In pregnancy, infections are a key cause of anemia and can be prevented by sleeping under a bednet and taking intermittent preventive treatment (IPTp) for malaria and deworming pills.

For infants, young children, and mothers, delayed cord clamping, sleeping under a bednet, exclusive breastfeeding, and birth spacing reduce the risk of becoming anemic.

For young children, continued breastfeeding and adequate complementary feeding (including micronutrients), preventing and treating malaria, and taking deworming pills can prevent anemia and promote healthy growth.

In adolescence, IFA supplements and deworming pills help prevent anemia. Family planning delays the age at first birth.

In 2011, 56% of pregnant women in Nepal consumed 90 or more IFA tablets.

55% of women received deworming medication during their last pregnancy (2011).

70% of infants in Nepal are exclusively breastfed during the first six months after birth (2011).

In 2011, 24% of children 6-23 months of age consumed foods rich in iron.*

More than one in four (28%) married adolescent girls expressed an unmet need for family planning (2011).

*A includes meat (including organ meat).

A multisectoral approach to prevent anemia will save lives and improve the wellbeing of mothers, infants, and children.
Anemia has substantial negative effects on the health and economic wellbeing of nations and communities. Children with anemia experience irrevocable cognitive and developmental delays and exhibit decreased worker productivity as adults.\(^1\) Globally, maternal anemia increases the risk of pre-term delivery and low birth weight, and iron-deficiency anemia underlies 115,000 maternal deaths and 591,000 perinatal deaths each year.\(^2\)

**Prevalence of anemia among children 6-59 months and women 15-49 years, by subregion**

Source: Nepal DHS, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subregion</th>
<th>Children 6-59 months of age</th>
<th>Women 15-49 years of age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The DHS hemoglobin levels used to diagnose anemia in children 6-59 months in grams/dL are: Mild: 10.0-10.9; Moderate: 7.0-9.9; Severe <7.0; Any <11.0.

The DHS hemoglobin levels used to diagnose anemia in non-pregnant women 15-49 years of age in grams/dL are: Mild: 10.0-10.9; Moderate: 7.0-9.9; Severe <7.0; Any <12.0.


### Status of Policies or Strategies to Support Reductions in Anemia*

- ✔️ IFA for pregnant women
- ✔️ IFA for women of reproductive age
- ✔️ IFA for adolescent girls
- ✔️ Iron and/or folic acid fortification legislation
- ✔️ Delayed cord clamping
- ✔️ Dietary diversity for complementary feeding
- ✔️ Micronutrient powders for children
- ✔️ Long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) for household use
- ✔️ Indoor residual spraying
- ✔️ National policy on sanitation
- ✔️ IPTp for pregnant women
- ✔️ Malaria diagnosis and treatment
- ✔️ Deworming for children
- ✔️ Deworming for pregnant women
- ✔️ Breastfeeding
- ✔️ No policy
- ✔️ Policy pending
- ✔️ Policy in place
- ✔️ Missing documentation

\(^*\)Information from the Global database on the Implementation of Nutrition Action (GINA) (https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en) or country documentation. The status of policies and strategies have been identified to the best of our knowledge. Revisions and updates are welcome.

1. Not part of national malaria strategy due to low prevalence of malaria during pregnancy.

Evidence-informed WHO guidance can be found here: http://www.who.int/elena/en/
Anemia is a Preventable Condition—Simple Interventions Can Have a Huge Impact

Increase iron uptake and stores

IFA supplementation among pregnant women increased from 2006 to 2011

Received any IFA during pregnancy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Took &lt;60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took 60-89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took 90+</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contraception use modestly increased from 2001 to 2011

Few children 6-23 months old were fed according to 3 key Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices in 2011

1. Continued breastfeeding, or feeding of milk/milk products to non-breastfed children
2. Feeding children solid foods, semi-solid foods, and milk products from the minimum number of food groups
3. Feeding children solid foods, semi-solid foods, and milk products the minimum number of times

Reduce iron losses and infection

Exclusive breastfeeding of children <6 months has not changed since 2001

The majority of households in Nepal have access to an improved source of drinking water*

The percentage of households with an improved latrine/toilet has steadily increased since 2001*

*Definition of 'improved latrine/toilet' has changed slightly across years. See Demographic and Health Surveys.

*Definition of 'improved drinking water source' has changed slightly across years. See Demographic and Health Surveys.

All data is from Nepal Demographic and Health Surveys unless otherwise noted

The majority of children and women received deworming medication in 2011*

Deworming medication given in past 6 months for children and during last pregnancy for women

*Definition of 'improved drinking water source' has changed slightly across years. See Demographic and Health Surveys.

"Breast milk, milk, or milk products" refers to breastfeeding or feeding of milk/milk products to non-breastfed children.

"4+ food groups" refers to feeding children solid foods, semi-solid foods, and milk products from the minimum number of food groups.

"Minimum meal frequency" refers to feeding children solid foods, semi-solid foods, and milk products the minimum number of times.
Multiple Sectors Play a Role in Anemia Prevention and Treatment

Stunting and anemia share similar risk factors and are responsive to many of the same interventions.

**Agriculture**
- Increase income and reduce poverty
- Production of biofortified and iron-rich crops
- Small livestock/poultry
- Dietary diversity

**Health**
- Iron supplementation
- Deworming
- Breastfeeding and complimentary feeding
- Family planning
- Malaria prevention and treatment
- Delayed cord clamping

**Water and Sanitation**
- Improved latrines
- Handwashing
- Access to clean water
- Livestock management
- Infectious disease prevention

**Education**
- Female literacy
- Health education
- Hygiene education
- Family planning education
- Nutrition education

**Data Sources:**
- Profile prepared September 2015.

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