
UNIT 3 MANAGEMENT OF MINOR AILMENTS-II

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

- identify minor ailments which occur commonly;
- provide primary level care for specific minor ailments;
- educate family members regarding care of minor ailments; and
- suggest preventive measures to community for prevention of minor ailments.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In previous Unit 2 you have learnt about the management of the common minor ailments related to respiratory and digestive system. In this unit you will learn about common minor ailments related to other body systems and organs. We will focus on ailments of skin, eye and ear. We shall also discuss about ailments related to circulatory, reproductive, neuro-muscular and urinary system. At the end we will discuss about some specific minor ailments.

We hope you will be able to identify the minor ailments and suggest measures to manage

them at home. Before studying this unit, you should read unit 1 and 2 of this block thoroughly.

3.2 MINOR AILMENTS OF SKIN

Minor ailments, which commonly involve skin, are scabies, prickly heat, allergy and rashes. Let us briefly describe each one of them.

3.2.1 Scabies and Prickly Heat

We shall discuss about scabies and prickly heat in this subsection.

i) **Scabies:** These are tiny sores with much itching. Scabies is an infection by itch mite which penetrates the skin and is characterized by a rash or tiny cracks in the finger webs, the front of the wrist and elbows, the armpits, hands and feet, the waistline, the thighs and the external genitals. This condition is usually seen in those who are not maintaining personal hygiene particularly those who do not take bath regularly. There is quite severe scratching, which can cause infection, produce sores with pus and sometimes swollen lymph nodes and fever may be present.

When you come across such cases you can suggest the following measures:

- Bathe vigorously with soap and water or scrub the affected part.
- Advise them to apply Benzyl Benzoate emulsion.
- And take full course of treatment for scabies using Benzyl benzoate. It is applied as an emulsion containing 25% of benzoate. In adults it is used as it is supplied. For children it is diluted (1:1) in clean water. For infants one part of it is mixed with three parts of water.

Benzyl benzoate is applied over the whole body below the neck, preferably after hot water bath. Medicine is applied on dry skin and left for 24 hours. Application is repeated on three consecutive days. Advise patient to take hot water bath after 3 applications.

Do not apply benzyl benzoate over face.

All members of family and affected person should be treated at the same time or at least those sharing the bed.

What other measures will you take regarding scabies? You will advise:

- The family members to wear clean washed clothes.
- Wash all the clothes after the treatment of affected persons including bed linen.
- Avoid close contact with others.
- Advise not to scratch as it will cause infection

When medicine is not available:

You may advise to boil some neem leaves in water, which can be grinded with turmeric powder to form thick paste and apply on the entire body and follow the same steps as in case of other medicines.

ii) **Prickly Heat:** It is an itching rash, which occurs on the parts of the body which are most endowed with sweat glands that is trunk, armpits, forearms.

When you come across such persons suffering from prickly heat:

- Advise them to take luke warm water bath.
- Apply calamine lotion or zinc boric dusting powder.
- Advise to wear cotton clothes and take regular bath with soap.
- Advise them to use prickly heat powder during hot season.
- Avoid direct exposure to heat or sunlight.
- Avoid scratching.

3.2.2 Allergy

An allergy is response by the immune system of body against allergens. The most common human allergens, which can provoke reaction range from hives and hay fever to life threatening asthma. These include dust mite, egg, cat dander and pollen. In addition some common allergens are moulds, tobacco smoke, certain food and food additives, insect venom, perfumes, detergents and soaps which cause allergy.

When allergens enter the body first time, the immune system reacts by making defensive antibodies. The initial exposure does not produce symptoms, but the antibody becomes attached to other defensive parts of the immune system either white blood cells (Basophils) or mast cells, which are found in the airway, intestine and skin. On subsequent exposure to the allergens, the programmed antibodies bind to it and signal the mast cell or Basophils to produce allergic symptoms. Depending on the nature of the allergens symptoms range from sneezing, running nose and itching, teary eyes and high fever, headaches, skin rashes, diarrhoea and life threatening systemic anaphylactic shock or person may collapse.

When you find a person with allergy the following measures may be useful to overcome it.

Symptomatic Treatment

- To relieve nasal congestion use decongestants as prescribed.
- To alleviate itching, inflammation and other reaction, use medications and sprays for example calamine, local anesthesia etc.
- Seasonal hay fever can be minimized by staying indoors when pollen counts are high and use air conditioner if possible.
- Hay fever and other types of pollen allergies are usually treated with drugs that counteract or inhibit histamine e.g. steroids prescribed by doctor.
- Wear disposable pollution mask and eye goggles for outdoor job.

In addition to above you can advise the client to reduce exposure to common household allergens as given below:

- Discard furniture and other dust catching furnishing.
- Keep the bedroom free of clusters of objects, extra furniture and polish the surface of furniture so that dust may not get collected or can be easily removed.
- Vacuum mattress regularly if possible or remove dust with hard broom, place in air tight plastic container.
- Buy comforters and pillows that are filled with synthetic fibres rather than feathers.
- Avoid heavy drapes. Use window shades.
- Wear dust mask when vacuuming or dusting.
- Keep the bedroom window closed if possible, air-condition the room.

