

**Iron and vitamin A  
supplementation  
and deworming  
protect young  
children from  
diseases and  
anaemia**

# Why

## protect young children with iron and vitamin A supplementation and deworming?

Regular consumption of foods rich in iron and vitamin A is low, particularly among infants and young children; the proportion of children 6 to 24 months old who consume vitamin A-rich foods regularly is 39 per cent while the proportion of those who consume regularly iron-rich food is 11 per cent.

The proportion of children who consume vitamin A and iron-rich foods regularly is particularly low in the lower wealth quintiles.

### Vitamin A supplementation keeps children safe from death, illness and vision loss

- Children who do not have enough vitamin A in their body have lower resistance to infections and greater risk of vision damage.
- Regular intake of vitamin A supplements after six months of age can reduce death in under-fives by almost one quarter in areas where vitamin A deficiency is prevalent.

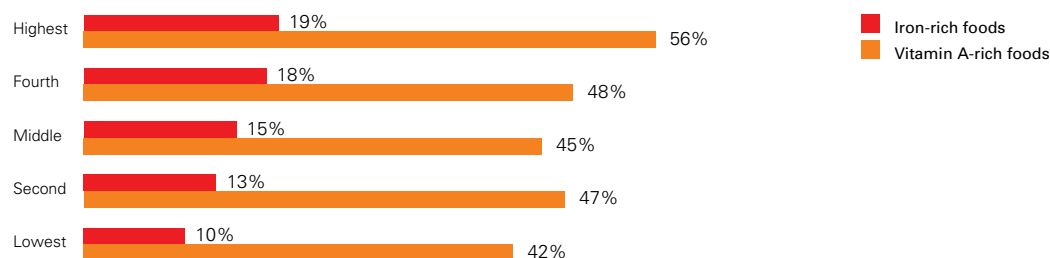
### Iron supplementation and deworming protect children from anaemia

- Children who do not have enough iron in their body are at a higher risk of anaemia, which has devastating consequences for children's brain development and school performance.
- Worms in children's intestine result in loss of nutrients such as iron, which are essential for optimal growth and development.

- Regular intake of iron supplements and regular deworming protect children against anaemia and poor development.

## Where are we today?

Consumption of foods rich in iron and vitamin A among children aged 6 to 35 months by wealth quintile (%)



Source: NFHS-3, 2006

## How to make iron and vitamin A supplementation and deworming possible for all children?

### Raise awareness about the cost of inaction

- Raise awareness on the importance of universal coverage of vitamin A supplementation for the survival, health and nutrition of infants and young children.
- Raise awareness on the importance of universal coverage of iron supplementation and deworming to prevent anaemia in young children: emphasize the devastating effect of iron anaemia on children's brain development, learning ability, and future earning potential.

### Improve programming, scale up interventions

- Scale up and universalize coverage of vitamin A supplementation, iron supplementation and deworming especially among the most vulnerable groups of children: the youngest, the poorest and children belonging to scheduled caste/scheduled tribe families.
- Ensure that there are no supply gaps of vitamin A and iron supplements and deworming tablets in programmes.
- Expand the use of community outreach mechanisms including Village Health and Nutrition Days to increase awareness of and demand for vitamin A and iron supplementation and deworming for infants and young children.