimples develop on face and body
- More sweating and body odour (when sweat smells bad)
- Hair growth under armpits
- Hair growth around genitals (pubic hair)
- More hair growth on arms and legs
- Pain in arms and legs as there is growth
- Weight and height gain

### Changes that take place only in boys:

- Voice gets lower or deeper and may crack sometimes but that is totally normal and eventually stabilizes
- Adam's apple which is the bump in your throat might get bigger and more visible as this happens
- Penis and testicles get bigger
- Hair may grow on face, chest, and back
- Chest and shoulders get broader
- The area around nipples may start to swell. This can look like breasts developing, but it usually goes away. This happens to about half of the male population, and it can last for a few months or up to a few years
- Ejection of semen from the penis which is a normal part of puberty

### Changes that take place only in girls:

- Breasts develop and become bigger
- Nipples may become darker
- Hips get wider and body may become curvier.
- Start getting menstruation, also known as periods
- A tiny bit of sticky, whitish fluid may come out of the vagina





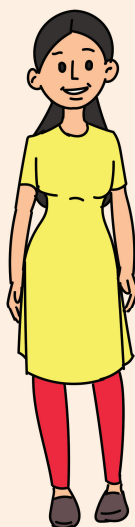
## When do pubertal changes start in boys?

Pubertal changes (physical and sexual maturation of adolescent boys and girls) may start appearing from 10 years of age, while pubic hair usually grow between 11 to 14 years of age. The age for growth spurt varies from one adolescent to another.

If an adolescent and his/her parents feel that the pubertal changes are too early or delayed, they should consult an ANM or doctor.

## Can pubertal changes occur early? When should one consult a doctor?

Yes, in some adolescents pubertal changes may occur early. Pubertal changes among girls before the age of eight years or its absence by 13 years and among boys before the age of nine years and its absence by the age of 14 years may be a cause of concern. In such cases, consultation with a doctor is important to get the right advice.



## Does puberty affect emotions too and make adolescents moody?

Yes, puberty does have an impact on emotions. This change in emotions or 'moody behaviour' is either because of the hormones or the changes taking place, or both! Emotions may seem like they are out of control. One minute you may feel happy and on top of the world, and the next minute you may feel low or sad.

If you feel that you cannot handle your emotions, talk to a helpful adult such as elder sibling, teacher or counsellor.



### **What is an erection? I get an erection when I see a girl in my class, how can I control that?**

An erection is when blood flows into the penis faster than it flows out, and makes the spongy tissue in the penis swell. When a boy has an erection, the penis gets bigger and harder. It may stick straight out, or curve up or down. Erections can happen at any point in your life, even when you are a baby. However, you start getting erections more often during puberty. Erections can happen sometimes due to sexual excitement or touching and stimulating the penis and sometimes it may happen due to none of these reasons. It is nothing to feel shy or embarrassed about. Boys may experience an erection during puberty while sitting in the class, walking on the street, just anywhere and not because they are thinking of something specific.

### **What are hormones?**

Hormones are the body's special chemical messengers that help it carry out certain processes. Hormones carry messages through the blood to the various organs of the body to help carry out their functions. There are many different types of hormones that are responsible for different functions of the body. One of these messages the hormones carry is telling the various organs of your body that it is time to start changing and begin the process of puberty, meaning growing up and developing the body to become an adult.

### **What is nocturnal emission/nightfall?**

Formation and discharge of semen can occur during mid-adolescence and manifests as nocturnal emission.

It signifies reproductive maturity for an adolescent boy. Nocturnal emission, also known as nightfall, is normal and does not require any form of treatment. Still many adolescent boys are stressed about this and go for treatments that may be extremely harmful to their health.



### **Is nocturnal emission harmful?**

It does not represent loss of manhood or sexual weakness; it is essentially harmless and does not require any treatment. Adolescent boys need to be reassured so that it does not become a cause for embarrassment or undue worry. As the body continuously produces semen and sperms, the loss through nocturnal emission is replaced.

### **How and whom to contact to get rid of concerns related to nocturnal emission?**

Nocturnal emission is a natural process and hence does not require any treatment. Its occurrence/frequency will gradually decrease as one attains maturity. If one still has doubts about it, one should consult a doctor at the nearest hospital/dispensary.

### **Why do we have pubic hair near our genitals?**

Pubic hair appears at puberty. It is an obvious physical sign of sexual maturity. Pubic hair serves a similar function as eyelashes or nose hair. It traps dirt, debris, and potentially harmful microorganisms.

In addition, hair follicles produce sebum, an oil which actually prevents bacteria from reproducing.

### **Is breast development normal in boys?**

In some boys, breast development can become prominent; this is normal and will subside eventually on its own.

However, if they are too prominent the condition is called 'gynaecomastia' and needs treatment. Sometimes extreme obesity can also lead to apparent increase of male breast tissue.

### **What should be the size of the penis?**

Concerns about the size of penis and testicles are common among boys, especially in relation to sexual abilities. The size of the penis has no relation to sexual performance. The penis doubles in length and width during adolescence with most rapid growth taking place between 14 and 16 years. The width or length of the penis varies from person to person. The average penis size (when flaccid) is 3–4 inches in length and 1 inch in diameter. The penis may also have slight curvature to left or right, which is normal. The size of the two testicles may also vary and the left one generally hangs lower than the right.

## What is masturbation?

Masturbation is simply when a person touches his/her own body, especially private parts for sexual pleasure or happiness – because it feels good.

## Why do people masturbate?

During puberty, as we discussed earlier there are a lot of hormones released in the body. These hormones also cause the reproductive or sexual organs to become more active, and feelings of excitement or pleasure may develop. These feelings can also cause us to masturbate, which is normal.

## Is masturbation bad for us?

Masturbation is not unhealthy or bad if it is done in moderation and in private. If masturbation is being used as an alternative to other means of relaxation or positive social activities and affecting functionality, then a counsellor or therapist should be consulted.

## Is it normal for adolescents to fall in love?

Yes, adolescents often fall in love. They may feel attracted to a friend or a person of the opposite or same sex. It is natural to have special feelings for someone. It is important for adolescents to understand that such relationships are based on mutual consent, trust, commitment and respect. It is good to express your feelings to the person you feel for but always in a respectful way. One should also be prepared to accept the other person's decision to not be friends with dignity and decency. Boys should know that when a girl says 'No' it means 'No'. One should learn to respect the personal space of a girl/boy as the case may be.



Feelings during adolescent years may change over time as one grows into an adult. This is also normal and one should learn to accept it. Adolescents should try and understand one another and help each other pursue their educational or professional dreams.

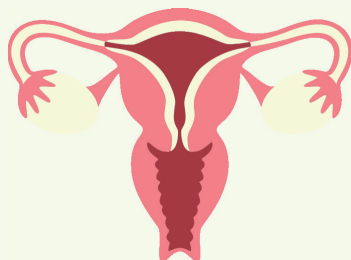
### **Is it okay to feel attracted to many people at the same time?**

As you grow, there will be lots of changes taking place in your body that may affect your daily life, feelings and relationships with others. As this happens, it is normal to start having strong feelings of attraction towards others. This attraction can be towards one person or many and it is normal. You may feel shy or embarrassed or conscious or nervous when you see them and talk to them.

You do have control over how you react or your behaviour. It is important to remember that the behaviour you choose shows respect towards the other person's personal boundaries. It is not alright to cross these personal boundaries just because you are attracted towards them. It is also a good idea to talk to a helpful adult about these feelings. They may help you understand and handle it in a safe manner.

### **How can young boys keep their genital area clean?**

**Washing the penis and testicles:** The penis should be washed gently with normal water every day. If soap is applied it should be a mild one, as harsh soaps cause soreness. Adolescent boys having foreskin should pull it back gently and wash underneath. If the skin under the foreskin is not washed correctly, smegma (a natural lubricant keeping the penis moist) may begin to gather and cause bacterial growth emitting a bad smell. In acute cases, the penis head may become red and swollen causing pain, irritation and discomfort. Deodorants or talcum powder should be avoided as they may collect under the foreskin. For circumcised adolescents care should be taken while cleaning the penis; washing the penis gently with normal or warm water once a day is sufficient. One should not forget to clean the base of the penis and testicles as sweat and dirt may cause irritation.



### **How does menstruation take place?**

In females during the menstrual cycle, the inner lining of the uterus grows and thickens. At the same time, the female egg is growing in the ovaries. When the egg matures, it leaves the ovary to reach the uterus through fallopian tubes. If the egg is not fertilized and pregnancy does not occur, non-fertilized egg breaks and the thickened lining of the uterus is shed and exits the body through vagina as a mixture of blood and tissue. This is called menstruation.

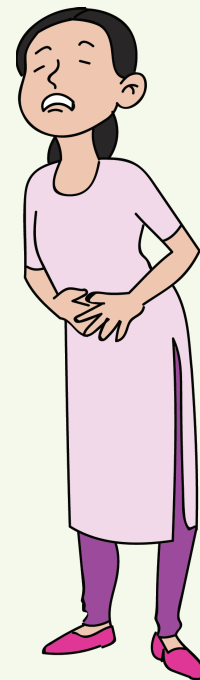
## When do pubertal changes start?

Pubertal changes (physical and sexual maturation of adolescent boys and girls) may start appearing from nine years of age (largely height or weight gain). However, secondary sexual characteristics like development of breasts, development of hair on external genitalia, development in size of uterus, ovaries along with physiological changes like menstruation usually start between 11 and 13 years of age. The age for growth spurt varies from one adolescent to another. If an adolescent and his/her parents feel that the pubertal changes are early or delayed, they should consult a doctor or ANM.

## What should adolescent girls do to overcome fear, pain and discomfort during menstruation?

Adolescent girls should not feel ashamed or guilty of having menstruation; they should follow their daily routines with a bit of extra nutrition and hygiene during these days.

- The pain in the lower abdomen and heaviness is common and can be eased by having hot water bath, use of hot bottle, hot drinks, antispasmodic medicines and light exercise like walking, stretching etc. This will help improve blood circulation and lessen pain.
- One should use sanitary napkins to absorb the blood loss. In case sanitary napkins are not available, one can use clean, old, soft cotton cloth, washed and dried in the sun. Napkins should be changed at least three times a day.
- Sanitary napkins can be disposed off by dumping them into a deep pit, burning or wrapping in paper and putting them in the waste bin for garbage processing.
- One should bathe daily and clean genital area with water and mild soap.



## At what age does a girl normally have her first period?

Most girls have their first period between 11 and 14 years of age. Some girls may have it as early as eight years while some may have it as late as 16 years. If you are more than 16 years old and your periods haven't started then a doctor should be consulted.

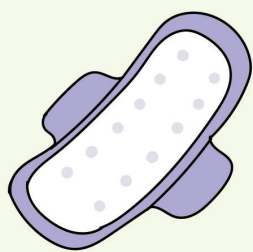
### What is a menstrual cycle?

The time between the first day of a menstrual period and the beginning of the next one is referred to as a menstrual cycle. The length of the menstrual cycle varies from girl to girl. For most girls their menstrual cycle is close to 28 days. It appears as if periods happen once every month. For some girls, the menstrual cycle can be as short as 21 days while for some girls it can be as long as 35 days.

### Why are periods irregular?

Hormones play a critical role in the menstrual process. When menstruation first starts during the adolescent years, these hormone systems are not yet fully developed. It may take around two years for periods to become regular. Before periods become regular, early or delayed periods are common. Sometimes an irregular period may be due to slight hormonal imbalances. It is best to contact a doctor to find out more about any specific concerns that you might have.