3.2.3 Rashes and Patches

We shall discuss about the rashes and patches as given below:

i) Rashes

Rashes are small reddish spots over the body. These may be local or general. The local skin rashes will be found in cases of scabies, prickly heat and localized allergens where itching is main symptom. The general skin rashes are main characteristics of particular disease such as measles, chickenpox, scarlet fever.

The common conditions (where rash occur) which you come across in the community are measles and chickenpox. Let us briefly describe these two conditions.

a) Measles

Measles is highly contagious disease caused by a virus. Symptoms develop after 10-14 days of exposure to virus or contact with infected person. Flu like symptoms develop, which include fever, running nose, red watery eyes and dry cough. Some children may have diarrhoea within one or two days, tiny white dots (Koplick spots) appear on the lining of the mouth. A day or two later, the characteristic skin rashes appears.

In measles, on fourth day, the rashes first appear on the face, forehead, hairline, behind ears and on the chin. It gradually spreads downwards and covers the whole body. However it remains thickest on the face. The rashes disappear after five days and form dried scars. These fall in fine flakes.

Although measles itself is mild, it carries high risk of complications such as pneumonia, ear infection and encephalitis.

Treatment of Measles

Symptomatic relief measures are given:

- Administer paracetamol tablet for fever as prescribed.
- Administer vitamin A supplements doses to reduce complications.
- Protect the eyes from glare, wash with boiled cooled water.
- Advise to take plenty of fluids and normal diet.
- Apply calamine lotion on rashes areas to prevent or reduce itching.
- Advise to take bath in lukewarm water.
- Watch for signs of complications and refer if any problem arises.

b) *Chicken Pox*

Chicken pox is a highly contagious disease caused by a varicella zoster virus, which is transmitted by direct contact with an infected person.

Itchy rashes appear. Signs of infection appear in the form of clusters of small red lumps which progress to blisters and scabs within 24 hours but new clusters continue forming for 4 or 5 days. The disease remains contagious until the final crop of blisters form scabs. The common complications of this disease is skin infection from scratching the blisters. It may lead to pneumonia and encephalitis also.

Treatment

- Child should be encouraged to drink plenty of fluids especially if there is fever.
- Give paracetamol tablets (as per standing order) if there is fever.
- Cut the nails short to prevent scratching.
- Cover the skin with soft cotton cloth.
- Give the sick child sponge bath with a lukewarm water using mild soap.
- Don't rub the skin, but keep it dry to reduce infection.
- Apply calamine lotion to alleviate itching and dry the blisters.
- For blisters in the mouth-help the child to gargle with salt water.

ii) *Patches*

Patches are large spots over the body skin. Patches on the skin may appear darker or lighter in colour than the normal skin colour. This may be seen in congenital conditions and infections.

In congenital condition, such as a mole birth mark appears as dark patch, which varies in size and shape. A mole is painless and harmless, as long as they do not show any other signs of change. But when it starts increasing in size, bleeds or gives rise to other symptoms, needs medical attention. You should immediately refer the person to higher centre.

In infection, particularly in the cases of leprosy, light coloured or coppery red patched on the skin is seen. These may be single or multiple and may be present on one or both sides of the body. In leprosy the skin patches are painless and do not itch. They are insensitive to touch, pain and temperature. If you come across such cases you can test for loss of sensation in the following ways:

- a) **Test for Touch:** Fold a stiff paper in triangular form. Ask the person to close his eyes. Touch the patch with the point of the paper alternatively with normal skin and indicate where he feels the touch. The skin patch may be insensitive.

- ii) **Test for Temperature:** Take two test tubes or small stainless steel glass, one containing hot water and one containing cold water. Ask the person to close his eyes and see whether he feels any difference in the temperature over the patch. Touch the patch alternatively with test tubes of hot or cold water and see the difference in touches.
- iii) **Test for Pain:** Ask the person to close his eyes, gently prick the patch and also prick the normal skin with a clean pin or needle. Indicate when and where he feels the pain of prick.

If you find that there is no sensation in skin patches of person which you tested, refer to health centre so that his skin smears can be examined for leprosy bacilli (*mycobacterium leprae*). If smear is found positive, the person will be referred for treatment of leprosy and to prevent complications of leprosy.

Follow up services can be provided as given below:

- Examine all contacts especially children, because children get the infection soon.
- Convince the family that if any one develops patches on the skin, he should seek early medical advice.
- Teach the patient and family about the care of hands and feet.
- Keep all contacts under observation for the appearance of any patches.
- Advise them to take treatment in full course as prescribed.

3.2.4 Ulcers, Boils and Impetigo

i) Ulcers

Ulcer is a large open sore. It is formed when there is loss of tissue at the surface of the skin. This loss of tissue results from the infection which destroys the cells. It can occur after injury or infection and chronic diseases like leprosy, syphilis, tuberculosis and filariasis etc.

Types of Ulcers

Usually you may come across with two types of ulcers that is acute and chronic. Let us understand about these.

