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The biggest room in any hospital is the room for improvement.

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FROM THE EDITOR

It is my immense pleasure and honour to bring to you the first edition of Sehatnama, a patient education magazine, an initiative taken by Hamdard Institute of Medical Sciences and Research and Hakeem Abdul Hameed Centenary hospital.

Health and safety are more than policies or protocols—they're the foundations of well-being, productivity, and peace of mind. In today's fast-moving world, it's easy to overlook just how vital these principles are in our daily lives.

That's why we remain committed to delivering trusted information, expert insights, and real-world stories that help you make informed decisions and stay ahead of the curve.

Inside this issue and many more to follow, you'll find a range of topics—from personal wellness and mental health to occupational safety, public health trends, and the latest developments in prevention and care. Whether you are a patient, a professional, a caregiver, or simply someone who values living a healthier life, our goal is to meet you where you are with content that matters. At Sehatnama our mission remains clear: to bridge the gap between expert knowledge and everyday life.

As always, we welcome your thoughts, feedback, and stories. Your voices shape this magazine and inspire the work we do. Together, let's continue building healthier, safer, and more connected communities.

Our editorial team remains committed to covering the issues that matter most—whether it's mental wellness, workplace safety, public health trends, or everyday tips for thriving in a fast-paced world. We believe health and safety are not just practices, but values we live by—and share with one another.

For any article contributions, feedback or suggestions please write to editor.sehatnama@gmail.com

Warm regards,



DR SANA SALIM KHAN
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPT OF
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Vitamin D Deficiency: What You Need to Know?

Dr. Bhumika Upadhyay, Assistant Professor, Department of Biochemistry

Vitamin D is often called the “**sunshine vitamin**” because your body makes it when your skin is exposed to sunlight. It is fat-soluble vitamin that helps your body absorb calcium and phosphorus—the key nutrients for **strong bones, muscles and immunity**.

There are two major forms:

- **Vitamin D2 (ergocalciferol):** Found in some plant-based foods and fortified products.
- **Vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol):** Made by the skin when exposed to sunlight and found in animal-based foods.

Q: What are the Symptoms of Vitamin D Deficiency?

A: You may not notice it at first, but low levels of vitamin D can cause:

- ✂ **Fatigue** or tiredness
- ✂ **Bone or back pain**
- ✂ **Muscle weakness or cramps**
- ✂ **Mood changes** (like depression)
- ✂ **Frequent illnesses or infections**
- ✂ **Hair thinning or loss**
- ✂ In children – **Delayed growth, bone deformities (Rickets)**
- ✂ **Osteomalacia or osteoporosis** in adults
- ✂ Increased risk of **fractures**.

Q. Who is at Risk for Vitamin D Deficiency?

A. You may be at risk if you:

- Get limited sunlight exposure (indoor lifestyle, high pollution, clothing coverage, etc.)
- Have darker skin (melanin reduces vitamin D production)
- Are elderly (reduced skin synthesis)
- Have obesity or malabsorption syndromes (e.g., celiac, Crohn’s disease)
- Use certain medications (e.g., anticonvulsants, glucocorticoids)
- Have chronic kidney or liver disease



Q. How to Check Your Vitamin D Levels?

A. The most common test is a **blood test** called 25-Hydroxycholecalciferol test (25(OH)D).

How to prepare for testing?

- Patients can visit the hospital's blood collection center or consult their physician for appropriate screening and testing.
- No fasting required.
- Inform the healthcare provider about any medications taken currently
- 2 ml of blood sample will be collected by vene puncture in a SST tube.
- Samples will be sent to lab at 2-8 degree, protected from light (preferably wrapped in an aluminium foil) during transportation to avoid degradation of sample

Q. What do the results mean?

A. According to he recommendations of the Endocrine Society and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) 2024 factsheet.