### From where can one get disposable sanitary napkins?



In some states, MoHFW supports menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls (10-19 years) through a scheme, under which the price of sanitary napkins is subsidized at Rs. 6 per pack (six pads in each pack). These are available with ASHA *didi* in the village. Besides this, many states are distributing napkins through ANMs/AWWs.

- All chemists and general stores keep sanitary napkins. These can be chosen and purchased from a wide range to suit need, comfort and budget.
- AFHS at the sub-centre, Primary Health Centre (PHC) and Community Health Centre (CHC) as well as the ANM, ASHA and AWW *didis* provide counselling and services on menstrual hygiene management.

### Can a girl take bath during menstruation?

Yes, bathing during menstruation is important to maintain hygiene. Menstruation is not 'unclean' or 'polluting'. If managed hygienically, girls can carry out all activities including schooling, outdoor games, cooking, preparing pickles, and performing regular duties with comfort and dignity.

**Does the onset of menstruation mean that a girl is ready for marriage and pregnancy?**

The onset of menstruation signifies internal changes in the adolescent girl. It does not mean that the girl has the overall maturity to carry the pregnancy and give birth to a child. A woman should not have her first pregnancy before attaining at least 20 years of age. In our society, child marriage is very common and adolescent girls are at high risk of unplanned and unsafe pregnancies.

**What should a girl do if her breasts are not well developed?**

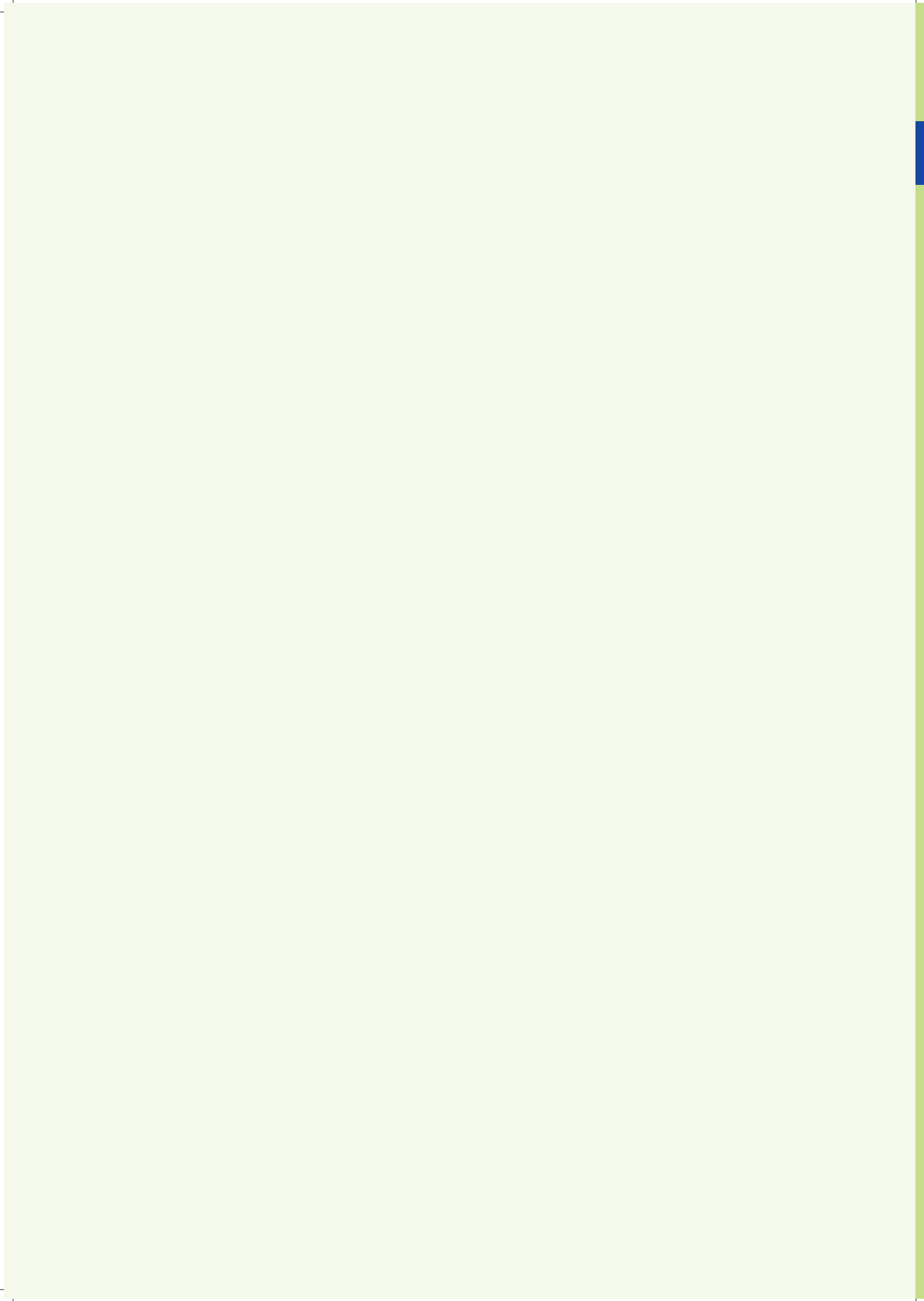
It is normal to have small or flat breasts. It is also normal that the size of the two breasts may vary initially but this is not a cause for concern. One should not worry unnecessarily. In case of excessive worry, consult an ANM/doctor.

**How can young girls keep their genital area clean?**

Washing the external female genitalia: The genitalia should be washed using normal water; if soap is used, it should be mild. Make sure to wash it from the front towards the back. A slight vaginal smell is normal and can be checked naturally by maintaining hygiene.

**Who can I contact?**

Name	Contact No.





## Module 3

# Health & Nutrition

Undernutrition

Anaemia

Lifestyle Health Conditions





## What is nutrition?

Nutrition is the study of nutrients in food, how the body uses nutrients, and the relationship between diet, health and disease.

## What are nutrients?

Nutrients are compounds in foods essential to life and health, providing us with energy, the building blocks for repair and growth and substances necessary to regulate chemical processes. There are six major nutrients: Carbohydrates, Fats, Proteins, Vitamins, Minerals, Water.

## What are macro and micronutrients?

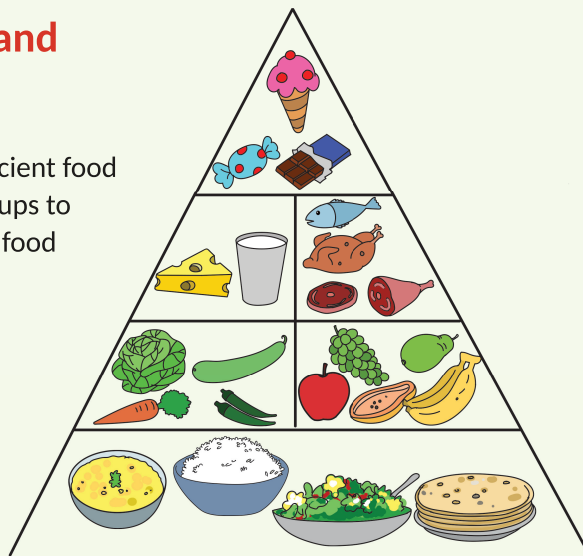
Macronutrients are nutrients needed by the body in larger quantities, e.g., carbohydrates, proteins, fats.

Micronutrients are needed by the body in smaller amounts, e.g., vitamins and minerals

## What is good nutrition and balanced diet?

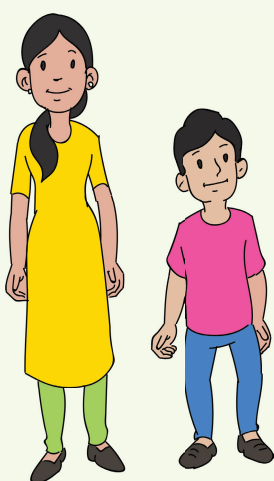
Adolescents need to consume sufficient food from each of the different food groups to meet all the nutrient needs. (Show food pyramid)

- The tip of the pyramid shows foods that are high in fats (oils) and sugar. These are energy giving but are needed in small quantities in the daily diet.
- Next, milk and milk products such as curd, *paneer* and buttermilk along with meat, poultry, fish and eggs are body building foods and can be consumed in moderate amount.
- Seasonal vegetables and fruits which are grown and available locally should be taken in adequate amount.
- The base of the pyramid shows that these foods should be consumed in large quantities like wheat, rice and pulses. They are the main source of energy giving food and provide natural fibres also.
- Drink plenty of water to keep yourself hydrated.



## What is the estimated average requirement of nutrients for adolescents?

	MALE			FEMALE		
	10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	16-18 yrs	10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	16-18 yrs
Energy (kcal/d)	2200	2850	3320	2060	2400	2500
Protein (gms/d)	27	36	45	27	35	37
Calcium (mg)	650	800	850	650	800	850
Iron (mg)	12	15	18	16	17	18



## What is malnutrition?

Malnutrition refers to deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients. The term malnutrition addresses three broad groups of conditions:

- Undernutrition, which includes wasting (low weight-for-height), stunting (low height-for-age) and underweight (low weight-for-age);
- Micronutrient-related malnutrition, which includes micronutrient deficiencies (a lack of important vitamins and minerals) or micronutrient excess; and
- Overweight, obesity and diet-related NCDs (such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers).

## Why do adolescents need nutritious food?

- Nutritional need is higher during adolescence than in childhood or adulthood.
- Girls and boys gain up to 50 per cent of their adult weight and more than 20 per cent of their adult height, and 50 per cent of their adult skeletal/bone mass during adolescence.
- To ensure calcium levels in bones.
- Balanced nutritional habits during adolescence prevent weak/brittle bones, obesity, heart disease and diabetes later on in life.
- Girls require additional iron supplementation to make up for blood loss during menstruation and calcium to strengthen bones.
- Good nutrition supports timely sexual maturation.
- Adolescence is the perfect stage to form good eating habits and set the tone for a lifetime of healthy eating.



## What are the signs of undernutrition and what could be its consequences if not treated?

### Signs of undernutrition:

- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Poor concentration in studies or other work
- Dry skin
- Spongy bleeding gums
- Thin and soft nails
- Weak immune system (falling sick often)
- Fragile bones that break easily



### Consequences of undernutrition:

- Growth failure and stunting
- Delayed sexual development
- Reduced muscle mass and body strength
- Impaired memory/memory loss/forgetfulness
- Poor school performance
- Pregnancy and birth complications in girls
- School absenteeism
- Anaemia
- Scurvy
- Micronutrient deficiencies

## What is anaemia?

Anaemia refers to low haemoglobin level in the blood. A common cause of anaemia is iron deficiency. Iron is very important for production of haemoglobin (found in red blood cells), which carries oxygen from the lungs to different parts of the body. Since all human cells depend on oxygen for survival, anaemia can affect many body functions. The haemoglobin level in adolescents should not be less than 12 gm/dl.

### Common reasons for anaemia among adolescents:

- Insufficient intake of iron, folate and foods rich in Vitamin C
- Hookworm infestation
- Loss of blood through menstrual bleeding in adolescent girls
- Frequent episodes of malaria/illnesses



#### Signs and symptoms of anaemia:

- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Pale skin, palm, tongue, lower eyelid, nails, etc.
- Shortness of breath
- Cold hands and feet
- Lack of appetite

### How can we check our haemoglobin levels?

You may contact ANM or ASHA *didi* of your area or visit the nearest health facility.