- **Acute Ulcer:** It is painful tender and contains discharge i.e. serum. Later on the pus forms and the ulcer has foul smell and dead tissue. The edges of some ulcer are swollen and such ulcers arise from an infected cut or from skin infection.
- **Chronic Ulcer:** These accompany chronic disease, malnutrition, underlying bone infection and neglected acute ulcers. These have a foul smell, their edges are raised and spreading. They are painful.

Treatment

Ulcer can be treated by:

- Applying hot fomentation
- Applying mercurochrome dressing. It needs to be changed twice a day.
- Chronic ulcer should be referred to higher health care unit.

ii) Boils

A boil is a warm painful swelling of the skin caused by a bacterial infection in a hair follicle. Some times it results from a puncture wound or an injection given with a dirty needle.

The possible causes of boils are:

- i) Poor personal hygiene
- ii) Diabetes
- iii) Chronic illness
- iv) Nutritional deficiencies.

Signs and Symptoms

- Swelling
- Redness of the affected area.

- Tenderness of the affected area
- Pain, which sometime may be throbbing pain
- It may also be accompanied by headache and fever.

Boils that form in a cluster are called carbuncle, where they appear simultaneously in different parts of the body is called furunculosis. This occurs when the bacteria spreads from original site to other parts of the body by contaminated objects such as towels, unwashed hands or shaving equipment.

Treatment

- Advise to apply hot fomentation with magnesium sulphate solution to the affected area.
- After boil breaks continue applying hot compress and allow the pus to drain but never press and squeeze the boil.
- Give antibiotics.
- Refer the cases of carbuncles and frunculosis to a higher health care.

Advise the patients to:

- Maintain cleanliness and good personal hygiene
- Frequent change of dressing.
- Take well balanced diet with plenty of fluids and fresh vegetables.
- Take early treatment if any infection occurs.

iii) Impetigo

Impetigo is irregular spreading sores with shining yellow crusts. It is a common, contagious skin infection that causes a painless red rash with many small itchy blisters some of which contain pus. When the blisters break characteristic yellow crusts form. Some people also have a slight fever with impetigo. This is most common in children.

Causes

In children and infants infection is most commonly caused by streptococci or staphylococci bacteria.

- In some instances bacteria also form an infection elsewhere in the body, usually the nose and ear.
- In other cases, the bacteria may invade the skin through a minor cut or an insect bite that has become infectious by scratching.

The other causes include:

- Sensitivity of skin to friction, chemicals, sun and other irritants.



Fig. 3.1

- Low resistance and fatigue, poor nutrition or illness particularly in diabetes or leukemia.
- Use of steroids or anti-cancer drugs.
- Poor hygiene and crowded, unsanitary living conditions.

Signs and Symptoms

This is bacterial infection that leads to rapidly spreading sores, with shiny, yellow crusts. It often occurs on face of children, especially around the mouth.

Most impetigo infections are mild and easily cured. In some cases however streptococci impetigo can result in inflammation of kidneys, a serious condition called acute glomerulonephritis.

Staphylococcus impetigo can lead to scalded skin syndrome in which large areas of skin are shed separately leaving raw oozing patches. This complication occurs most often in babies, especially new-born.

Treatment

When you come across a patient with impetigo advise mother on self-care measure, which include:

- Wash the rash areas with antiseptic soap. Use disposable gauze or paper towels instead of cloth or towel.
- Paint the sores with gentian violet or an antibiotic cream e.g. neomycin.
- When blisters break open, remove crusting areas to expose and cleanse the lesions. Then cover the sores with gauze to prevent from touching or scratching them.
- Avoid shaving while impetigo infection.
- Never use a cortisone cream on any skin rash that might be impetigo.

Advise the patient (mother) to:

- If infection persists, consult doctor for antibiotic therapy.
- Take vitamin B and vitamin C tablets and food rich in vitamin B & C.
- Wash the infected persons' bed linen and clothing separately using the hot boiling water available to prevent spread of infection to others.

3.2.5 Ring Worm

These are circular, raised, pink patches with scaly centre especially at waist and folds. It is accompanied by marked itching.

Management

- Advise to take bath with soap and water and dry skin folds neatly.
- Apply benzoic salicylic citrate or triode (if no allergy).
- Wash and boil the clothes and dry in sun before wearing.
- If there is no improvements refer to hospital.

3.2.6 Lice Infestation

Lice are tiny parasite insects that live on blood. In humans, they infest primarily the scalp hair and genital area. There are head lice, pubic lice and body lice also.

Head Lice: They are usually less than 1/8 inch long and almost as wide. They are most often spread through direct contact, but can also be picked up by sharing brushes, combs and other clothes used over head or ears.

Pubic Lice are shorter and fatter than head lice. Their resemblance to tiny crabs with complete claws has given rise to their popular name as crabs. They are usually transmitted by sexual contact or poor personal hygiene.

Body Lice are longer and thinner than pubic lice. Infestation is common among people who live in crowded insanitary conditions.



Fig. 3.2

Signs and Symptoms

Like in all infestation the primary symptoms are intense itching, which is a reaction to insects' saliva.

- Head lice tends to cause itching behind ears and along the hairline at the back of the neck.
- Pubic lice which sometimes also infect beards and eyebrows typically produce itching in the genital area.
- Itching from body lice occurs mostly in the shoulders, trunk, buttocks and abdomen.