Vitamin D Level	Category
< 12 ng/mL	Deficient
12–20 ng/mL	Insufficient
20–50 ng/mL	Sufficient
> 50 ng/mL	May be excessive

Vitamin D Level	Category
> 100ng/mL	May be toxic

Q. If found deficient, what can you do at home?

1. Get Sunlight

- 15–30 mins of sun on arms and legs, 3–4 times a week (between 10 AM – 3 PM)
- Darker skin may need slightly more time

2. Add Vitamin D-Rich Foods

- Fortified milk, cereals, and juices
- Fatty fish: salmon, tuna, mackerel
- Egg yolks
- Mushrooms exposed to sunlight

3. Supplements (if advised by a doctor)

- Available in tablet, sachet or injectable form, Dosage varies depending on severity and age.
- Always take with a fat-containing meal for better absorption.
- Combined with calcium, it keeps bones strong.
- Vitamin D is fat-soluble, meaning too much can be harmful—don't self-medicate

Note: It's crucial to consult with a healthcare professional for personalized recommendations regarding vitamin D levels and supplementation, especially if you have specific health concerns or risk factors for deficiency.

Q: Can you take vitamin D without testing?

A: It is not recommended. Overuse may be harmful. Always consult your doctor first.

Q: How often should I get tested?

A: At-risk individuals may need periodic testing. Otherwise, test if symptoms or risk factors are present.

Q: Can I get enough vitamin D from food alone?

A: Usually no; food contributes partly. Sunlight and/or supplements are also necessary for most people.

Q. Can I overdose on Vitamin D?

A: Yes. Vitamin D toxicity (hypervitaminosis D) usually results from excessive supplement use. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, confusion, dehydration, kidney damage, and high calcium levels. Always follow prescribed doses.

Q: What if a patient has normal calcium but low Vitamin D?

A: It's possible. Serum calcium may remain normal due to secondary hyperparathyroidism. Vitamin D deficiency can still be present and needs correction. In that case a parathyroid hormone (PTH) testing may be recommended.

Q. Is Vitamin D status important in patients with kidney disease?

A: Yes, the kidneys convert 25(OH)D to its active form (1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D). Patients with chronic kidney disease may require active forms (like calcitriol) under supervision.

Q. How often should Vitamin D be retested after supplementation?

A: Typically, after 8–12 weeks of supplementation to assess response. More frequent testing isn't necessary unless clinically indicated.

Q. How does obesity affect Vitamin D levels?

A: Vitamin D is stored in fat tissue, making it less bioavailable in individuals with obesity. Higher doses may be required, and weight loss can improve vitamin D status.

Final Word of advice

Vitamin D may be a small nutrient, but it has **BIG impacts on your health**. If you think you're low, **get tested!**



Circumcision -Questions and Answers

Dr. Sachin Katyal, Associate Professor, Department of Surgery



Ritual circumcision is a procedure performed for religious or cultural reasons. Here are some common questions and answers which will help you more informed and empowered.

What is circumcision?

Circumcision is the surgical removal of the foreskin, the fold of skin covering the head of the penis.

Why is ritual circumcision performed?

It is often performed as part of religious or cultural traditions. For example, in Judaism, it is called a "Brit Milah" and is performed on the eighth day of a baby boy's life. In Islam, circumcision is also widely practiced, though the timing varies.

What are the benefits of circumcision?

Circumcision may have health benefits, such as reducing the risk of urinary tract infections, sexually transmitted infections, and certain penile conditions. However, these benefits should be weighed against potential risks.

Will this surgery be safe if done outside hospital setting?

Not only it is not safe getting operated for removal of foreskin outside of hospital setting but also the final result is compromised. Sometimes the skin which gets removed is too less leaving the penis appearing as uncircumcised which eventually has to be redone later. In some cases, excess skin removal can cause very ugly looking scar which may have medical implications as well.

How is the procedure performed?

The procedure is done under general anaesthesia in hospital settings. The foreskin is removed after precisely marking the amount of skin that needs to be removed and the wound is closed with dissolvable stitches. Healing typically takes 7-10 days.

What are the risks of circumcision?