### How can we prevent anaemia?

#### Anaemia can be prevented if you:

- Eat iron-rich foods. Non-vegetarian foods like meat, chicken, eggs are high in iron. Vegetarians could have iron-rich foods like spinach, *bajra*, beans and oil seeds like *kalonji*.
- Take blue Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) tablets weekly that are provided in schools and AWCs under WIFS Programme. Maintain a gap of at least 30 minutes between meals and intake of IFA tablet.
- Do not take tea/coffee with meals or for at least one hour after taking iron tablets and meals.
- Eat Vitamin C rich foods such as guava, *amla*, orange, lemon, sprouts to increase iron absorption in your body.
- Maintain personal hygiene and sanitation.
- On some days food can be cooked in iron utensils.
- Cook food on slow fire and in covered pans. This helps reduce nutrient loss (such as in a pressure cooker).
- Wear footwear to prevent worm infestation; take a course of deworming medication in case worm infestation is suspected.
- Prevent breeding of mosquitoes to protect from malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases.

## What is Vitamin B12 deficiency and its consequences?

- Vitamin B12 is crucial for nerve tissue health, brain function, and the production of red blood cells. Cobalamin is another name for Vitamin B12.
- A deficiency or insufficiency can occur when levels of Vitamin B12 become too low to meet the demands of the body. This can lead to fatigue, breathlessness, numbness, poor balance and memory trouble and can even progress to irreversible neurological issues if left untreated.



## What is Body Mass Index?

Body mass index (BMI) is a person's weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in metres. BMI is an inexpensive and easy screening method for weight category - underweight, healthy weight, overweight, and obesity.

**Formula:**  $\text{weight (kg)} / [\text{height (m)}]^2$

With the metric system, the formula for BMI is weight in kilograms divided by height in metres squared. Because height is commonly measured in centimetres, divide height in centimetres by 100 to obtain height in metres.

Example: Weight = 68 kg, Height = 165 cm (1.65 m)

Calculation:  $68 \div (1.65)^2 = 24.98$

## What are the risk factors to lifestyle health conditions?

Lifestyle health conditions also known as non-communicable health conditions are caused due to risk factors associated with changing lifestyles. Adolescents and youth in particular, spend a lot of time before computers, televisions, on mobile phones and social media, which results in a sedentary lifestyle with very little physical activity. Adolescents are also easily influenced by messages from media and advertising to follow a lifestyle that may not always be healthy. The key risk factors are unhealthy diet (foods with low or no nutritional value) including packaged and processed foods, physical inactivity (sedentary lifestyle), consumption of tobacco and alcohol.

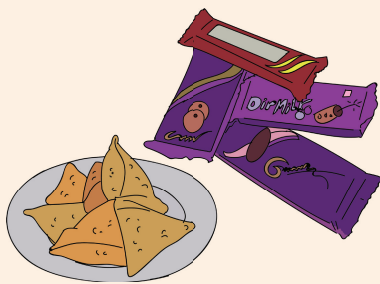
### How does an unhealthy diet affect one's health?

An unhealthy diet is low on nutrition and high on calories. Intake of an unhealthy diet may hamper adolescent growth and development and may make adolescents vulnerable to many lifestyle diseases.

### What diseases can one acquire due to risk factors associated with lifestyle?

Most common lifestyle diseases include obesity, diabetes (high blood sugar), hypertension (high blood pressure), heart disease etc.

### What is an unhealthy diet?



An unhealthy diet consists of foods with low or no nutritional value. These foods are also known as junk food and include items like aerated drinks, chocolates, chips, noodles, oily food like samosas, food made of processed cereals like *maida* and packaged foods. Junk food is high on the 3Ss (sugar, salt and sour tastes), which provide empty calories and increase one's appetite. Therefore, avoid overeating and unhealthy snacking.

### How can physical activity and sports help prevent lifestyle health conditions?

Physical exercise is important for both adolescent girls and boys. Girls should equally be encouraged to participate in outdoor games and regular physical exercise. Physical activities like sports and exercise help burn calories more efficiently and improve muscular strength and blood circulation. The key to health is to burn what you eat. If you are consuming more than what you are using, you will end up being overweight or obese. Hence, one should try including physical exercise or sport like cycling, football, running, swimming etc., to balance calorie consumption.



Exercising for 60 minutes for at least five days in a week is also important.



## Who can I contact?

Name	Contact No.



## Module 4

# Healthy Mind for Healthy Behaviour

Healthy Behaviour

Healthy Mind



## How does one maintain an active body and mind?



Physical activities like exercise, yoga, dance, martial arts, outdoor games like football, basketball, running etc., help us build stamina, fight fatigue and obesity and support the growth of bones and muscles. They also add to our confidence level. One can also explore new games and ways to support learning abilities.

One can pursue hobbies like music, poetry or painting and keep up with current events by reading the daily newspaper and listening to news programmes. These activities encourage our thinking and learning abilities, keeping us stress free, confident and happy.

## How can we help girls engage in outdoor games and recreational/fun activities?

Many adolescent girls are not allowed to participate in outdoor games and activities. Elders fear that they are not safe outside their homes. This is not good for their physical health, self-esteem and self-confidence, which are important components of healthy growth. As responsible members of the community, we should ensure that girls are not teased or harassed physically or verbally. Parents should seek help from community members and police to act against the perpetrators. This will contribute to community and government's efforts to make public places safe and friendly for girls. Girls should not feel shy/afraid to report such incidents to their family members.



## What is a relationship? How do I know if a relationship is safe for me?



A relationship is a way in which two or more people are connected to each other. Relationships can be healthy or harmful.

A healthy relationship is based on trust, mutual respect and where both feel safe with each other.

A few more characteristics of healthy relationships are:

- Listens to you and understands you
- Cares about how you feel and what you think
- Is honest with you
- Does not talk behind your back
- Keeps promises made to you
- Encourages you to do your best
- Respects your privacy and personal boundaries

A harmful relationship is a relationship in which there is no respect towards each other and one or both the persons feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

A few more characteristics of harmful relationships are:

- Uses physical force, although not always, to get you to do what he/she wants
- Lies or is dishonest with you
- Gossips or spreads rumours about you
- Forces you to do things that you do not want to do
- Hurts you or people by making fun or calling names



### Is it okay for boys to cry or be soft-spoken?

Yes, a boy or a man can cry to vent his feelings. He can be soft-spoken or shy as well. Being rude or insensitive is not macho. It is normal that some boys may have soft voices or like to cook or design; things generally linked with girls. Taking on different gender roles does not mean that a boy is not male. The same is true for girls who are outspoken or like to dress like boys or play games more linked with boys. It is wrong to label such adolescents as 'sissy' or 'tomboyish'.

### What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone hurts another person physically or emotionally on purpose repeatedly either by word or action. Bullying is often something that is done by someone who is usually more powerful or is in a position of strength such as, someone who is bigger, older, richer or more popular. A bully may try to make the other person feel uncomfortable or hurt them physically either by pushing, hitting and kicking or by spreading rumours and teasing them by name-calling.



### What is peer pressure?

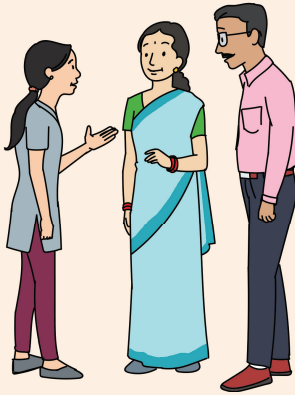
Peer pressure is influence that a peer group, observers or individuals exert which encourages others to change their attitudes, values or behaviour to conform to the group's norms.

### Is peer pressure always negative?

No. It is not always negative. Peer pressure can also be positive such as pressure to volunteer for a helpful reason, respect elders or excel in academics. You can make a difference by creating positive peer pressure, especially when you feel negative peer pressure around you.

### What can be done to handle peer pressure?

Be assertive and express thoughts, ideas and feelings; say 'No' without guilt/fear; set your own priorities i.e., choosing how you spend your time; asking for what you want; being able to stand up for what you believe in.



### How do you talk to your peers, parents and family to deal with pressure?

- Be honest and open when communicating with your parents. Tell them that you feel pressurized to do things that seem wrong or risky and don't know how to deal with them.
- If you cannot communicate directly with your parents, try to communicate with someone in the family who understands you, maybe an older sibling, uncle, aunt, etc. with whom you have a good relation.

### What does it mean to have a boyfriend or a girlfriend?

The words boyfriend and girlfriend are commonly used to describe a special relationship. It could be a relationship where an adolescent feels attracted to someone and wants to spend time with them. In India, under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012, adolescents cannot give permission or consent to anyone to touch or look at their private parts and they too cannot do the same to anyone else.

### Is it okay to have a boyfriend or girlfriend?

It is unsafe to jump into a relationship without thinking or just because an adolescent thinks it might be fun. Relationships are different from what is shown in movies, so it is best to first think about what they are getting into. Sometimes, adolescents may feel pressured to be in this relationship, maybe by their friends, or even the other person who likes them and wants to be in a relationship with them.



## What is substance misuse and who can (mis)use it?

A drug is a chemical substance which when consumed by the body, alters its function physically and/or psychologically (excluding food and water). It could be a pharmaceutical preparation or a naturally occurring substance (like *bhaang*) used primarily to alter the physical and mental functioning of an individual.

### Types of users:

1. Experimenters: Begin using drugs largely because of peer pressure or curiosity and usually confine their use to recreational party settings
2. Compulsive users: Devote considerable time and energy or money into getting high, talk incessantly about drug use and become experts on street drugs

**Substance misuse:** It refers to the excessive use of and dependence on a stimulant, depressant, chemical substance, herb (plant) leading to effects that are harmful to the individual's physical and/or mental health or the welfare of others.

**Addiction:** Repeated use of substance to the extent that the user (addict) is periodically or chronically intoxicated, shows a compulsion to take the preferred substance/s, has great difficulty in modifying his/her behaviour and exhibits determination to obtain the substance, like *bhaang*, alcohol, tobacco by any means.

## What are the symptoms of a drug user?

If someone is using drugs, you might notice changes in how the person looks or acts. The most obvious sign of addiction is the strong need to have a particular drug or substance. The adolescent user may lose interest in studies and school



## What are common mental health problems during adolescence?

Anxiety, depression, learning disorders are some of the most common ones.

## What are the symptoms of mental health issues?

Declining academic performance, high-risk behaviours, generalized aches and pains, dizziness, trembling and sweating, sleep problems or unexplained tiredness, mood swings, sadness are some symptoms.

- Have an unexplained change in personality or attitude such as sudden mood swings, irritability and anger
- Have trouble concentrating on work or studies
- Have an unexplained need for money and start stealing or selling belongings
- Appear fearful, anxious or suspicious for no reason
- Have tremors, slurred speech or impaired coordination

## My friends pressurize me a lot to indulge in substance misuse. What can I do?

Learn and practise saying 'No'. Do not feel guilty for refusing something that you are forced to do. Good friends never force one to do anything one is not comfortable with. If there is risk of physical harm in saying 'No', do not hesitate to leave your friend's group or to take the help of elders.



## My friends say that tobacco and alcohol will make me an adult. Is this true?

No. To be an adult you should be able to take responsibility for your actions. Under the influence of alcohol no one is able to do so.

## How one can get rid of the habit of using harmful substances?

One may contact AFHC or school counsellors and school teachers. There are helpline numbers also to support quitting.