Treatment

When you find cases of lice infestation, advise the clients regarding the treatment of lice with shampoos, which are medicated to kill lice.

- Start by killing adult lice with medicated shampoo by following direction of use given on the package carefully.
- Then use a fine toothed comb to remove eggs bonded to the shaft part of hair.
- Wipe nits from the comb frequently.
- Repeat the process after a week or 10 days.

When shampoo is not available treat the head lice as follows:

- Make solution of equal parts of kerosene and hair oil. Apply the solution in the evening to each separate strand of hair so that the solution comes in contact with all the lice and nits.
- After applying solution wrap the head in towel
- Wash hair with soap on next morning and comb it with a fine toothed comb
- Soak the brush and comb in kerosene oil to remove the lice present in it. If lice have settled on the eye lashes applying petroleum jelly 3 or 4 times a day which will banish them within a week. So advise the same to clients.
- Body lice are eliminated by bathing and discarding or fumigating clothing. You have to advise the clients in the same directions. Maintain personnel hygiene. Use separate bed and clothes to prevent others in the family from getting lice infestation.

Check Your Progress 1

i) List the common minor ailments of skin you come across in the community.

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ii) What measures you will take if a child is brought to you with scabies?

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iii) What advice you will give if you find some one having head lice.

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3.3 MINOR AILMENTS OF EAR

In this section we shall discuss about minor ailment of ear and eye. We shall begin with minor ailments of ear and then focus on minor ailments of eye.

Common minor ailments of ear, which you come across, are earache, ear discharge, otitis media and foreign body in ear.

Let us understand about each of these ailments.

3.3.1 Earache and Ear Discharge

i) **Earache**

Earache refers to the pain in the ear. The pain is usually caused by infection, excessive ear wax and also objects that injure the external canal or lodge there, cause earache. The other possible causes are tooth abscess, a gum infection, sinusitis and temporo mandibular joint problems and air-travel (barratries).

When you come across the person with earache you must find out the causes by asking the following:

- Location and area of pain
- Whether pain started gradually or suddenly
- Progress and duration of pain
- Possibility of foreign body entering the ear
- Any discharge from the ear
- Dizziness
- Sign of infection in the throat or other parts
- Observe the ear for redness, discharge, any foreign body.

Treatment

Treatment of earache varies according to the cause and site of earache. The usual infection of the ear includes external otitis, otitis media and labyrinthitis. If the person comes with earache with or without fever, you should adopt following measures:

- Apply sulphacetamide ear drops as per standing order
- Give acetyl salicylic tablets as per standing order

- If pain persists after 3 days refer for medical help.
- Usually doctors will prescribe antibiotic either orally or ear drops. They may also prescribe anti-fungal or corticosteroids drops if needed.

You may also take following measures:

- Apply alternative warm and cold compress to reduce pain, that is, apply a hot wet towel to the painful ear for two minutes then cold towel for few seconds and repeat this for 4 to 5 times in an hour till pain reduces. End with the cold towel.
- Ask them to take special care when blowing the nose, avoid sniffing.
- Ask them to keep the ear canal dry when taking bath, shampooing and showering.
- Advise them to plug the ear by cotton wool during travel by air and during swimming.
- Advise the person to hold the nose and close the mouth and to swallow and blow out the cheeks.
- If there is hardened wax – put soda glycerine or solwax one drop three times a day to soften the earwax.
- Put 3-5 drops of baby oil or clean coconut oil inside the ear daily for 3 days or 2-3 drops of boroglycerin ear drops once or twice a day. Then flush with warm sterile water using the sterile syringe.
- If no improvement, refer the case for medical aid / treatment.

ii) Ear Discharge

The discharge from the ear may be either chronic or acute. It may be thin and watery or thick and purulent. The discharge or infection may be due to bacteria or fungi.

Bacterial infection is usually accompanied by an inflammation of nose and throat, which leads to (otitis external), otitis media, or labyrinthitis. Most bacterial infections are usually acute in nature.

Fungal infection is more common in dry, dusty environment and gives rise to foul smelling and thick discharge.

The general symptoms of discharge may include, pain, fever and difficulty in hearing. The child may pull at ear and show irritability. The general management includes the following:

- clean ear gently with cotton wool on sticks.
- Instill ear drops as per standing orders.
- Put cotton plugs.
- Give antibiotics or sulfa drugs (as per standing orders) if there is fever.
- Refer the case if the condition does not improve with these treatment.

3.3.2 Otitis External

Otitis External refers to an infection of the external ear canal, which extends from the ear opening to the eardrum. Usually it develops when water becomes trapped in the canal, creating a favourable conditions for a fungal or bacterial infection. Other causes include allergies and a foreign object or chemical irritants in the ear canal.

The signs and symptoms of otitis external are:

- Pain in the ear
- Itching
- Reddish swelling in ear canal
- Decreased hearing (if the ear is blocked)
- There may be pus

When you come across these type of cases you should take the following measures:

- Advise to put drops of water with vinegar in the ear 3-4 times a day. Mix a spoon of vinegar with 1 spoon of boiled water.

