



Importance of Antenatal Care in Nursing

Introduction

Antenatal care [1] is a systematic supervision of a woman during pregnancy at regular intervals to monitor a). Maternal wellbeing; b). Fetal wellbeing; c). Progress of fetal growth. Antenatal care or prenatal care involves regular check-up, health screening, education, and pregnancy. It is given to the pregnant women from the time of confirmation of pregnancy until the beginning of labor.

Components of Antenatal Care: [2]

- Health Monitoring (Assessment):** Taking physical examination (weight, blood pressure, abdominal check-up) monitoring baby's growth and heartbeat.
- Screening and Investigations:** Blood investigation includes haemoglobin and sugar level and infections like HIV, Hepatitis, urine test includes protein, sugar, genetic screening includes Down's syndrome, thalassemia ultra sound screening includes growth and anomaly scan.
- Health Education and Counselling:** Guidance on diet, safe exercises, hygiene, recognizing labor signs and new born care. Healthcare counselling about birth preparedness. Breastfeeding, family planning in case of multiple pregnancy.
- Nutritional Support:** Advices on balanced diet and supplements such as iron and calcium.
- Preventive Measures:** Iron and folic acid supplements and managing existing conditions.
- Emotional Support:** Addressing anxieties and mental wellbeing.

7. Immunization: Administrating recommended vaccines.

WHO general guidelines of antenatal care [3]

Minimum Contacts: At least 8 visits are recommended to reduce maternal and newborn death includes.

First Trimester: Visit during 8–12 weeks for confirmation of pregnancy baseline test and planning.

Second Trimester: Two antenatal visits for regular checkups and anomaly scans at 20th and 26th week of pregnancy.

Third Trimester: Five visits at 30th weeks, 34th week, 36th week, 38th week, and 40th week. This visit mainly focusing fetal movement, preparation for labor and management of labor pain.

Importance of Antenatal Care [4]

- Early detection of gestational diabetic mellitus, preeclampsia, fetal abnormalities
- Reduces maternal and fetal mortality.
- Empowers knowledge of parents for making decisions.
- Promoting healthy life of mother and child.

References

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