

National Deworming Day (NDD)

9th Feb, 2019



What to study?

For Prelims and Mains: NDD- features and need, what is deworming and the need for it, and what are Intestinal parasitic worms?

Context: The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) is conducting its eighth round of National Deworming Day (NDD).

NDD is observed bi-annually on 10th February and 10th August in all states and UTs followed by mop-up activities. This year the NDD is being conducted on 8th February and mop up day on the 14th February.

About the National Deworming Day:

1. The National Deworming Day is a **single fixed-day approach to treating intestinal worm infections in all children aged 1- 19 years.**
2. It will **mobilize health personnel, state governments and other stakeholders** to prioritize investment in control of **Soil Transmitted Helminth (STH)** infections one of the most common infections.
3. **All the children are provided deworming tablet in schools and anganwadis. Besides the deworming tablet, various health promotion activities** related to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) are organised in schools and anganwadis.
4. The NDD program is a cost-effective program at scale that continues to reach crores of children and adolescents with deworming benefits through a safe medicine **Albendazole.**

Background:

India carries the highest burden of worm infestation and 64% of Indian population less than 14 years of age are at risk of Soil Transmitted Helminths (STH) or worms' infestation (WHO). Soil Transmitted Helminths (STH) interfere with nutrients uptake in children; can lead to anaemia, malnourishment and impaired mental and physical development. The situation of undernutrition and anaemia which is linked to STH ranges from 40% to 70% in different population groups across the country (WHO). They also pose a serious threat to children's education and productivity later in life.

About Intestinal parasitic worms:

They are **large multicellular organisms**, which when mature can generally be seen with the naked eye. They are also known as Helminths. They are often referred to as intestinal worms even though not all helminths reside in the intestines.

Why this is a cause for concern?

1. Parasitic worms in children interfere with nutrient uptake, and can contribute to anaemia, malnourishment, and impaired mental and physical development. Parasitic worms have also

debilitating consequences on the health and education of children, and on their long-term earning potential.

2. According to the 2012 report 'Children in India', published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 48% of children under the age of 5 years are stunted and 19.8% are wasted, indicating that half of the country's children are malnourished.

Significance of NDD:

Anganwadi and school-based mass deworming program is safe, cost-effective, and can reach crores of children quickly. Deworming has been shown to reduce absenteeism in schools; improve health, nutritional, and learning outcomes; and increase the likelihood of higher-wage jobs later in life.

Deworming with the safe and beneficial Albendazole tablet is an evidence-based, globally-accepted, and effective solution to controlling worm infections. National Deworming Day has, thus, been designed to reach all children, regardless of socio-economic background.

To be looked in UPSC Paper 2 Topic:

1. Issues related to health and management of human resources.