Helpline numbers - National Tobacco Quit Line Services (NTQLS) - 1800 112 356 (TOLL FREE)



## What are the commonly known and used substances and their short-term and long-term effects?

Substance	Short-Term Effects	Long-Term Effects
<p>Alcohol</p> <p>It is another commonly used drug made through fermentation of fruits and/or grains.</p> <p>It is a depressant that slows down the activity of the central nervous system.</p>	<p>At first, the person feels relaxed and less inhibited but gradually the person's reflexes become slower. The person may experience mood changes.</p>	<p>A person who drinks heavily on a regular basis may develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inflamed stomach or pancreas</li> <li>• Severe damage to the liver</li> </ul>
<p>Tobacco</p> <p>It consists of crushed and dried leaves of the tobacco plant.</p> <p>It is one of the most commonly used drugs.</p> <p>Forms of tobacco: Cigarettes, smokes, sticks, butts, <i>gutka</i>, <i>beedi</i>, <i>hookah</i>.</p>	<p>If the person drinks a large amount of alcohol on a single occasion (binge drinking), the respiratory system may slow down or even stop, causing death (acute alcohol poisoning). Hangover may occur. (Severe discomfort in the form of headache, low blood sugar levels, dehydration and irritation of the lining of the digestive system occurs the next day).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certain cancers of the gastrointestinal tract</li> <li>• Heart disease, high blood pressure</li> <li>• Brain and nerve damage</li> </ul> <p>Repeated use of alcohol makes the user periodically or chronically intoxicated and the user has great difficulty in modifying his/her behaviour and exhibits determination to obtain the substance.</p>

## What are the other harmful substances?

Marijuana, hashish, *ganja*, *charas*, *bhaang*, weed/pot, other edible cannabinoids, opium, heroin/*afeem/smack*/brown sugar, buprenorphine, codeine, petrol/kerosene, paints, adhesives, varnishes, dry cleaning agents, nail polish removers, typewriter and correction fluids, etc

## What are the common reasons for stress during adolescence?

Adolescence is a stressful phase for many. The reasons could be any of the following: fear of exams and career plans, concerns about physical changes, falling in love, getting admission in a good school/college, pressure by employers, pressure by friends, unfair behaviour of elders, risk of violence etc., and trying to maintain good relations with everyone during this process.



### **How can we resolve problems?**

Problem solving enables a person to deal with them constructively in his/her life. Problems left unresolved can cause mental stress and can affect one's body with fatigue, headaches etc. In such situations it is better to try and resolve the issues by talking to different people like PEs, parents, relatives, doctor, teacher, social worker or an elder member of the community.

### **What are healthy ways to manage stress?**

- Manage your time, identify your strengths and limitations, say 'No' to pressures and avoid topics that can lead to arguments and stress.
- Alter stress situations by being assertive, expressing your feelings rather than bottling them up.
- Engage in fun activities that help in dispelling stress such as music, sports, dance, yoga etc.
- Take help from friends, parents, teachers or other elders.

### **What are conflicts and why do they occur?**

Conflict refers to some form of disagreement arising within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted or unacceptable to one or more members of the same group. Conflict is a natural part of our lives and very common during adolescence, as adolescents think differently and have different perspectives.

### **What are some peaceful ways to resolve a conflict?**

- Stop the argument when you feel you are getting angry and may say something that you will regret later.
- Stay calm and take deep breaths.
- Listen to the other person's point of view.
- Look for a compromise; think of possible solutions that satisfy both sides. Remember compromise is not a win-win situation always.
- Ask someone else to help (teacher, parents, other friends, etc.).

## What is anger?



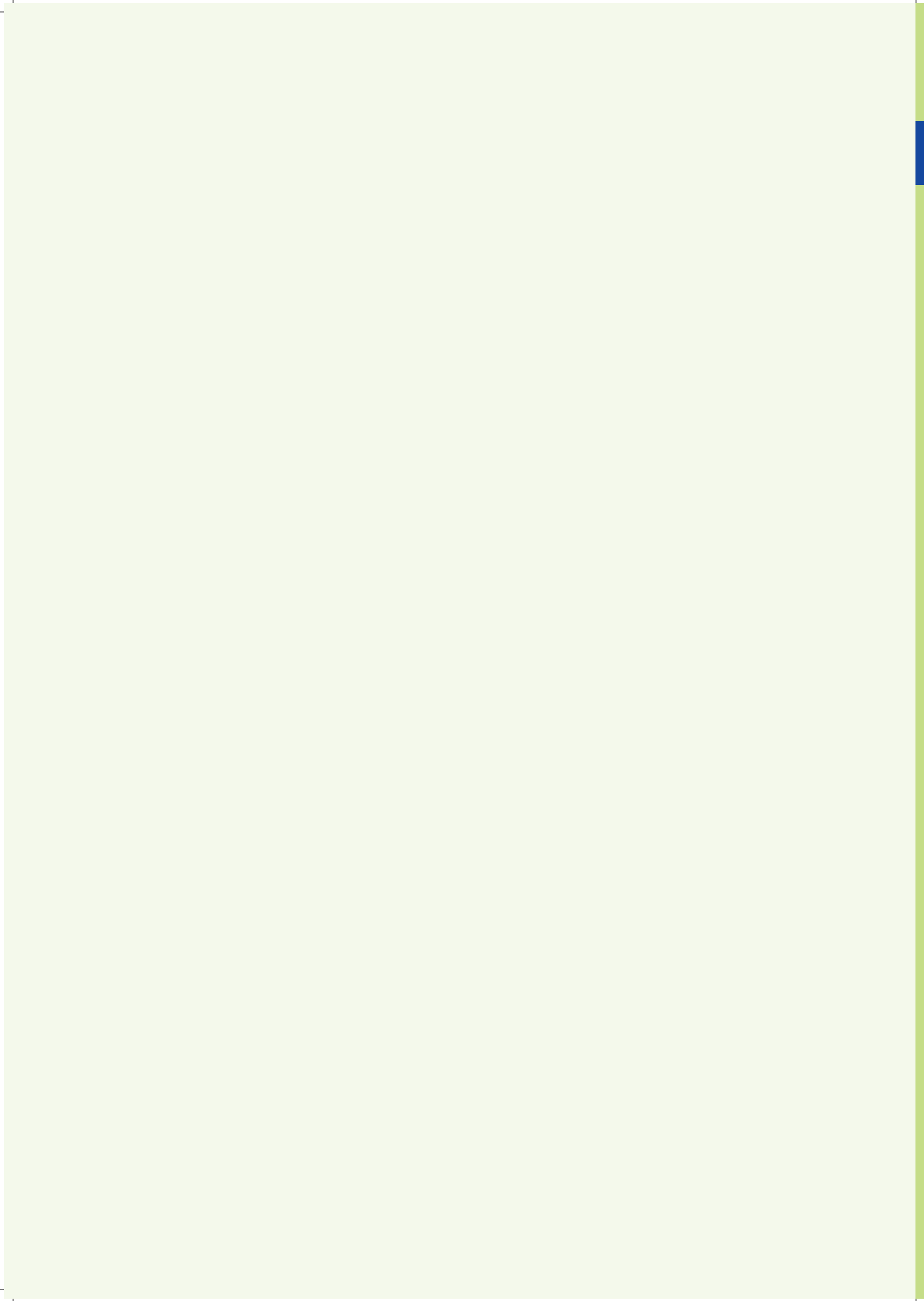
- If conflict is left unsettled it causes anger.
- Anger is a negative emotion that can be managed in two ways: bottling it up inside or letting it out.
- It is important to acknowledge, accept, manage and appropriately express feelings rather than being overwhelmed by their strength.
- When anger comes out, it can harm oneself, damage friendships, interfere with learning, disturb family relationships and limit participation in group activities/team work.

## I feel like committing suicide at times. What can I do in such situations?

- Suicide is not a safe way to express anger, sadness, fear, embarrassment or anything else you could be feeling. You may feel that there is no solution to the problem you are facing and the only way out is by ending your life. Remember that there is no single solution to any problem, there are many solutions.
- You can seek help from helpful adults, talk to them about what is troubling you. Your safety and your life are of prime importance. You can also call on some helpline numbers in India. NIMHANS Helpline Toll-free number: 080 – 4611 0007

## Who can I contact?

Name	Contact No.



## Module 5

# Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health

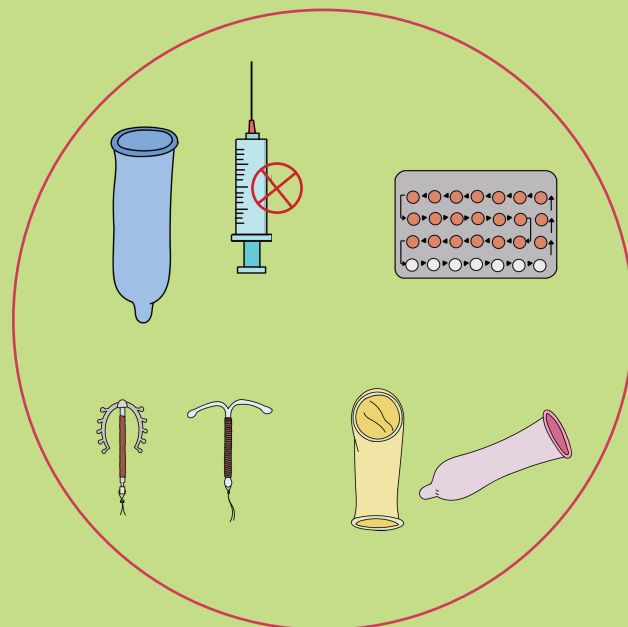
### Transmitted Infections



### Pregnancy & Contraception



### Termination of Pregnancy





## What are the signs of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)?

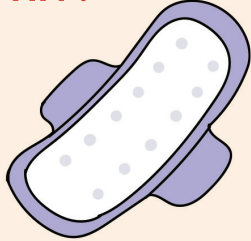


Symptoms in Males	Symptoms in Females
<p>Remember, in case of unprotected sexual intercourse, get yourself tested. You need not wait for symptoms to appear.</p> <p>Common symptoms are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discharge from penis (green, yellow, pus-like)</li><li>• Pain or burning during urination</li><li>• Swollen and painful glands/lymph nodes in the groin; blisters and open sores (ulcers) in the genital area</li><li>• Warts in the genital area</li><li>• Rashes on limbs</li><li>• Itching or tingling sensation in the genital area</li><li>• Sores in the mouth</li><li>• Heaviness and discomfort in testicles</li></ul> <p>There are no symptoms for HIV infection, it can only be screened for and confirmed through a test.</p>	<p>Remember, in case of unprotected sexual intercourse, get yourself tested. You need not wait for symptoms to appear.</p> <p>Common symptoms are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Irregular bleeding</li><li>• Constant lower abdominal/pelvic pain</li><li>• Abnormal vaginal discharges (white, yellow, green, frothy, bubbly, curd-like, pus-like and odorous)</li><li>• Swelling and/or itching of the vagina</li><li>• Burning sensation during urination</li><li>• Sores on genital parts</li><li>• Painful or difficult intercourse</li></ul> <p>The infection in women may be some times asymptomatic until much later.</p> <p>There are no symptoms for HIV infection, it can only be screened for and confirmed through a test.</p>

## What are the consequences of leaving STIs untreated?

Untreated STIs can lead to some serious health consequences including pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), infertility and even cancer. They can also lead to complications during pregnancy and in newborns and death in case of syphilis. STIs like HIV cannot be treated but can be managed on timely diagnosis.

## How does one get infected by RTI, STI or HIV?



Reproductive Tract Infections (RTIs) may occur either due to poor personal hygiene or unprotected sexual contact. Not all RTIs are sexually transmitted. Some infections are due to poor sanitation and hygiene that includes using unclean toilets, sanitary pads, improper cleaning of genitalia during daily bath and for girls especially during menstruation or unsafe abortion.

