Managing Anaemia
In India, anaemia is a common condition among women. The chances of a mother having a delivery before term, or even dying are higher among mothers with severe anaemia.

This booklet tells you how to deal with anaemia in pregnant women.
How do you know you have anaemia?

Anaemia can be detected by a simple blood test. This blood test measures the amount of haemoglobin (Hb) in the blood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Hb level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>More than 11g/dl</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate anaemia</td>
<td>7-11 g/dl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe anaemia</td>
<td>Less than 7 g/dl</td>
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What are the common symptoms of anaemia?

The main problem faced is a feeling of weakness and sometimes breathlessness. On examination, the tongue and the nails and even palm of the hand would appear pale. Sometimes, in very severe cases, general swelling would be there.
Why is anaemia dangerous for pregnant women?

Women with severe anaemia are more at risk of having a delivery before term. This means their babies are more at risk too.

Severe anaemia also puts a woman's life at risk during delivery.
What can a pregnant woman do to make sure she has no anaemia?

It is very important for pregnant women to have a regular check-up and also get their blood tested for anaemia.

They should take the prescribed dose of Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) tablets.
In addition, both during pregnancy and for some time after delivery, they should eat the right foods.

These include meat and liver, green leafy vegetables as well as other vegetables and fruits, whole pulses and jaggery.
How many IFA tablets are required?

Even if a pregnant woman does not have anaemia, she should take one tablet of Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) every day for at least 100 days, after the first trimester.

A pregnant woman with anaemia needs to take at least 200 tablets of IFA. She should take two tablets of IFA per day for 100 days.
A non-anaemic woman should take one tablet of IFA for at least 100 days after delivery.

An anaemic woman should take two tablets of IFA for at least 100 days after delivery.
The tablets must be taken preferably on an empty stomach early in the morning.

But if a woman has nausea or abdominal pain, she may take the tablet after meals or at night.
The tablets must not be taken along with tea, coffee, milk or calcium.

A woman may feel less tired after taking the tablets for a few days. Even so, she must continue taking the tablets for as long as has been recommended.
What about the problems that taking IFA may cause?

Nausea, constipation and black stools are some of the common side effects of taking IFA. These are not serious, and will reduce over time.
Drinking a lot of water and eating plenty of leafy vegetables and fruits helps in cases of constipation.
IFA does not make the baby’s skin darker. On the contrary, it helps the mother and her baby remain healthy.
Is there any other care an anaemic woman needs to take during pregnancy?

A woman with anaemia should make sure she has her delivery in a facility equipped to manage complications.

A severely anaemic woman may need blood transfusion which would be available at the nearest PHC/CHC/DH.