

## Preventing Vitamin A deficiency in Children

To prevent vitamin A deficiency for good health in young children:

- ❑ Babies less than six months should be exclusively breastfed. A mother's milk is rich in vitamin A.
- ❑ After 6 months of age, start introducing your baby to other vitamin A rich foods like dark green leafy vegetables as well as yellow and orange fruits and vegetables. Mashed, cooked green leaves, pumpkins, paw paw, mangoes, well-cooked liver, or any other vitamin A rich foods when available should be added to a child's porridge.
- ❑ Some fat or oil should also be added to a child's diet every day. This helps the body to make use of vitamin A.
- ❑ All children should be given plenty of vitamin A rich foods.
- ❑ All children from 6 months to 59 months should be given vitamin A capsules.



Produced by the National Food and Nutrition Commission with financial support from SUN-FUND



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# What you need to know about Vitamin A



FOR A HEALTHY BODY  
& GOOD EYESIGHT

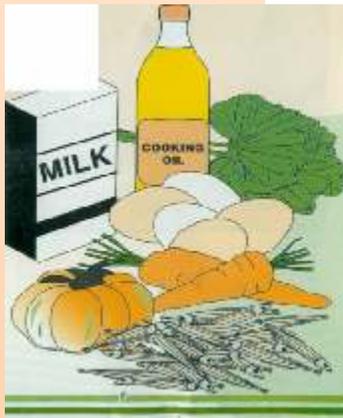
## What is Vitamin A ?

Vitamin A is a substance required by the body in small amounts to promote good health.

## Vitamin A rich foods

Vitamin A is found in green, orange and yellow fruits and vegetables and in animal foods. Examples of these foods include:

- ❑ Green leaves such as rape, pumpkin leaves, cassava leaves, bean leaves, sweet potato leaves.
- ❑ Orange and yellow fruits and vegetables like orange fleshed sweet potatoes, carrots, pumpkins, ripe mangoes and paw paws.
- ❑ Animal foods like liver, liver oils, kapenta and other small fish eaten whole are a good source of vitamin A.
- ❑ Other sources of vitamin A include eggs and milk, red palm oil, breast milk and fortified sugar.
- ❑ Foods containing



oil or fat such as groundnuts and Soya beans help the body to use Vitamin A. Therefore, use these as often as you can especially in vegetables.

## Children need Vitamin A

- ❑ Children under 5 years of age and especially those within the first 1000 most critical days need plenty of Vitamin A.
- ❑ Children who are malnourished or have measles, diarrhea, or other serious infections are particularly in special need of Vitamin A as these conditions easily deplete the vitamin A in the body.

## Vitamin A deficiency

- ❑ Although vitamin A is required in small amounts, it plays a very important role in promoting growth, protecting against diseases and for healthy eyes and skin.
- ❑ If a person does not eat enough of the foods that contain vitamin A, then a condition known as

vitamin A deficiency develops.

- ❑ A person with low stores of vitamin A in the body will not easily fight off diseases.
- ❑ Low stores of vitamin A in the body may lead to difficulty in seeing in dim light and to total blindness if not corrected in time.

## Vitamin A capsules

- ❑ At times it may be difficult to eat enough foods to have sufficient vitamin A in our bodies. In this case it is possible to give vitamin a capsules.
- ❑ These capsules are given to children between the age of six months to five years every six months at the health centers.
- ❑ Vitamin A capsules are also given to children who have measles, severe diarrhea or who are malnourished.