**Remember, even the first unprotected sexual encounter can lead to STIs and HIV.**

## What is HIV and what is AIDS?

HIV	AIDS
<p>HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) that causes AIDS. HIV attacks the body's immune system which helps the body fight off infections and other diseases. Over a period of time, HIV gradually destroys this ability of the body, making people more susceptible to different infections like tuberculosis and diarrhoea but with weak immunity to fight them.</p> <p>H = Human (only found in humans)  I = Immunodeficiency (weakens the immune system)  V = Virus (a type of germ)</p>	<p>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is the stage wherein HIV infection brings the immunity of the body down to a very low level, when an infected person becomes susceptible to different minor but possibly fatal serious infections.</p> <p>A = Acquired (to get something that you are not born with)  I = Immuno (the body's defense system, which provides protection from infections)  D = Deficiency (a defect or weakness, lack of something)  S = Syndrome (a group of signs and symptoms in a disease)</p>

## Does HIV kill a person?

HIV does not kill a person but leads to a condition wherein body immunity becomes extremely low and in such conditions the body is not able to fight against the infection. This condition is called 'AIDS'. But with timely treatment known as Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), nutritious food, physical exercise, healthy lifestyle and positive attitude towards healthy living one can delay AIDS.



## What are the different modes of transmission of HIV?

### Modes of transmission

Unprotected vaginal and/or anal sex with an HIV infected partner

Transfusion of HIV infected blood and blood products

Sharing needles with HIV infected drug users

From parents living with HIV to their unborn child

### HIV is NOT transmitted through

Hugging

Sneezing

Being bitten by a mosquito

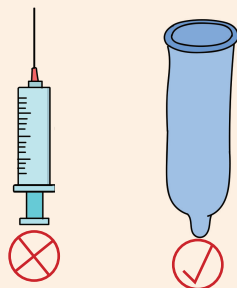
Shaking hands

Using public toilets

Sharing or eating food in same utensils, or using objects handled by people with HIV

Spending time in the same house, school or public place with a person who has HIV infection

## How can HIV infection be prevented?



### HIV infection can be prevented through:

- Correct and regular use of condoms
- Being faithful to partner
- Abstinence from sexual intercourse (or sexual contact) without condom
- Transfusion of blood obtained from authorized blood banks
- Use of disposable syringes and needles
- Not sharing injecting equipment during drug use
- HIV positive pregnant women can prevent transmission to their unborn child by undertaking Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission (PPTCT) therapy.

**What are the signs and symptoms of HIV infection?**

A person does not know about HIV infection without getting tested.

**How does pregnancy happen?**

Pregnancy happens when a male and female have sexual intercourse. During intercourse, the mature egg is fertilized by a sperm cell. The fertilized egg then travels down the fallopian tube into the uterus. This is conception and marks the beginning of pregnancy.

When pregnancy happens, a woman's menstruation stops as the uterus has the fertilized egg implanted in it.

**What is contraception?**

Contraception is a method by which pregnancy/conception is prevented.

**Why should a couple use contraception?**

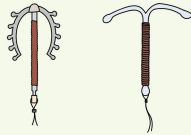
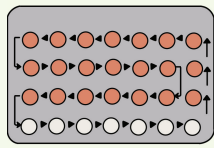
Couples should adopt contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancies and to plan their family.

**Who should be responsible for practising contraception: man or woman?**

Both partners need to mutually decide on the method of contraception considering the suitability, advantages, risks associated and convenience for the user. Contraception is not the sole responsibility of the female partner.

**What are the different contraceptive methods for men?**

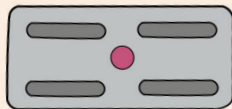
The contraceptive methods available for men are condoms, which are simple and easy to use and also provide protection against RTI/STI and HIV infection.



## What are the different contraceptive methods for women?

Oral Contraceptive Pills (OCPs) such as Mala D, Chhaya, Intrauterine Devices such as Copper T, Injectable contraceptives such as Antara are available at government hospitals. Other methods such as female condoms are available in the market.

## What is emergency contraception?



Emergency contraception is a way to prevent pregnancy within 72 hours of unprotected sex.

Unprotected sex may happen due to non-use of any contraceptive device, incorrect use of condom, tearing of condom, sex under the influence of alcohol and drugs and in cases of forced sex, sexual violence/assault (date rape, sexual abuse etc.). Emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs) are available with the ASHA *didi* and at all government health facilities. It should be taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex – and definitely within 72 hours. Consuming this pill after 72 hours may not prevent pregnancy.

Note: ECP is not to be consumed on a regular basis or as an OCP.

## What are the best contraceptive methods for adolescents and young couples?

Condoms: Condoms are available for both men and women, but more commonly and at cheaper price for men.

- A male condom is a sheath or covering made to fit over a man's erect penis. Most commonly available brand in the public health system is 'Nirodh'. A condom prevents semen (carrying sperms) from entering the vagina and hence prevents fertilization of the ovum by the sperm.
- A female condom is closed at one end and is inserted into the vagina with the help of fingers with the open end outside the vagina. This creates a physical barrier for the semen ejaculated into the vagina from coming in contact with the ovum.

Both male and female condoms also provide protection against STIs including HIV. This makes it the most suitable contraceptive for adolescents and young couples. But condoms need to be used correctly and consistently.

- Hormonal contraceptive pills: OCPs are a combination of hormones that can be taken every day to prevent ovulation in women. Some of the commonly available OCPs are Mala-D, Mala-N. Consistent regular use is necessary for its success.

Other methods (only for those with a child):

- Intra-uterine contraceptive device (IUCD): can be placed inside the uterus of a woman to prevent the fertilization of egg. This method is not suggested for unmarried women and those without any children.
- Chhaya, a non-hormonal pill, is a safe and effective method and can be given to breastfeeding mothers.
- Antara, an injectable contraceptive, is a safe and effective method of contraception for maintaining spacing between pregnancies.

### What are safe sexual practices?



Safe sexual practices are those where there is no or minimum risk of unwanted pregnancy or transmission of infections through sexual route. This includes:

- Masturbation - Commonly understood as self-stimulation of sexual organs with hands for sexual pleasure. It may be practised alone or with a partner. There is no scientific evidence for its negative effect on health or fertility etc. However, among adolescents, preoccupation with masturbation may slow down other activities like study, play, social interaction etc.
- Holding hands, touching, kissing, cuddling are some safe ways to show affection and love.
- Correct and consistent use of condom (condom provides triple protection – from unwanted pregnancy, STI and HIV).
- Use of suitable contraceptive method.
- Being faithful to partner.
- Abstinence from sex (delay sexual debut).

### What is safe abortion or MTP?

In India, Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) has been legalized through the MTP Act which came into force in 1972. Any woman above 18 years of age, irrespective of marital status, can opt for an abortion. In case of minors (below 18 years of age), a written consent from parents or guardian is necessary. Safe abortion is the procedure performed by certified doctors in a certified clinical or hospital setting only (authorized under the provisions of the MTP Act). It is legal in India. The MTP Act gives well-specified grounds for abortion that include failure of contraception, pregnancy due to sexual violence like rape, if continuation of pregnancy poses a threat to the life of a woman, risk to physical health and mental trauma to woman, or when there is a substantial risk that the child, if born, would suffer from deformities and diseases.

The MTP (Amendment) Act, 2021 came into force with effect from 24th September 2021. This Act amends the MTP Act 1971 ('MTP Act') which regulates the conditions under which medical termination of pregnancy can be pursued. It allows abortion to be done on the advice of one doctor up to 20 weeks, and two doctors in the case of certain categories of women between 20 and 24 weeks. State-level Medical Boards decide if a pregnancy may be terminated after 24 weeks in cases of substantial foetal abnormalities.

### **When is abortion unsafe?**

An abortion is unsafe when done at uncertified clinics or hospitals and by an untrained person/doctor and it has serious risks like partial abortion, damage to internal organs, excessive bleeding and may prove fatal as well.

### **What are the different methods to terminate a pregnancy?**

Pregnancy can be terminated surgically or non-surgically depending on the gestation of the pregnancy, but under the strict supervision of a trained and certified doctor.

### **When can a woman have the next pregnancy after a miscarriage or induced abortion?**

The recommended minimum interval before the next pregnancy is six months. This will help reduce risks of adverse effects on the mother and child.

### **When is abortion illegal?**



Abortion can be illegal if:

- Performed by an untrained and uncertified person
- Performed in an uncertified clinic or hospital. Gol has certified select clinics and hospitals based on availability of necessary infrastructure to provide safe abortion services
- Duration of pregnancy is above the permitted 20 weeks of gestation or without the opinion of a second doctor if gestation period is between 20 and 24 weeks
- It is conducted based on the sex of the foetus (female foeticide)

Also, pregnancy can be terminated only through government-approved clinical methods. Termination of pregnancy through non-clinical methods (like those performed at home, using force etc.) is illegal as it can jeopardize the health of the woman and may even cause excessive haemorrhage and damage to internal organs, such as puncturing or tearing of the uterus. Long-term complications include chronic pain, PID and infertility.

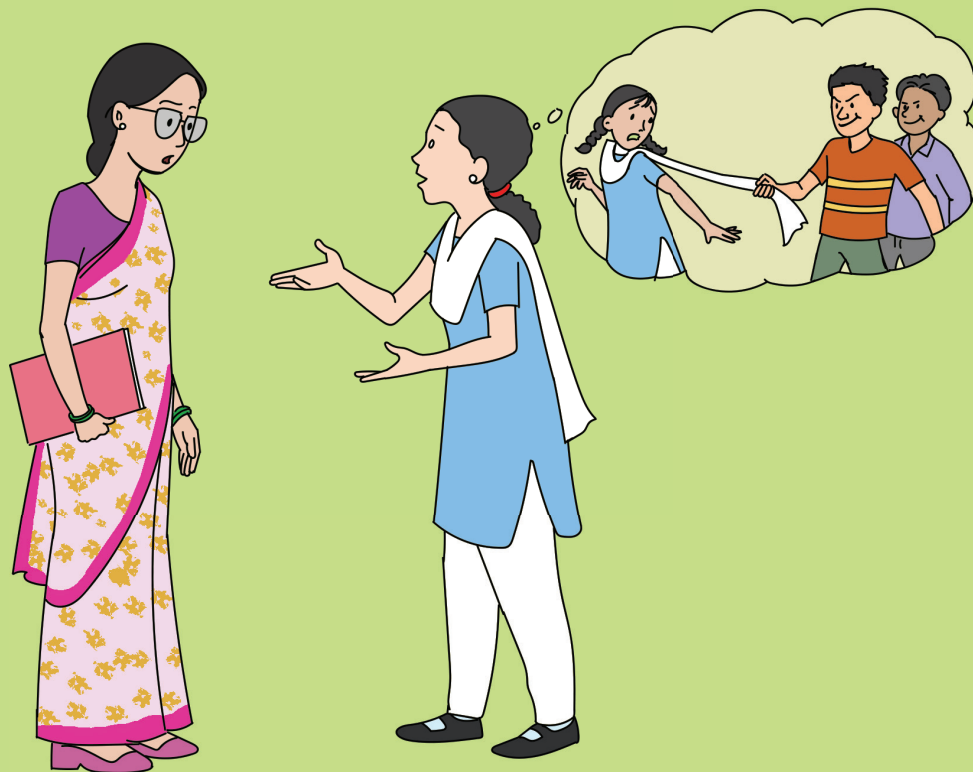
Note: Termination of pregnancy after determining the sex of the child is a criminal offence on the part of both the doctor performing and the couple and their family members supporting such an act.

### Who can I contact?

Name	Contact No.

## Module 6

# Responding to Violence







## Is violence common amongst adolescents?

Violence can lead to more serious consequences for the victims than the perpetrators. If the victim is a girl, she is not allowed to go out of the house, forced to discontinue studies and often deprived of available opportunities for skill building and independence. Violence not only harms the present of the victim but also influences his/her future.