- Administer analgesics and antipyretic for pain and fever as per standing order.
- If there is fever, pus and painful nodes refer to hospital and follow up care by giving prescribed medicines.

3.3.3 Foreign Body in Ear

The foreign body may be in the form of solid objects put in the ear and insects or wax.

Solid Objects: These may be round or irregular in shape for example, children may put a grain or any object in their ears while playing.

Insects : Sometimes without the knowledge of the individuals insects may enter or crawl into the ear.

Wax: Ear glands in the external ear usually produce wax, but excessive wax formation can block ear passage and can cause infection.

Management

When you come across the person with foreign body in the ear, you ask about the following:

- If anything has entered into the ear.
- Is there any complaint of itching or wriggling sensation in the ear (may found in case of insect).
- Any problem with hardened wax prior to it.
- Take temperature if there is acute pain or fever.
- Do not attempt to remove the foreign body if you are not expert in the same.



Fig. 3.3

- If it is insect. Put warm coconut or baby oil in the ear to kill the insect first then flush out the dead insect with warm sterile water using syringe.
- If grain or any object is inside, pull the outer ear outward and upward to straighten the canal and shake the head bending the effected ear downward.
- If it cannot be removed, seek medical help/refer the case.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) List common minor ailments of the ear.

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ii) List the main causes of earache.

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iii) What steps you should take when there is an insect in the ear canal?

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3.4 MINOR AILMENTS OF EYE

You have already studied some of the emergency problems of eye in unit 2. Some of the common minor ailments of eye which you may come across during your community visit or at your health centre include conjunctivitis, style, eye injuries and foreign body in the eye.

Minor ailments of eye if not treated promptly, can become serious problems or lead to complications.

Let us discuss each of these problems in the following sub-sections.

3.4.1 Conjunctivitis

It is an inflammatory condition of conjunctiva. It is also called 'sore eye' or 'pink eyes'. It spreads quickly in a family or a school. It is caused by bacteria or virus.

Do you know what are the signs and symptoms?

- Sticky purulent discharge from eyes.
- Pain in eyes.
- Redness in eyes.
- Eyelids may stick together due to purulent discharge during sleep.

Care During Eye Infection

- Clean eyes with clean boiled warm water and clean boiled cotton swabs or clean boiled pieces of cotton clothes.
- Instill sulphacetamide eye drops or as prescribed by the doctor.
- Give oral antibiotics as prescribed if the infection is severe or continues for more than three days.
- Refer the case to hospital if it is epidemic or if the symptoms do not disappear after treatment.

3.4.2 Stye

This is an infection around one eyelash. It starts as a small red swelling on the edge of eyelid. It may get very swollen and painful. One may get many styes one after the other. The eye may be red and sometimes there is purulent discharge also:

Management

- Apply warm salt water or boric acid solution compresses.
- Apply antibiotic/chloromycetin ointment three times a day as per standing order.
- Give analgesics if required.
- If pus is formed, it should never be squeezed.
- Give antibiotic as prescribed.
- Refer if abscess is formed.

3.4.3 Eye Injuries

Injuries in eyes may be caused due to fall, fire works or foreign bodies and chemicals. You should take following steps when you come across a person with eye injuries.

- In case of injuries give first aid to protect eye from danger.
- Wash eyes with clean water.
- Remove foreign body with minimum discomfort.
- If bleeding occurs, control with help of eye bandage and dressing, and
- Refer the person as early as possible to prevent complications.

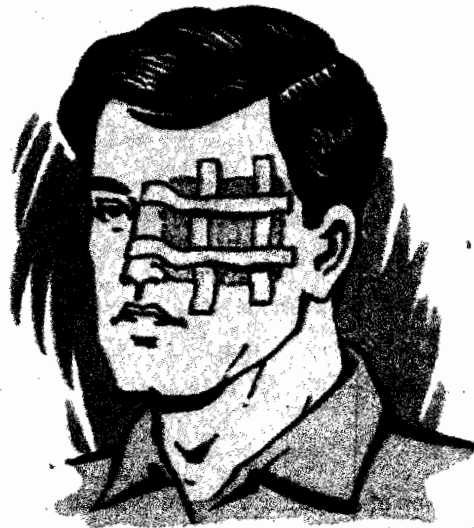


Fig. 3.4

Check Your Progress 3

i) How you will manage eye infection at home?

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ii) What should be done where a person comes with eye injuries?

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3.5 MINOR AILMENTS OF CIRCULATORY SYSTEM

Minor ailments affecting blood, blood vessels or heart require proper management at home before referral to appropriate health centre. In this section we shall focus on anaemia and high blood pressure.

3.5.1 Anaemia

In anaemia blood gets thin due to lack of red blood cells. Anaemia is mainly caused by iron deficiency.

Signs and Symptoms

- Pale lips, tongue, nails and conjunctiva
- Fatigue (person gets tired easily).
- Haemoglobin (Hb) may be below 10 gms.

