



PREVENTING VITAMIN A DEFICIENCY

By

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What is Vitamin A?

- Essential fat-soluble micronutrient
- Daily requirements vary from 180-450 mg/day of retinol or its equivalent.
- Amount required depends on age, sex and physiological status of individuals



Sources of Vitamin A

- Both plant and animal sources
- Common sources include green leafy vegetables, carrots, papaya, red palm oil, egg yolk, liver, mango, tomato, pumpkin, spinach, chili pepper, butter, meat and dairy products.



Prevalence of Vitamin A Deficiency

- Nationally, the prevalence of Vitamin A deficiency is as follows:
 - Under five children: 23.2%
 - Mothers: 13.0%
 - Pregnant women: 19.0%



Effects of Vitamin A Deficiency

- Visual impairment
- Blindness
- Increased risk of severity and death from measles and diarrhoea
- Increases susceptibility to infection
- Lower immunity and frequent ill-health
- Poor growth



Strategies to prevent Vitamin A deficiency

- Supplementation: For children 6 months to 5 years, women who have just put to bed, malnourished children, children infected with measles and children with diarrhoea.
- Food fortification: In Nigeria, it is mandatory to fortify Vegetable oil, wheat flour and sugar with Vitamin A.
- Dietary diversification: Consumption of Vitamin A-rich foods, Nutrition education and social, marketing techniques for behavioral modification



Warnings!

- Vitamin A supplements can cause toxic effects if taken in excessive quantities
- Pregnant women should not take Vitamin A supplements at any time during pregnancy
- To prevent Vitamin A Deficiency during pregnancy, all pregnant women are advised to eat a piece of liver once a week as a preventive measure.