## What can be the effects of violence?

Any form of physical, verbal or sexual abuse is violence.

**Physical:** An act which harms an adolescent physically; it can be in the form of punching, kicking, shoving, beating, slapping, ear/hand twisting.

**Verbal:** An act to harm a child by using offensive words, slang, embarrassing a child in front of classmates, narrating sexual jokes in front of someone, using insulting language. It can be in the form of abusive language a husband uses against his wife or parents against their children. It can also be in the form of whistling, passing lewd remarks against anyone, especially girls.

**Emotional:** Anything which hurts a child emotionally – insults, humiliations, threats, lack of affection, bias – is emotional violence which can lead to mental stress.

**Sexual:** Pressurizing or forcing someone to perform sexual acts (can range from kissing to penetrative sex) against his/her will or consent. It can be in the form of brushing past girls, touching them inappropriately, undressing in front of a child, asking a child to undress in front of an adult, etc.

## What should a child who has faced violence do?

A child who has faced any form of violence should not feel ashamed, scared or isolated but should be supported in his/her fight for justice. The child must seek support from parents/teachers or other family members in such a situation. CHILDLINE (telephone no. 1098) stands for a friendly *didi* or a sympathetic *bhaiya* who is always there for vulnerable children 24 hours of the day, 365 days of the year.

## What is Gender-Based Violence (GBV)? Who can be the victims?

GBV is a term for any harmful act that is done against a person's will, which is based on gender differences between males and females. While GBV is usually targeted at girls and women, boys and men may also be victims of GBV.

## What are the different forms of GBV?

Some of the commonly heard forms of GBV in our country are female foeticide, female infanticide, honour killing, child/forced marriage, kidnapping for marriage, domestic violence, eve teasing, stalking, molestation and rape (forced sex).

## What are the common injuries among adolescents?

Road traffic crashes, drowning, falls, burns, poisoning, work related injuries, animal bites constitute major threats of survival for children and adolescents worldwide.

## How to prevent injuries?



- Do not come under peer pressure to perform any risky activities like rash driving or doing stunts etc.
- Use seat belts and bicycle and motorcycle helmets,
- Avoid alcohol and drugs etc.
- Use safety equipment in sports and leisure activities
- Protect yourself at work place
- Be careful while passing through forest or bushy areas to prevent snake bite or getting bitten by an animal
- Immediately contact the nearest health centre, if injured

## What can we do if we spot a victim of GBV?

Victims of GBV need to be immediately taken to the nearest medical/health centre for first aid, treatment and counselling support. Most of the health centres have good referral contacts to ensure legal aid, care and support to the victim/survivor.

## What is child sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse includes touching, looking at or talking about children's private parts. Sexual abuse can happen to any child.

### Touching involves:

- Touching private parts
- Touching areas surrounding private parts
- Rubbing their body against children in a sexual way
- Trying to kiss children on their mouth
- Asking children to do any of these with them or others



### Looking involves:

- Showing their private parts
- Looking at your private parts
- Showing photos or videos with sexual activities
- Clicking photos of children's private parts
- Making videos where children's private parts can be seen

### Talking includes:

- Using sexual language or jokes that talk about sexual activities or private parts
- Passing sexual comments or comments on your or someone else's private parts

Sometimes people may do things accidentally. For example, someone touched your buttocks while playing or opened the door while you were changing clothes. Even though these things happened accidentally, it is okay if you felt unsafe or uncomfortable. You can still let the other person know that you do not like it and do not want it to happen again. So, whether an incident is sexual abuse or not, when you feel uncomfortable or unsafe you need to talk about it with your helping adults.

**What can I do if someone is trying to sexually abuse me?**

In such a situation you can say no or refuse assertively and get away from the unsafe situation or place.

Then you can go and tell a helping adult as soon as possible. You may also feel comfortable telling a friend or someone of your own age and that is alright. However, after that, talk to an adult, as they are in a better position to help you.

**Does sexual abuse happen only with girls and not boys?**

Sexual abuse can happen to both boys and girls. In fact, the number of girls abused and the number of boys abused in our country is almost the same.

**What if being assertive or saying no does not help? Is it okay to be aggressive? What else can I do?**

Assertive behaviour is usually helpful. However, if they still keep troubling you, you can even scream for help. As the last option, you can use aggressive behaviour like pushing rather than hitting when nothing else is working out.

**If I share about the sexual abuse I have experienced then it will bring shame upon me and my family. What can I do in this situation?**

It is never your fault if someone has sexually abused you. No matter what the people around you say, always keep in mind that you are not to be blamed for what someone else did. It is not your fault so there is no need for you to feel guilty or worry about your family's name and reputation.

Remember when you tell adults about this, it might at first be a shock to them, so be prepared and give them time to relax. If you do not tell them, they cannot know and so they cannot help.

## How do I know if someone is planning to sexually abuse me?

It can be difficult to understand if someone is sexually abusing you or is planning to sexually abuse you. People who sexually abuse children can be a known person or a stranger. A stranger may try to trick children by either asking for some help or assistance in finding an address or trying to help the child. They may even offer something like chocolates or allowing to play with their pet animal or something else they like. Known people can sometimes trick children and create a relationship with them or their families.

Tricking is usually a characteristic of a harmful relationship, as there is no honesty in it. The way in which they form the relationship is the same way as anyone forms a relationship. This makes it difficult for children to understand what this person wants from the relationship. As soon as you realize what they are doing or feel uncomfortable, try your best to ask for help.

## What law is there to support us if someone sexually abuses us?

Gol has created a law called POCSO to support children in case someone sexually abuses them. You can call on police helpline numbers - 100 or 112. You can also call on CHILDLINE helpline number 1098 or contact the Counsellor at the AFHC and seek assistance.



## How can I help a friend who is experiencing sexual abuse?

Help your friend talk to an adult who can help: like parents, teachers, police, siblings or friends (above 18).

Do not promise to keep it a secret or not tell anyone. You will need to talk to a helpful adult and ask for help.

Keeping this in mind you can say to your friend: "I cannot make a promise to keep it a secret, but I will only tell someone to get help for you."

Let your friend know that the abuse is not their fault. Children who experience sexual abuse often feel they have done something wrong.

Do not let the information about the sexual abuse spread all over the school, or tuitions, or among friend circles. Talk to a helpful adult to help you and your friend.

### **What if I go to an adult to ask for help and he/she refuses to help me?**

It is quite possible that a helpful adult may refuse to help you for some reason. In such situation, you can go to another helpful adult to ask for help. You can call on police helpline numbers - 100 or 112. You can also call on CHILDLINE helpline number 1098 or contact the Counsellor at the AFHC and seek assistance.

### **Who can I contact?**

Name	Contact No.

## Module 7

# My Rights and Entitlements







**Are human rights applicable to adolescents?  
What are the bodies that ensure adolescent rights?**

All human rights are applicable to adolescents as to any adult. The Constitution of India has a special provision to ensure survival, protection, development, health and happiness of its children. Some of the rights entitlement bodies include - National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) an independent body to take measures to protect the rights of children across the country; the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of United Nations which means that the GoI and our State Governments are committed to ensure the Rights of Children as stated in the CRC; and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

**What are the six Fundamental Rights that every Indian child is entitled to?**

The Constitution of India has provided six Fundamental Rights to every child of the country. These are:

- The right to equality
- The right to freedom
- The right to freedom from exploitation
- The right to freedom of religion
- Cultural and educational rights
- The right to constitutional remedies



**What are the key features of the AFHS that adolescents are entitled to?**

The key features of the AFHS are:

- Separate room in the existing clinic for adolescents with a separate waiting area
- Accessible location
- Adolescent friendly timings
- Dedicated trained service provider
- Privacy to adolescents when sharing their concerns with ANM/doctor/counsellor

- Doctors/counsellor and other staff not to discriminate, judge adolescents on the basis of:
  - the act that caused the medical condition
  - the information they want to seek about their own body or sexual activities
  - asking for contraceptives

### Who can I contact?

Name	Contact No.

## Module 8

# Health and Environment





## How can we maintain body hygiene?



Daily bath is a very important routine. One should have a full body bath daily with a gentle soap/ cleanser and include cleaning of hair and genital area. Head bath with soap/shampoo or home-based cleanser is necessary at least three times a week to prevent dandruff and other scalp infections. One can also use home-based cleansers available in our kitchen such as wheat flour husk, *besan* mixed with *dahi* or plain water with a little turmeric. There are also special kinds of clay (locally known as *multani mitti*) that are easily available. These home remedies not only clean the body and hair but also maintain their softness and glow. During daily bath, special care should be taken to clean genital area with plain water or gentle cleanser.

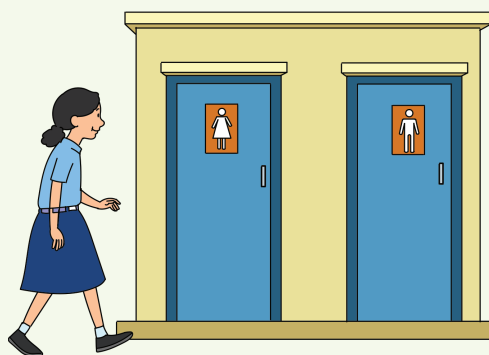
## Why is it important to wash our hands with soap and keep our nails clean?

While we take care of our body and looks, it is equally important to wash our hands properly every time we use the toilet and before handling eatables. Hand washing with soap substantially reduces the risk of infections causing diarrhoea, jaundice, typhoid and polio in childhood. Nails should be cut; if one has long nails, they should be cleaned every time during hand wash to remove any dirt or infection underneath.



## How do poor community hygiene and environmental conditions cause illnesses?

Defecation in the open, improper hand washing and poor waste disposal are the root causes of water-borne infections and diseases like diarrhoea, intestinal parasites and malaria and air-borne infections like pneumonia and tuberculosis. Smoke from factories and vehicles has raised levels of harmful pollutants in the air. Bronchial asthma and other respiratory conditions are on the rise among children and adolescents.



## How can adolescents help in community health and sanitation?

- Stop defecation in the open and encourage use of toilets and hand washing with soap. Encourage construction of sanitary latrines at home.
- Demand separate toilets for boys and girls in schools.
- Educate people to keep toilets and public utilities clean and sanitized.
- Create awareness that unclean water should pass through a separate pipe/channel.
- Separate biodegradable (easily decomposed like vegetables, food products etc.) from non-biodegradable waste (that do not decompose but can be recycled like paper, plastic, glass etc.)
- Encourage hygienic disposal of menstrual product.

## Who can I contact?

Name	Contact No.

## Module 9

# Social Media and Internet Use







## What is the meaning of sexting? Is it sexual abuse?

Sexting (Sex+texting) means receiving or sending sexual text messages, photos or videos using mobile phones, laptops, tablets or smart phones where either private parts can be seen or being spoken of. Once a sext (sex+text) is sent, there is no way of getting it back and can be misused by the person it has been sent to. It could spread over the internet too. Sexting is sexual abuse and illegal especially if the messages, photos and videos are of someone below 18 years of age. Even if children below the age of 18 share such information with each other it is sexual abuse.

If you ever receive a sext whether from a friend, a cousin, a relative or from your girlfriend or boyfriend, let them know that it is not alright to send such messages, photos or videos. Do not share it with others. Talk to your helpful adult about it and seek help.

## What is cyberbullying?



Cyberbullying is another form of bullying or harassment that takes place using electronic technology. It can be done by devices such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as on social media sites, text messages, chats, and websites. Sharing or posting embarrassing photos or videos of children without permission to make fun of them, posting or writing something insulting about a child on social media like WhatsApp, Facebook or Instagram are examples of cyberbullying. Sexual bullying or sexual abuse too can happen through cyberbullying.