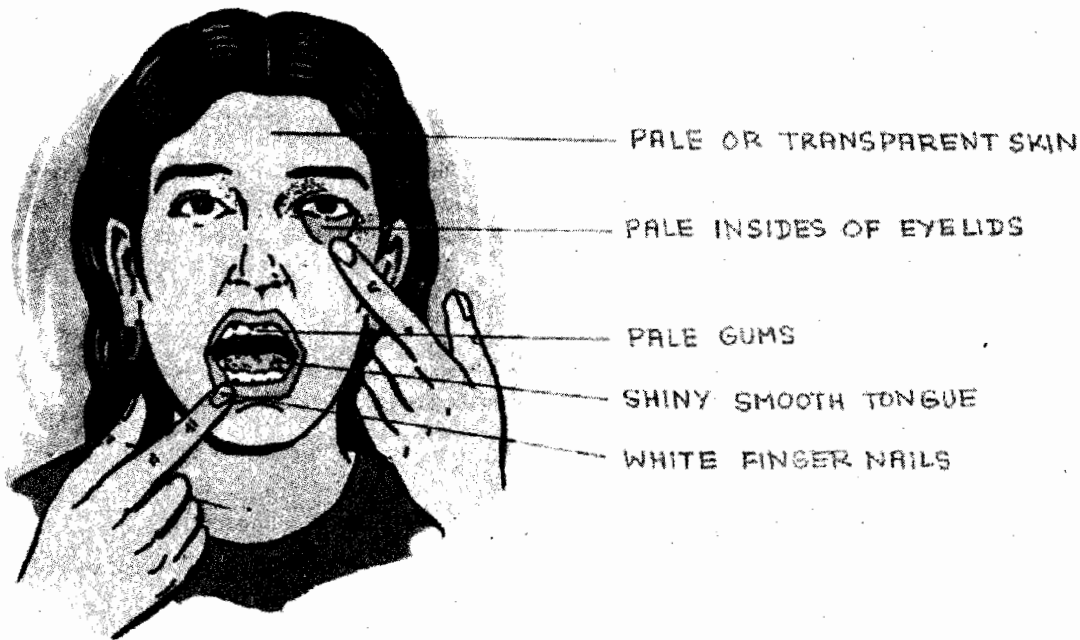


Fig. 3.5

Do you know that Anaemia can also result due to hemorrhage, malaria, piles or pregnancy and child birth.

As a health worker, you have to prevent and correct Anaemia. You have to take the following steps:

- Advise the community/family to take diet rich in iron, like green leafy vegetables, dals, meat, liver and eggs, beans, peas, amarnath leaves, jaggery.
- Give iron and folic acid tablets prophylactically.
- Treat malaria, piles or any other bleeding.
- Advise stool examination for worms and treat worm infestation if worms are present.
- Provide good antenatal care during pregnancy and teach mothers about importance of spacing and limitation of family to enable her to gain health.
- Advise to check hemoglobin level periodically
- Refer if anaemia continues for a long time.

3.5.2 High Blood Pressure

High Blood Pressure means rise in blood pressure (more than 140/90 mm Hg.).

High blood pressure is associated with other diseases like pregnancy, kidney and heart problems etc. Patient complains of headache, shortness of breathe, fatigue and palpitation. Record the blood pressure, if it is high refer for regular treatment to the hospital.

Advice to take following measures:

- Reduce weight if patient is over weight
- Salt restriction
- Avoid smoking or alcohol
- Adequate rest
- Yoga and meditation

3.6 MINOR AILMENTS OF REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

Minor ailments of reproductive system, which you may commonly come across are: Amenorrhoea, vaginal discharge, breast lump etc.

Amenorrhoea

Amenorrhoea means absence of menstruation. You may observe for other signs of pregnancy, lactation, menopause or emotional trauma etc. If nothing is reported, refer for further investigations to hospital.

Dysmenorrhoea

Dysmenorrhoea means painful menstruation. Client complains of dull or severe pain in lower abdomen and backache. Avoid constipation. Empty the bladder frequently. Advise to take Aspirin tablet or Balargan tablets to reduce pain. If dysmenorrhoea continues, refer the client to doctor.

Vaginal Bleeding

It may be associated with pregnancy i.e. antepartum or it may not be associated with pregnancy. It can be due to abortion, menorrhagia, use of oral contraceptives and insertion of intra-uterine device.

How will you manage these problems:

- If bleeding is during pregnancy you must advise bed rest to the mother.
- Give ergometrin maleate tablets or injection if needed in menorrhagia as per standing order.
- Give vitamin C and calcium gluconate tablets.
- Refer to the hospital/doctor if there is no improvement with all clothes soaked in blood.

Vaginal Discharge

This is a common problem. Discharge may be white and milky or yellowish, thick and curdy, greenish and frothy as in (Trichomoniasis) foul smelling, and blood stained. There may be itching on vulva. Sometimes the discharge may be due to insertion of intra-uterine device (IUD).

What measures will you take:

- Advise to maintain personal hygiene.
- Clean vulva and vagina with cotton swab and warm saline.
- In case of itching gentian violet may be applied.
- Give analgesics (painkiller), as per standing order if there is no improvement, refer to the doctor.

Genital Sores

There may be punctured ulcers with hard margins on penis or vulva. This may be due to sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis etc. Sores and swelling on genital organs may be painful or painless.

