

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1792

ANSWERED ON:16.08.2013

ADVERSE EFFECTS OF IRON PILLS

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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a large number of school children reportedly fell ill after consuming folic acid/iron pills in various parts of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the number of children shown adverse effects after consuming iron pills along with the reasons therefor, State/UT-wise;
- (c) whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details and the outcome thereof; and
- (e) the corrective measures taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD)

- (a): State level data has shown that 0.02% of adolescent had minor side-effects of IFA supplementation.
- (b): State-wise data of number of adolescents reporting side-effects after IFA tablet consumption is annexed. As the elemental iron is known to cause gastric irritation, minor side-effects such as nausea, stomach- ache and vomiting are expected. However, these side-effects are of short duration and subside as body becomes used to iron supplement intake. The incidence of IFA supplementation side-effects (0.02%) reported under WIFS programme is within the expected range.
- (c): State governments have been requested to enquire into the side effects and have been advised to adhere to the IFA supplementation protocols.
- (d): State reports have shown that IFA supplementation protocols were adhered to and there were no programmatic errors
- (e): Measures undertaken by this ministry:
 - # National level Expert group meeting conducted to deliberate upon and review the matter
 - # Advisory to States in order to reinforce adherence to Weekly Iron and Folic Acid supplementation programme guidelines.
 - # Standardized Side-effects investigation protocol developed to ensure monitoring, appropriate action and follow up by states in such cases.