Like any surgical procedure, circumcision carries risks of general anaesthesia but as anaesthesia is very short, the risk involved is drastically minimised as compared to other surgical procedures. Few complications associated with circumcision include bleeding, infection, and pain. But these are way less when compared with circumcisions done outside of hospital settings.

How should the circumcision site be cared for?

After the procedure, the area should be kept clean and dry. Parents or caregivers should follow the doctor's instructions which include keeping the kid in lukewarm water for 10-15 minutes at least once a day. There should not be use of any ointment, oil or and covering over the operated site.

Should we do diapers after this surgery?

Yes, the diapers are used regularly as usual after surgery rather they need to be changed more quickly after proper cleaning of operated site with soap and water.

Will the child cry or feel pain while passing urine after circumcision?

No, the child does not feel any pain or cries while passing urine after circumcision as when skin is removed adequately away from the opening from where urine comes out. There should not be any burning or pain while passing urine provided the area is kept clean.

Can we put the shorts or lowers immediately after the circumcision?

Yes, one should keep the operated site adequately covered so that it remains clean and dry. Leaving the operated site open to air for drying puts it at risk of getting covered with dust and germs which should be avoided.

Nurturing Young Minds: Why Children Mental Health Matters

Dr. Sana Salim Khan, Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics

In today's fast paced life, mental health is very important. This is especially true for children. We all want our children to grow up as happy and confident adults. But sometimes we don't realize the foundations of the adults they will eventually grow up to be is most often determined in childhood.



Understanding Children's Mental Health

Children experience a wide range of emotions every day—joy, frustration, fear, excitement, anxiety. Most of the time, these feelings are a normal part of growing up. But sometimes, a child might struggle with emotions or behaviors that interfere with their daily life, relationships, or school. That's when it might be time to pay closer attention.

Mental health in children includes their emotional well-being, how they interact with others, how they handle stress, and how they learn and grow socially. When children feel mentally healthy, they're better able to:

- Form strong relationships
- Adapt to changes
- Cope with challenges
- Learn and focus

Signs to Watch For

It can be hard to know when a child is just going through a rough patch—or when something more serious is happening. Some signs that a child may be struggling with their mental health include:

- Frequent mood swings or emotional outbursts
- Withdrawing from friends or activities they used to enjoy
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Difficulty concentrating or declining performance at school
- Excessive fears or worries
- Physical complaints like stomach aches or headaches with no clear cause
- Talking about feeling hopeless or worthless

If you notice these signs lasting more than a few weeks, or if they seem to be getting worse, it's okay to reach out for help. You're not alone—and neither is your child.



How Parents Can Support Their Child's Mental Health

1. Open Up Conversations

Let your child know it's safe to talk about their feelings. Ask open-ended questions like, "How are you feeling today?" or "What's been on your mind lately?" Listen with empathy—sometimes just being heard makes a huge difference.

2. Create a Routine

Structure and predictability help kids feel safe and secure. Consistent sleep, meal, and play times can ease anxiety and support emotional regulation.

3. **Model Healthy Emotions**

Children learn a lot from watching how adults handle stress and emotions. Show them it's okay to talk about feelings and that asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.

4. **Encourage Physical Activity and Play**

Movement and play are natural stress-relievers for children. They also build confidence, friendships, and emotional resilience.

5. **Limit Screen Time**

Too much screen time, especially on social media or violent content, can negatively affect children's mental health. Encourage offline activities that stimulate creativity and real-world connection.

6. **Seek Professional Help When Needed**

Therapists, pediatricians, and school counselors are all valuable allies in supporting your child. Early intervention can make a big difference.



You Are Not Alone

Many families face challenges related to children's mental health. It's nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, recognizing the need for support—and acting on it—is one of the most loving things you can do for your child.

By creating a safe, supportive environment where emotions are honored and mental health is nurtured, you help your child grow into a strong, compassionate, and emotionally healthy adult.

INFORMED CONSENT

Dr. Aqsa Shaikh, Professor, Department of Community Medicine

Before you sign an informed consent, Pause and check out these frequently asked questions

What is an informed consent?