## Why do people say the internet is unsafe?

The internet is a huge platform loaded with lots of information on a variety of things. It can be helpful if used properly. You can learn many new skills, gain a wide range of knowledge and even boost healthy development. However, it is important to be careful while using the internet. The accuracy of the information depends a lot on the source of the information. If you get the information from an untrusted source, it is very likely that the information you gather might be wrong and may cause harm.

## How can I create a password that people cannot guess or figure out?

Here are a few factors you can keep in mind while creating a password:

- Make the password at least 8-12 characters long. The longer the password the better. Depending on the requirement of the website you are signing in to, include numbers, symbols, capital letters and small letters. For example, Tfhleliw613FS. Rw\$4pw. You

can replace some letters with a number or a special character, for example, 0 (zero) for O, \$ for S, 4 for A, 3 for E, 8 for G, 7 for L, 1 or ! for I, 9 for P. You can use this very creatively to make your password.

- Do not let the web browser on your phone or computer like Chrome or UC browser (Universal Control Browser) or Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox save the password.
- Never share your password with anyone. Do not write your passwords in places where it is easy for anyone to find.
- Do not use one password for everything. Use different passwords for different websites.
- When you use computers at a cybercafe make sure you logout before you get up.



## Is it safe to accept the friend request of strangers?

Before you accept friend requests from strangers there are a few things you need to keep in mind. There is a possibility that the person might be someone older than you and has written the wrong age. People can create fake profiles; they may share false information about themselves.

They may say that they only want to be friends with you online, they just want to chat with you and want to know you. There is no sure way to know if these are their actual plans. They may talk to you in a way that shows they understand you. They may try to flatter you by giving false praises. All these things can make you feel very happy with yourself and you may even feel that this person is a safe person who completely understands you like no one else.

Yet, if someone you became friends with on the internet asks to meet you, it may turn out to be unsafe for you. Avoid arranging a face-to-face meeting with someone you met online. It is best to even avoid any kind of communication in the form of an audio or video call with them.

However, if you still plan to meet them then think of a place that is more public; the reason why they want to meet you; taking someone along instead of going alone; and about the time you will be meeting them.

**Are all online challenges or games unsafe?**

All online challenges or games are not unsafe, but some are. These unsafe challenges or games at the beginning sound fun and safe, as you move ahead, the level of it being unsafe increases.

These challenges or games are not just harmful but the people who are running or handling them are tricking children into joining them and then pressurizing them to complete the challenge.

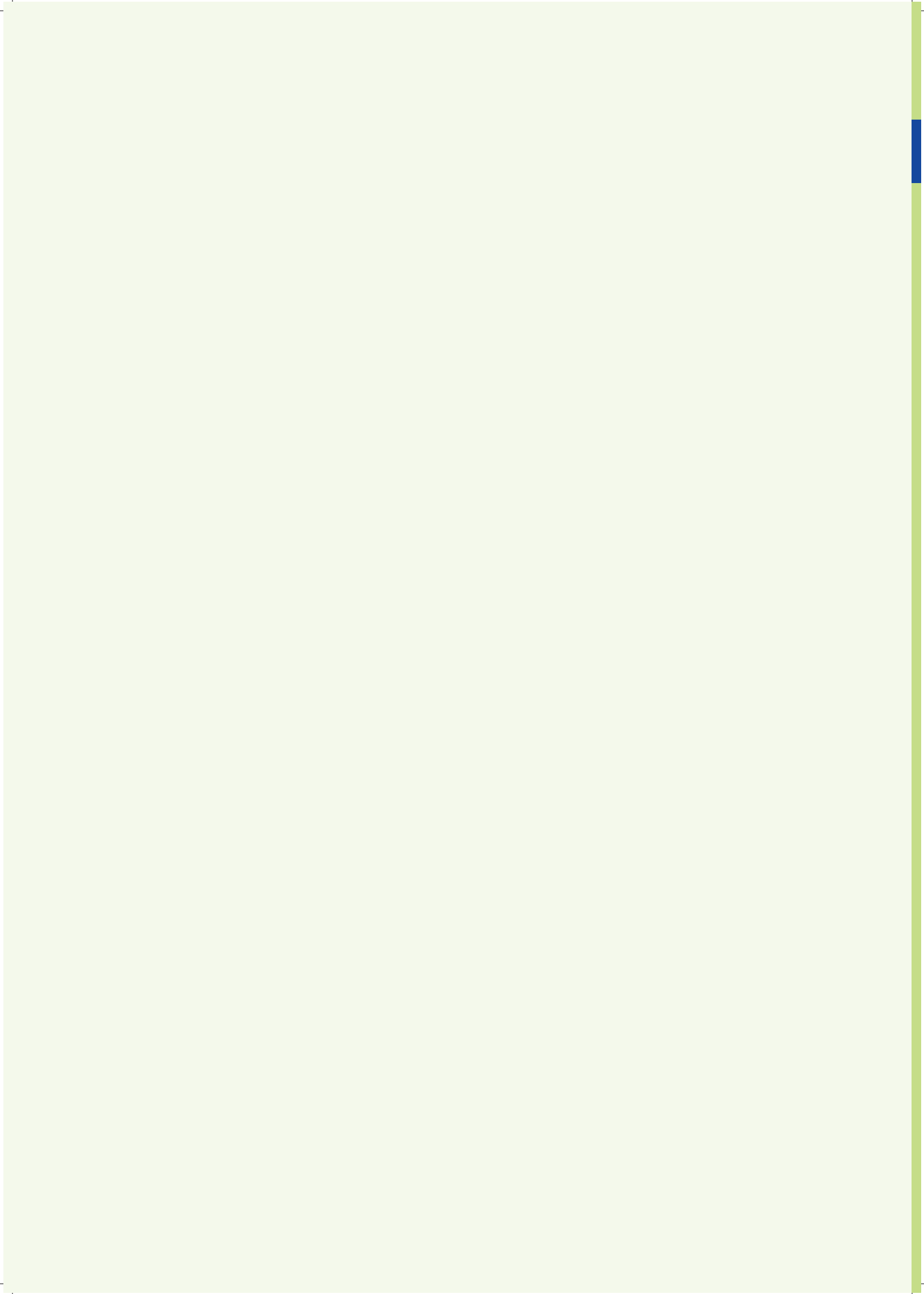
**Why am I told to not share personal information on the internet? How will I create a profile if I don't put up personal information?**

To create a profile, you do need to share personal information. Be careful with what kind of information you are sharing on the internet, how much personal information you are sharing and with whom you are sharing it. Giving out a lot of personal or very private information on the internet to either someone who is known or unknown can be unsafe. Therefore, before you give out information such as your phone number or address you need to think about the possible consequences of sharing such information.

Another way of sharing information is by uploading photos or videos. You need to be careful when you upload these.

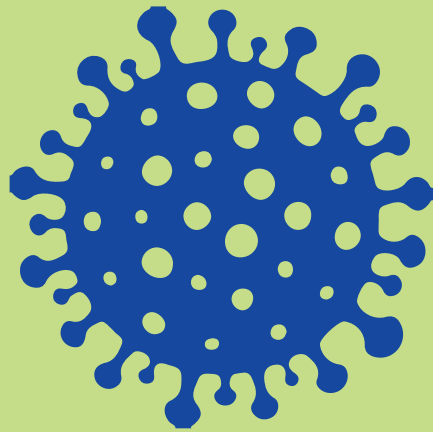
**What are privacy settings and what can I do to have strong privacy settings?**

Privacy settings are the various settings you can set on all the social media websites or apps on which you have created your accounts or profiles or logged on. Privacy settings control how much information about you can be shared on these websites or apps and what information you want to share with known and unknown people.



## Module 10

# COVID-19





## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infectious respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease. The first case was found in Wuhan, China in December 2019.

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The most common symptoms are fever, cough, and tiredness. Other symptoms can include shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, confusion, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain, and skin rashes.



Symptoms of COVID-19 infection may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus and can range from very mild to severe illness. Some people who have been infected don't have any symptoms. Older people and those with underlying medical conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, or cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.



People of all ages who experience fever and/or cough associated with difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, or loss of speech or movement should consult a doctor immediately.

## How does COVID-19 spread?

Coronavirus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small droplets when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe. A person can be infected when aerosols or droplets containing the virus are inhaled or come directly into contact with the eyes, nose, or mouth. People may also become infected by touching their mouth, nose or eyes after touching surfaces contaminated with the virus.

The virus can also spread in poorly ventilated and/or crowded indoor settings, where people tend to spend longer periods of time. Indoor locations, particularly those with poor ventilation, are riskier than outdoor locations.

## Can adolescents get infected with COVID-19?

Yes, anyone can get infected with COVID-19.

## Do I still need to worry about infection even though I am fit and healthy?

People have died or suffered from severe symptoms despite being otherwise healthy. So even if you are less at risk due to your age or BMI, that doesn't guarantee that you won't suffer from long-term symptoms like breathlessness, fatigue, a loss of smell and/or taste. Further, you could spread the infection to vulnerable people, such as older people or those with compromised immune systems or diabetes. Taking steps to safeguard against COVID-19 will not only protect you, but also others around you.



### What are the ways I can protect myself from COVID-19?



Simple steps can help you stay safe like:

- Stay at least two metres apart from others, even if they don't appear to be sick (physical distancing).
- Wear a properly fitted mask when physical distancing is not possible or when in poorly ventilated settings.

- Choose open, well-ventilated spaces over closed ones. Open a window, if indoors.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or clean them with alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- If you feel unwell, stay home and self-isolate until you recover.
- Get vaccinated when a vaccine is available to you.

## What is COVID Appropriate Behaviour (CAB)?

CAB is recommended behaviour to prevent SARS-CoV-2 infections:

### 3Ws:

- Watch your distance (more than 2 metres)
- Wash your hands
- Wear a mask





## What should I do if I have tested positive for COVID-19?

### Don't Panic!

Immediately isolate yourself and contact the nearby health facility urgently for further guidance. Depending upon your condition the doctor will suggest if you can stay in home isolation or need care at a hospital.



## What are the guidelines for home isolation of mild/asymptomatic COVID-19 cases?

The guidelines are applicable to COVID-19 patients who have been clinically assessed and assigned as mild/asymptomatic cases of COVID-19.

- Patients must isolate themselves from other household members, stay in the identified room and away from other people at home, especially elderly and those with co-morbid conditions like hypertension, cardiovascular disease, renal disease etc.
- Patients should stay in a well-ventilated room with cross ventilation and windows should be kept open to allow fresh air to come in.
- Patients should at all times use triple layer medical mask. They should discard the mask after eight hours of use or earlier if the mask becomes wet or is visibly soiled. In the event of caregiver entering the room, both caregiver and patient may preferably consider using N-95 mask.
- Masks should be discarded after cutting them to pieces and putting in a paper bag for a minimum of 72 hours.
- Patients must take rest and drink lot of fluids to maintain adequate hydration.
- Patients must follow respiratory etiquettes at all times.
- Patients must undertake frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 40 seconds or clean with alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Patients shall not share personal items including utensils with other people in the household.
- Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces in the room (tabletops, doorknobs, handles, etc.) with soap/detergent & water must be ensured. The cleaning can be undertaken either by the patient or the caregiver duly following required precautions such as use of masks and gloves.
- Self-monitoring of blood oxygen saturation with a pulse oximeter for the patient is advised.
- The patient shall self-monitor his/her health with daily temperature monitoring (as given below) and report promptly if any deterioration of symptom is noticed. The status shall be shared with the treating Medical Officer as well as surveillance teams/Control Room.

