

Topic: Reproductive Health

Meaning of Reproductive Health

Reproductive health is the ability of people to have a satisfying and safe sex life and the capability to reproduce as well as the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.

Significance of Reproductive Health

Reproductive health is significant because it promotes good sexual health which enhances life and personal relations. It is also a prerequisite for social, economic and human development i.e. human energy and creativity is the driving force of development and this cannot be generated by a sick person. It sets the stage for health beyond the reproductive years for both men and women. Similarly, the health of a newborn is largely a function of the mother's health, and nutritional status and her access to good health care. Furthermore, reproductive health takes care of reproductive health problems at various stages in life, thereby preventing health problems at later stages in life. It contributes enormously to physical and psychosocial comfort and closeness. Reproductive health creates awareness on the dangers associated with disease, abuse, exploitation, unwanted pregnancy, etc.

Care and Protection of the Reproductive System

This is done through:

1. Circumcision of the male at childbirth reducing the effect of micro-organisms on the fore skin of the penis.
2. Regular bathing of the individual and drying of the reproductive organs.
3. Shaving of the pubic hair to avoid the growth of bacteria and fungi.
4. Ensuring thorough cleanliness of the toilet system to avoid contracting diseases, such as candidacies.
5. Washing of undies (pants) regularly.

6. Using sanitary pads by females during menstruation to avoid getting stained and infections.
7. Using tissue paper to clean up after urinating.

Breast Feeding

Breastfeeding is the normal way of providing young infants with the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development. Virtually all mothers can breastfeed, provided they have accurate information, and the support of their family, the health care system and society at large.

Colostrum, the yellowish, sticky breast milk produced at the end of pregnancy, is recommended by WHO as the perfect food for the newborn, and feeding should be initiated within the first hour after birth.

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended up to 6 months of age, with continued breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary foods up to two years of age or beyond.

Importance of breastfeeding

Breastfeeding a baby exclusively for the first 6 months, and then continued breastfeeding in addition to appropriate solid foods until 12 months and beyond, has health benefits for both the mother and child.

Importance of breastfeeding for mother

Research shows that breastfeeding has significant health benefits for mothers.

Breastfeeding:

1. Assists the uterus return to its pre-pregnant state faster.
2. Can help women to lose weight after baby's birth.
3. Reduces the risk of ovarian cancer and pre-menopausal breast cancer.
4. Reduces the risk of osteoporosis
5. Reduces the risk of mothers with gestational diabetes developing Type 2 diabetes.

Importance of breastfeeding for baby

1. Less illness
2. Babies who are fed breast milk have a lower risk of :
 - Gastro-intestinal (gut) illness
 - Allergies
 - Asthma
 - Diabetes
 - Obesity
 - Some childhood cancers
 - Respiratory tract (chest) infections
 - Urinary tract infections
 - SIDS (cot death).
3. Breastfed babies are less likely to be hospitalized.

Importance of Knowledge of Genetic Disorder in Family

A genetic disorder is a disease that is caused by an abnormality in an individual's DNA. In other word, genetic disorder is an illness caused by abnormalities in genes or chromosomes. Abnormalities can range from a small mutation in a single gene to the addition or subtraction of an entire chromosome or set of chromosomes. Sickle cell disease, cystic fibrosis, cancer, obesity, mental illness, Alzheimer disease and Ta

y-Sachs disease are examples of genetic disorders

Knowledge of genetic disorder may assist the family by:

- Identifying the likelihood that certain diseases or conditions may develop based on genetic information, and then anticipating the timing of the expected disorder in the person's life cycle.

- Helping families prepare pragmatically and emotionally for expected challenges, such as: living with uncertainty, care giving strains, and losses associated with various genetic conditions as they may unfold.
- Helping families create meaning that sustains hope and promotes mastery.
- Identify effective treatments, or teaching coping skills for disorders with little hope for treatment.
- Can lead to better care and management of the patient and ultimately to improved quality of life