Informed consent is a procedure during which a doctor (or other healthcare provider) gives you all the important information about a medical procedure, test, or treatment before you agree to it—so you can make a clear, informed decision about your health. The same is documented in a written and signed form called Informed Consent Form.

Why is it Important?

It's important because you have the right to understand and choose what happens to your body. It is called Autonomy. Informed consent protects that right. And this includes the right to choose a treatment / option that may not give the best results.

Is it mandatory?

Yes, signing an informed consent form before a procedure that needs a signed informed consent is legally mandatory. It protects the interests of all the parties involved.

What Does It Include?

An informed consent covers the following things

- What the procedure is?
- Why it's being recommended?
- The risks (what could go wrong)?
- The benefits (how it might help you)?
- Other options (including doing nothing)?
- What might happen if you don't do it?

You then have the chance to ask questions and take time to think about it before saying yes (or no).



Is it Always Written?

Not always. For big procedures like surgery, you'll usually sign a form to show you agree. But for smaller things (like a blood test), verbal consent is usually enough—though you still have a right to ask questions.

Who will give consent for the procedure on my child?

As an adult person of sound mind and legal capacity, you can give the consent for the medical procedure on your minor child. It is always best to discuss this with the other parent or any other legal guardian of the child.

It's also suggested to discuss the same with the child in a way they understand so that they cooperate in the treatment procedure without undue anxiety or resentment.

I had signed an informed consent form. But now I want to take back my consent. Can I do it?

Yes, you have the right to take back your consent at any point of the time without providing a reason. However, it's always helpful to discuss your concerns with your healthcare provider. You should also know the risks of stopping a procedure that has been already started.

I have signed a consent form for surgery? Do I need to sign a separate consent form for anaesthesia?

Yes, you will need to provide consent for each of the high-risk procedures that are a part of your treatment like – anaesthesia, surgery, blood transfusion, etc.

Ask yourself before signing

Do I Understand What the Procedure Is?

- Ask: "Can you explain exactly what this procedure involves, in plain language?"
- You should know what will happen during and after the procedure.

Why Is This Procedure Being Recommended?

- Ask: "What's the purpose of this? What are we trying to find out or fix?"
- Make sure you understand how it relates to your diagnosis or symptoms.

What Are the Risks or Possible Complications?

- Ask: "What are the most common risks, and how serious are they?"
- You need to know what could go wrong—even if it's rare.

What Are the Benefits?

- Ask: "What do I stand to gain from this? Will it cure me or just relieve symptoms?"
- Be clear on what the best-case outcome looks like.

Are There Alternatives?

- Ask: "Are there other options—including doing nothing—for now?"
- You should be told about all reasonable options, including lifestyle changes, medications, or other treatments.

What Happens If I Say No or Wait?

- Ask: "What are the risks of not doing this now?"
- Sometimes, waiting is fine; other times, delay could make things worse.

Who Will Be Doing the Procedure?

- Ask: "Will you be doing the procedure yourself? What's your experience with it?"
- You have a right to know who will be involved and their qualifications.

Can I Take a Copy of the Form Home?

- It's totally okay to say: "Can I take some time to think about this?" or "Can I have a copy to review before signing?"
 - Don't feel pressured—it's your body, your choice. You also have a right to second opinion.
-

Have All My Questions Been Answered?

- If anything feels rushed or unclear, speak up:
"I don't feel ready to sign yet—I have more questions."

 DO I UNDERSTAND WHAT THE PROCEDURE IS? Can you explain exactly what this procedure involves, in plain language?	 WHAT ARE THE RISKS OR POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS? What are the most common risks, and how serious are they?
 WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS? What do I stand to gain from this? Will it cure me or just relieve symptoms?	 ARE THERE ALTERNATIVES? Are there other options—including doing nothing—for now?
 WHAT HAPPENS IF I SAY NO OR WAIT? What are the risks of not doing this now?	 WHAT WILL RECOVERY LOOK LIKE? How long will recovery take? Will I need help, time off work, or follow-up care?
 WHO WILL BE DOING THE PROCEDURE? Will you be doing the procedure yourself? What's your experience with it?	 CAN I TAKE A COPY OF THE FORM HOME? Can I take some time to think about this? or. Can I have a copy to review before signing
 HAVE ALL MY QUESTIONS BEEN ANSWERED I don't feel ready to sign yet - I have more questions.	 HAVE ALL MY QUESTIONS BEEN ANSWERED "I don't feel ready to sign yet— I have more questions."

