

GROWTH MONITORING

What We Should Know

- Regular weight gain is the most important sign that a child is growing and developing well.
 - Serial weight recording is more important than nutrition status at one point of time.
 - Serial weight recording helps in the early detection of growth faltering.
 - If the focus is only on grade of malnutrition, it is possible that a Grade I child with inadequate weight gain is not recognised as a child needing attention.
 - Indications of early growth faltering therefore will not be recognised.
 - When growth faltering is detected early even small changes in practices within family's means can make a critical difference.
 - All children between 0-5 years should be weighed every month at the nearest Anganwadi Centre.
 - Each child should have a growth chart and the child's weight should be recorded regularly in this chart.
 - Growth charts can serve as an important tool for making growth of the child "visible" to parents so that appropriate actions can be taken to check growth faltering and promote growth.
 - Growth Promotion involves the following steps:
 1. (a) Regular monthly weighing of children from birth to-five years with the involvement of mother/father or other members of the family to generate their interest.
(b) Plotting the weight of the child on a growth chart.
 2. Determining the adequacy of weight gain or growth velocity (direction of the growth curve)
 3. Analysis of causes of growth faltering.
 4. Deciding what can be done (Action) at the household-level for the child.
 5. Deciding what can be done (Action) at community-level and at the level of AWW, ANM and the ICDS Supervisor.
 6. Follow up on the progress of the child.
 - A child is considered to have adequate weight gain if:
 - The child is growing at the same rate or faster than the reference curve, regardless of the nutritional grade.
 - The child is showing adequate weight gain every month.
 - Rate of child's weight gain dependent upon the age.
- 6-11 months** - if minimum gain per month **500g**
- 12-35 months** -200g month or 500g for 3 months





- A downward curve is an indication that the child is not growing well, and that he/she requires immediate attention of the ICDS supervisor and the ANM.
- A child who has not gained adequate weight for 1-2 months but has maintained nutritional grade is showing signs of early faltering and needs attention to feeding.
- A child who has inadequate weight gain for 1-2 months and is currently ill is showing signs of early faltering & will need medical attention. In case of lack of appetite special efforts at feeding.
- A child, irrespective of the grade of malnutrition, who is showing weight loss in two months is showing signs of severe growth faltering.
- A child, irrespective of the grade of malnutrition, who has not increased weight in three continuous weighings is showing signs of prolonged or severe faltering.

What We Can Do

1. Weigh once a month all the children between 0-5 years in the Anganwadi area with the active involvement of families and communities.
2. Plot the weight of the child on the growth chart and determine adequacy of growth.
3. Discuss with the families on causes for poor or good growth.

Check for:

- Is the child getting age appropriate feeding ?
 - Has the child received all the Immunisations ?
 - Is the child in contact with people with tuberculosis or measles ?
 - Was the child taken to health centre/hospital ?
 - If ill, is the child receiving adequate care ?
4. Counsel the families offering advice for the individual child.
 5. Check the understanding of the families on action to be taken.
 6. If needed take the child for referral.
 7. Agree with the families as to when they should return.
 8. Using the community growth chart discuss with mothers' groups regarding who is malnourished, why are they malnourished and what can be done to reduce malnutrition.
 9. Through home visit follow-up on the progress of the child.