Advice for personal hygiene and wash with antiseptic lotion and take sitz bath. Advise the person to avoid sexual relations until condition is cured and is no longer communicable.

Breast Lump

Breast lump is mainly due to breast abscess, which is painful. For such problems treatment may include antibiotics. But to relieve discomfort apply hot or cold compress or express breast milk (in case of lactating mother). Painless breast lump could be cancer. Early reporting and treatment can prevent further spread.

Check Your Progress 4

- i) What health teaching you will give when you find a woman having vaginal discharge and sores over a perineal area?

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ii) What advice you will give to mother who complains of hardness in her breast?

3.7 MINOR AILMENTS OF NEURO MUSCULAR SYSTEM

We shall focus on headache and back pain.

Headache

It is very common problem. Headache could be due to stress, nervous tension, lack of sleep or rest, eyestrain, indigestion or even constipation. It can be relieved by proper rest and sleep. Analgesics may be given if it is not relieved by rest and sleep. There can be pressure headache due to emotional disturbance, which can be relieved by gentle massage. Headache is also associated with disorders like common cold, fever, ear discharge and sinusitis etc. which can be reduced by rest and cold compresses and treating the cause. Discussed in details in Unit 2.

Back Pain

Back pain may also result due to various problems like heavy work, injury, exposure to cold or old age. It may also be associated with menstruation or pregnancy.

Do you know that back pain is not a disease but a symptom of various conditions such as pregnancy, menstruation, uterus problems, spinal problems, muscle strain.

Examine carefully for any symptoms of swelling.

- Advise proper posture and rest.
- Give analgesics.
- Refer if symptoms do not subside.

Do you know the back pain in most cases is caused by lifting heavy weights, so advise for lifting heavy weight in proper way by bending knees and using strong thigh muscles rather than back muscles.

3.8 MINOR AILMENTS OF URINARY SYSTEM

Ailments of urinary system include urinary infection, renal stones or tumours. Person may complain of difficulty in passing urine, burning micturation or even blood in urine.

You may inquire about duration of symptoms and fever. Observe for any discharge per vagina or urethra and changes in colour of urine. Advice personal hygiene, plenty of fluid intake and specific treatment for infection or stones. Analgesics can be given to relieve pain. Constant observation can help in early diagnosis.

Patient may come with the problem of shooting pain (renal colic) accompanied by vomiting, sweating, difficulty in urination, blood in urine etc. This will indicate renal stone. You can advise the patient to take plenty of fluids, give tablet Balargan and refer immediately to appropriate health centre.

Check Your Progress 5

i) List the main causes of headache.

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ii) List main symptoms of urinary infection.

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ai) What advise you will give to a person who comes to you with the complain of burning micturation.

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3.9 OTHER SELECTED MINOR AILMENTS

You may come across with some other Minor ailments commonly occurring in the community which you have to manage. They are listed below and the measures which you will take are also explained:

i) **Jaundice**

- It is a yellowish discoloration of skin and eyes. It may be a sign of disease in liver, gall bladder, pancreas or blood.
- It may be accompanied by nausea, vomiting and itching of skin
- Urine may be dark colour.

What measures you will take?

- Advise to take bed rest
- Advise to take plenty of sugar-cane juice and sweetened fruit juice.
- Advise to avoid fatty foods.
- Refer case to hospital

ii) **Kwashiorkor**

It is a severe form of malnutrition caused by not eating enough proteins i.e. there is a protein deficiency.

Signs and Symptoms

- Swelling of face
- Hands and feet
- Patchy peeling of skin
- Brittle hair
- Hair lose its natural colour
- Poor appetite, weak cry, unhappy look.
- Slow activity
- Likely to have diarrhoea.

WET MALNUTRITION
OR KWASHIORKOR
-FROM NOT EATING ENOUGH PROTEIN-

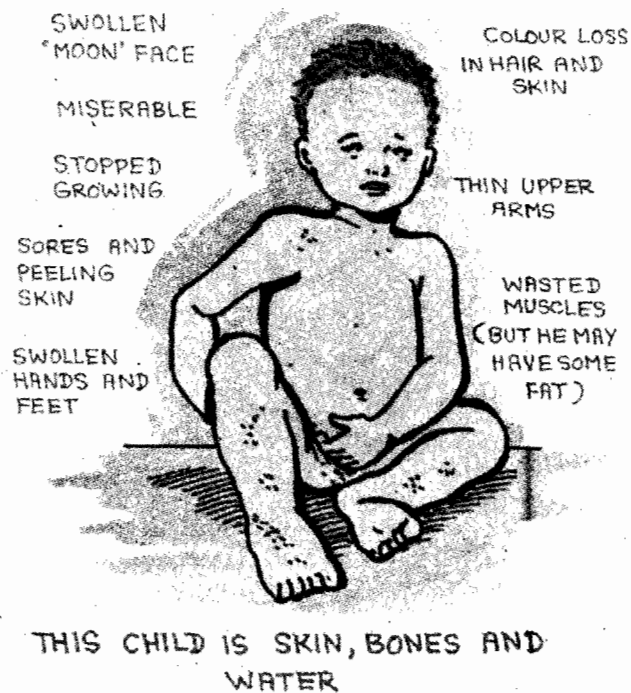


Fig. 3.6

Management

- Give frequent small feeds rich in proteins (eggs, chicken, fish, soyabean, groundnuts)
- Advise to give content of Hyderabad mix
- Assess the grade of malnutrition
- Severe cases may be referred to hospital

iii) **Marasmus**

It is a condition caused by starvation i.e. not eating enough of food. This is caused by deficiency of calories. (Fig. 3.7)

Signs and Symptoms

- Face is widened and child has anxious looks.
- Limbs are very thin; pot belly, no fat under the skin
- Abdomen bloated
- Gross loss of weight
- Diarrhoea is often present.

