



Frequently Asked Questions on National Deworming Day For Parents with Children in Private Schools

National Deworming Day (NDD) is a country-wide school and *anganwadi*-based deworming program led by the Government of India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The Department of School Education and Literacy under the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Women and Child Development collaborate to implement the National Deworming Day.

The program was started in all government and government-aided schools and *anganwadis* in 2015. Looking at the success of the program, the Government of India has now scaled NDD to private schools across the country so that all children can benefit from deworming.

29% of children in India are enrolled in private schools, with more than 50% children attending private schools in some states¹. These children also belong to a range of socio-economic backgrounds. With such a significant proportion of children attending private schools, it is imperative that the deworming program is conducted in private schools.

NDD is committed to reaching out to private school children to ensure they too have access to deworming drug and receive benefits for improved health and education outcomes.

National Deworming Day is held on February 10 at all schools and *anganwadis*, with some states conducting a second round on August 10, based on STH prevalence mapping.

Any child who is not dewormed on National Deworming Day due to sickness or absenteeism will be administered the tablet on mop-up day³.

Why do children need to be dewormed?

According to World Health Organization, parasitic worms, also known as Soil Transmitted Helminths (STH) are a significant public health treat in India with 220 million children between the ages of 1 and 14 predicted to be at risk². Worm infections interfere with nutrient uptake, can lead to anaemia, malnourishment, and impaired mental and physical development. They pose a serious threat to children's health, education, and long term livelihood potential. Infected children are often too sick and tired to concentrate at school, or attend at all.

Direct benefits of deworming:

- Controls anaemia
- Improves nutritional uptake

Indirect benefits of deworming:

- Helps improve concentration, capacity to learn, and attendance at school/*anganwadi*
- Helps improve work potential and livelihood opportunities later in life
- Benefits the community by reducing worms in the environment

How Do Worms Spread?⁴



1. An infected child contaminates soil with faeces containing worm eggs. These eggs develop into larvae in the soil

2. Other children are infected by eggs ingested through food or dirty hands, or by larvae penetrating the skin

3. In an infected child, eggs and larvae develop into adult worms, which produce eggs and have an ill effect on the child's health

¹ Ninth Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)

² WHO Number of Children (Pre-SAC and SAC) requiring Preventive Chemotherapy for STH, 2014 (http://apps.who.int/neglected_diseases/ntddata/sth/sth.html)

³ Mop-up day is conducted on February 15 and August 17

⁴ Helminth Control in School-age Children - A Guide for Managers of Control Programs, 2nd Edition, WHO (2011)



How are children treated for worms (dewormed)?

Albendazole 400mg chewable tablet is a safe and cost-effective treatment used worldwide for decades. WHO and the Government of India recommend this tablet to be administered to children aged 1-19 years at all *anganwadis* and schools on NDD.

Why should my child be dewormed even if s/he does not appear sick?

Children can carry worms for a long time and not have any visible symptoms, but it can have long-term impact on children's health, education, and overall wellbeing. If only some children are dewormed, the benefits of deworming will be limited to those who get the treatment. This means there will be children who continue to harbor the STH eggs and infection within the community will continue. Thus, it is essential to deworm all children aged 1-19 years.

How Can I be sure the deworming tablet (Albendazole 400 mg) is safe?

- Albendazole is on the list of WHO and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India essential medicines and is effective against a wide range of worms.
- The drug has been through extensive safety testing and used by millions of people worldwide for treating STH.
- Global experience of administering Albendazole confirms that the tablet itself causes only rare, mild, and transient side effects, which are generally related to degeneration of the worms that have been killed.
- The teachers and *anganwadi* workers, who administer the tablet to your child, are well trained. They follow global safety protocol while administering the tablet.

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Health systems will be on alert for any assistance on National Deworming Day and mop-up day

In Tripura, government and private schools, and *anganwadis* have joined hands to deworm all children aged 1-19 on National Deworming Day (February 10) and mop-up day (February 15).

OTHER PRACTICES TO REDUCE WORM INFECTION, OTHER THAN DEWORMING



Do not defecate in the open. Always use a toilet



Wash your hands with soap, especially before eating and after using the toilet



Wear shoes



Keep your nails clean and short



Always drink clean water and keep food covered



Wash fruits and vegetables with clean water



Keep your surroundings clean

Did you know?

Studies show that absenteeism in schools decreases by 25%, due to deworming. Make sure your child is dewormed on National Deworming Day for a worm-free and healthy future.

#KrimitMuktBharat