## What is vaccination?

Vaccination is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases.



## What are the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination?

Getting vaccinated could save your life. COVID-19 vaccines provide strong protection against serious illness, hospitalization and death. There is also some evidence that being vaccinated will make it less likely that you will pass the virus on to others, which means your decision to get the vaccine also protects those around you.

## How do the vaccines work?

Vaccines work by training and preparing the body's natural defenses - the immune system. It helps recognize and fight off viruses and bacteria they target. If the body is exposed to those disease-causing germs later, it is immediately ready to destroy them, preventing illness.

## Can adolescents in the age group of 12 to 18 years be given COVID-19 vaccination?

Currently adolescents in 15-18 years age group are eligible to take Covaxin – the only vaccine approved for the age group - from 3rd January 2022. The guidelines will be reviewed from time to time to include more adolescent age groups.

## How can adolescents take the vaccine?

- a. All those aged 15 years or more will be able to register on Co-WIN. In other words, all those whose birth year is 2007 or before, shall be eligible.
- b. Beneficiaries can self-register online through an existing account on Co-WIN or can also register by creating a new account through a unique mobile number. This facility is available for all eligible citizens presently.
- c. Such beneficiaries can also be registered onsite by the verifier/vaccinator in facilitated registration mode.
- d. Appointments can be booked online or onsite (walk-in).

### The vaccination may be deferred in the following scenario:

- In case of individuals having lab test proven SARS-2 COVID-19 illness, COVID-19 vaccination to be deferred by three months after recovery.



## How can adolescents manage stress during COVID-19 pandemic?

Adolescents can adopt healthy strategies to cope with current times of confinement, thus maintaining positive and cheerful atmosphere at home.

- Practice government recommended precautionary measures such as washing/sanitizing regularly and physical distancing.
- Accept all emotions as natural feelings, and practise mindfulness through art, music, exercise and journaling.
- Eat healthy meals, get enough sleep, avoid excessive caffeine, exercise regularly, and do things you enjoy.
- Spend quality time with family and friends on calls, fun activities and indoor games (outdoor if permitted).
- Genuinely care for friends, family and marginalized people (frequent checking in with loved ones, giving to charity).
- Have open communication with family and friends to avoid overthinking and related negative thoughts.
- Avoid use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs to cope with emotions. These can worsen physical and mental health and reduce immunity.
- Gather accurate facts from credible sources such as Ministry of Health and WHO website.
- Reduce the time you & your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.
- Help around the house - plan meals, manage chores; adopt new hobbies such as reading, painting, gardening etc.

## Is it safe to get vaccinated if I am menstruating?

You should get vaccinated if you are menstruating and have your period on the day of your vaccination appointment. Menstruation isn't a medical reason to not get the COVID-19 vaccine.

### What are the common side effects of COVID vaccination?

As is true for other vaccines, the common side effects in some individuals could be mild fever, pain, etc. at the site of injection.

Inform the nearest health authorities/ANM/ASHA in case you feel any discomfort or uneasiness subsequently.

### Does having side effects mean that the vaccine is working? What does having no side effects mean?

The vaccine stimulates your immune system to protect you from the virus. This process can sometimes cause side effects like fever, chills or headache, but not everyone will experience side effects. The presence or magnitude of the reaction does not predict or reflect your immune response to the vaccine.

You do not have to have side effects in order to be protected.



### What happens if the second dose is missed?

- Two doses are required for complete protection
- If missed take the second dose at the earliest. There is no need to repeat the first dose

People with no symptoms should be able to stay at home, if adequately isolated from others, but this should be confirmed by a doctor.



### Prevention: Social Distancing

Deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness by staying at least two metres away from other people lessens your chances of catching the virus.

<b>DO</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DO stay at home unless absolutely necessary.</li><li>• DO keep a distance of at least two metres between yourself and another person.</li></ul>
<b>DO NOT</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DO NOT hold events where people have to gather (even if it is a corner meeting with three or four friends, or an evening chat on the <i>chaupal</i>).</li><li>• DO NOT go to crowded places like markets, for shopping, meals, parties.</li><li>• DO NOT use public transport.</li></ul>



## Respiratory etiquette

Respiratory Hygiene is a combination of measures taken to stop the spread of germs through respiratory behaviours like coughing or sneezing.

<b>DO</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DO use a handkerchief or a tissue to cover your face while coughing or sneezing.</li><li>• DO throw the used tissue immediately into a closed dustbin.</li><li>• DO cover your sneeze into your bent upper arm in case you are not carrying a tissue or a kerchief.</li><li>• DO wash hands immediately after you have covered your sneeze or cough.</li></ul>
<b>DO NOT</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DO NOT use other ways of covering your face like the <i>pallu</i> of the sari or the <i>chunni</i> or the <i>gamcha</i>.</li><li>• DO NOT spit in the open, always use a spittoon or wash basin for spitting.</li></ul>

## Face masks

### Hand hygiene

<b>DO</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DO wash your hands often with soap and water for 40 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.</li><li>• DO use a hand sanitizer (at least 70% alcohol based) if soap and water is not available. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.</li></ul>
<b>DO NOT</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DO NOT touch eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.</li><li>• DO NOT touch surfaces like door knobs and door bells, elevator buttons, handrails, support handles, chair backs, ATM surfaces, mobiles, jeep handles etc.</li></ul>

## Social distancing measures

- Contact tracing
- Isolation of sick individuals
- Quarantine of exposed individuals
- School measures/closures/study from home
- Workplace measures/closures/work from home
- Avoiding crowding

### Travel-related measures

- Travel advisories
- Travel restrictions (within villages/blocks/districts/States to be restricted)

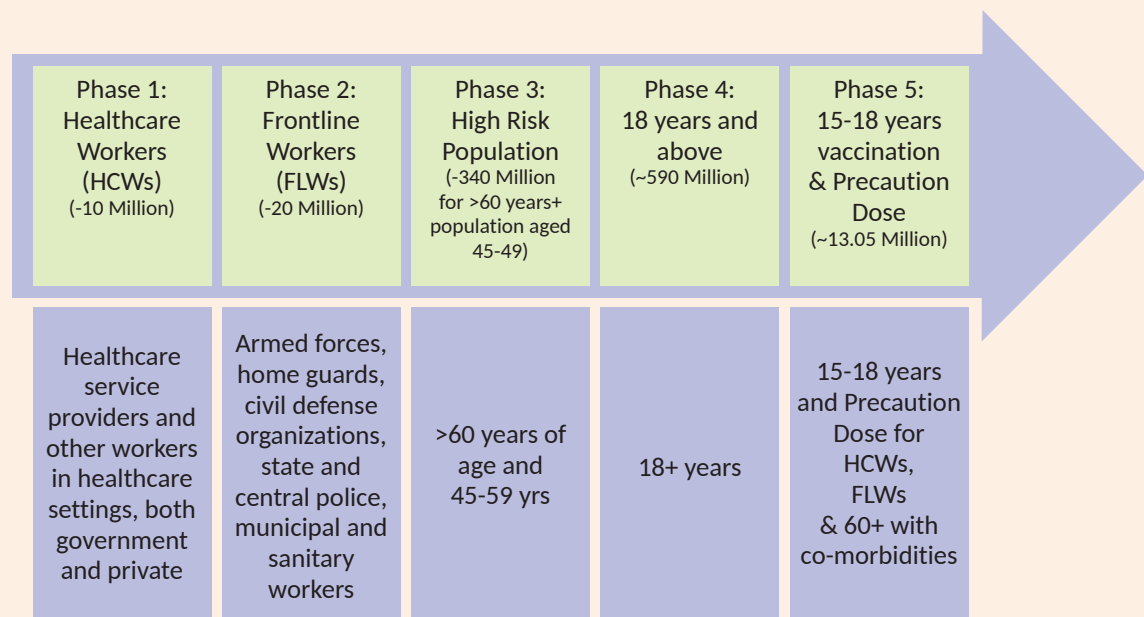
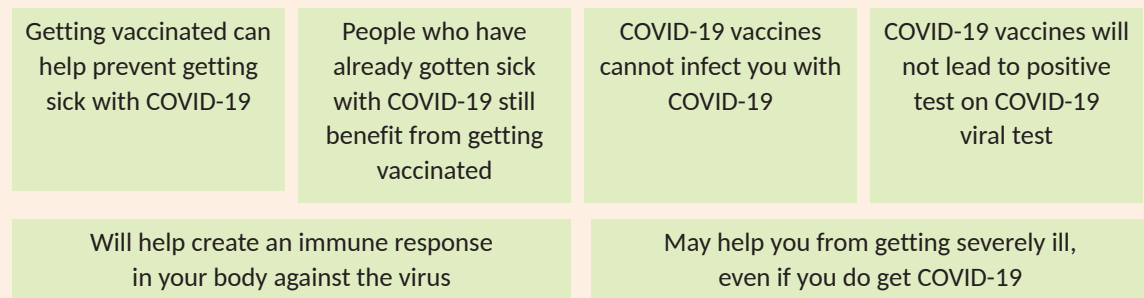
### Environmental measures

- Surface and object cleaning
- Increased ventilation

### Testing

- RT-PCR: Real-time Polymerase Chain Reaction of RNA Nasal AND Oropharyngeal Swabs (Collect 2 swabs)
- Rapid Test

### Vaccination



## Myths & Facts

1. STATEMENT: With the summers coming up, the coronavirus will be killed  
FACT: COVID-19 has been detected in all areas, including areas with hot and humid weather. The best way to protect yourself against COVID-19 is by frequently washing your hands with soap and water, covering your face while coughing and sneezing and avoiding crowded places.
2. STATEMENT: Having a bath with hot water will kill the virus  
FACT: The virus lives inside the body where the temperature is maintained at 37°C and is not affected by a hot water bath.
3. STATEMENT: Getting the pneumonia vaccine will protect you against the virus  
FACT: The pneumonia vaccine will certainly protect you against other organisms that cause pneumonia, but not against the Novel Coronavirus.
4. STATEMENT: Spraying alcohol or disinfectant over your body can prevent infection  
FACT: Spraying with alcohol or sanitizer on clothes and body will not prevent you from getting infection as it spreads when the virus enters the body through the nose or mouth. Cleaning and wiping hands with alcohol-based sanitizer is to prevent the virus from entering your system through infected hands when you touch your mouth or eat food with infected hands.
5. STATEMENT: Regularly rinsing the nose with saline will prevent the infection  
FACT: Rinsing nose with saline has in few cases helped in containing common cold, but there is no evidence to suggest that it is effective against the Novel Coronavirus infection.
6. STATEMENT: Coronavirus can be passed through chicken and meat  
FACT: No! There is no such evidence of Coronavirus spreading through meat and poultry products. However, it is always advised to have properly cooked meat and chicken.
7. STATEMENT: A person with Coronavirus can recover fully and be no more infectious  
FACT: Around 80 per cent of the people have recovered from the disease without needing special treatment, but information on the virus treatment is still being researched.
8. STATEMENT: Eating raw garlic, sesame seeds will protect you against the virus  
FACT: Garlic is a healthy food that has other benefits but does not protect you against Coronavirus.
9. STATEMENT: The virus can die easily once it is out of the body  
FACT: We do not know about this particular virus as of now. Similar viruses (SARS, MERS) survive from 8 to 24 hours depending on types of surfaces.
10. STATEMENT: You can get COVID-19 through mosquito bites  
FACT: Coronavirus cannot be spread through the bite of a mosquito. It spreads through droplets when an infected person sneezes or coughs.

## Notes

[illegible]



## Notes

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## Notes

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