How to Manage?

- Give frequent small high calories and high protein feeds
- Give more quantity of food
- Advise to give content of Hyderabad mix
- Assess the grade of malnutrition, you may have to refer the case.

iv) **Convulsions**

It is an uncontrolled fit. It is characterised by sudden jerking of a part or all of the person's body as in meningitis or epilepsy.

**DRY MALNUTRITION
OR MARASMUS**
- FROM NOT EATING ENOUGH -



THIS CHILD IS JUST SKIN AND BONES

Fig. 3.7

Signs and Symptoms

- Child becomes stiff
- Teeth are clenched
- Twitching of muscles
- Difficulty to open mouth
- Flushed face
- Eyes suddenly roll upward which may be accompanied by high fever.

Management

- Give side position
- Clean the airways
- Cover the child properly
- Prevent the child from injury
- Loosen the clothing and ensure fresh air
- Do not restrain
- Refer the case

v) *Worm Infestation*

The worms live in intestines and cause diseases. Worm infestation is very common problem in the community and you need to educate the community about the same. There are many types of worms. Those which are large are sometimes seen in stools such as round worms, thread worms and tape worms. Hookworms and whip worms may be present in the gut without being seen in stools. They are transmitted by faecal oral route.

You have studied worm infestation in Course 2, Block 4, Unit 5 in detail. Please refer that unit.

Signs and Symptoms

- Anaemia.

- Loss of appetite.
- A child with many worms will be malnourished and with distension of abdomen.
- Pain in abdomen.
- Itching at anus or vulva in case of thread worms. There may be indigestion, weakness, convulsions or asthma.

Management

- Advise to use footwear when walking in the field to prevent hook worm infestation.
- Discourage open air field defecation—use latrines.
- Advise to wash cloths and bed linen properly.
- Advise to cut their nails short and wash hands often.
- Never eat raw or uncooked meat.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating them raw.
- Teach children not to eat anything dropped on the floor and not to eat mud.
- Give piperazine citrate or mebendazol. In adults 4 gms of piperazine citrate single dose is administered preferably in the evening.
- In children piperazine citrate is given in the dose of 75 mg/kg of body weight upto 3.5 gms as single dose.

3.10 LET US SUM UP

Minor ailments are very common in the community, and it is expected that you are able to help and guide community members to manage minor ailments at home with simple nursing measures or home remedies. Such steps will also reduce load of referral centres and encourage community to be self-reliant. You have learnt about most common minor ailments related to various body systems such as skin, eye, ear, reproductive, neuro muscular, urinary system. You have also learnt about other specific minor ailments such as convulsion, marasmus, jaundice, worms etc. This knowledge will help you in the delivery of effective health care to the community at large.

3.11 MODEL ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- Common minor ailments of skin are
 - Scabies
 - Prickly heat
 - Rashes
 - Patches
 - Lice infestation
 - Ulcers
 - Boils
- Measures taken for scabies
 - Full course of treatment with B.B emulsion
 - Personal hygiene
 - Prevent further spread
 - Isolation and proper disinfection of clothing
- Use of medicated shampoo
 - Use of Kerosene and hair oil for head lice treatment
 - Personal hygiene and hair hygiene

Check Your Progress 2

- i) Earache, otitis media and foreign body in the ear.
- ii) ● Excessive wax
● Objects, insects in ear canal
● Injuries external, internal
- iii) Try to kill insect by putting some ear drops or warm coconut oil. Flush out the dead insect with warm saline water using syringe.

Check Your Progress 3

- i) ● Cleaning eyes
● Eye wash and applicator of eye drops
● Give oral antibiotics if advised
● Refer to hospital if does not recover
- ii) ● Wash eyes with cold water
● Remove foreign body with minimum discomfort
● Apply bandage if bleeding or injury due to foreign body
● Refer immediately

Check Your Progress 4

- i) ● Advise to maintain personal hygiene.
● Clean vulva and vagina with cotton swab and warm saline.
● In case of itching gentian violet may be applied.
● Give analgesics (painkiller), if there is no improvement, refer to doctor.
- ii) ● Check if hardness is painful or painless.
● Observe for any breast abscess
● Refer for early diagnosis and treatment

Check Your Progress 5

- i) Stress, nervousness, lack of sleep, eye strain and indigestion.
- ii) ● fever
● difficulty in passing urine
● burning micturition, blood in urine
- iii) ● Personal hygiene
● plenty of fluids orally
● Refer early diagnosis and treatment