Good Bugs, Great Health- The Amazing Role Of Your Gut Microbiota

Dr. Ayan Kumar Das, Assistant Professor, Department of Microbiology



The gut microbiota has been referred to as the forgotten organ—because of its size, complexity, and importance to health."

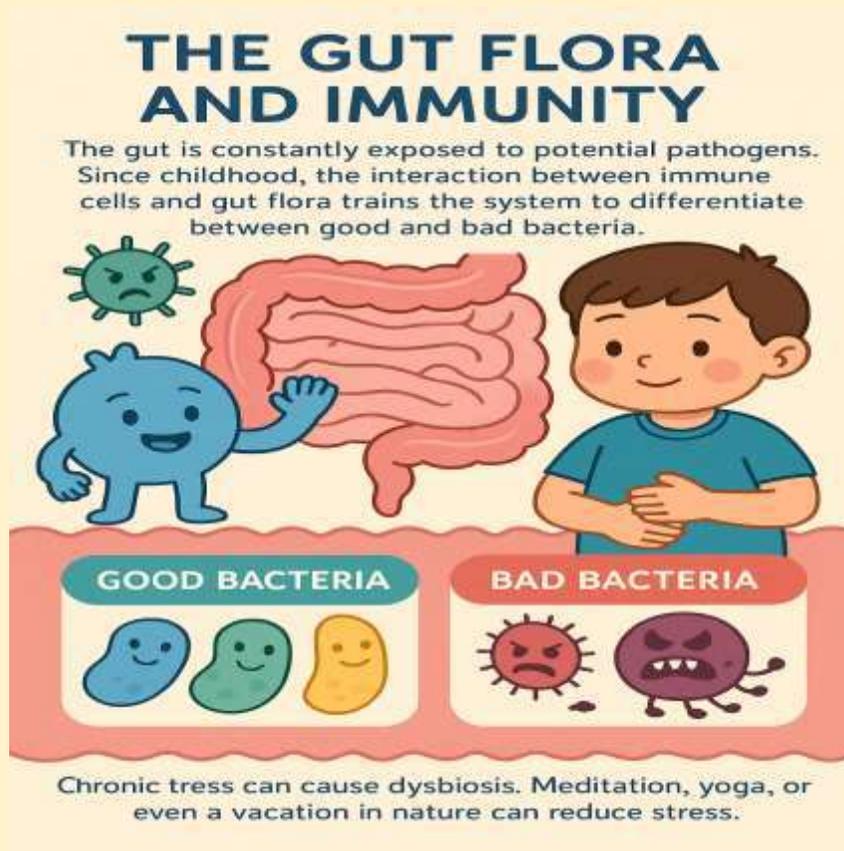
— Jeroen Raes, PhD.

We often considered humans unique and superior to all other organisms. However, many don't realize that we rely on tiny organisms inside us to maintain our health. Inside our gut, there is an entirely different universe, comprising trillions of bacteria, fungi, viruses, and other microorganisms that live together and are collectively known as the gut microbiota. This internal community is crucial for multiple phenomena that keep us healthy and happy. From digestion to the production and absorption of certain nutrients to the development of our immune system and even influencing our mood, scientists have discovered multiple effects of gut microbiota on our wellbeing. Understanding the importance and preservation of a balanced gut microbiota is key to a healthier and more resilient life.

The gut microbiota is like a metro city where different groups live in harmony and work together to keep the system running smoothly. The microbiota starts establishing in the gut during the early stages of life and depends on many factors like the mother's microbiota during pregnancy and delivery, the post-natal environment, and the type of feed received, etc. As we age, other factors like lifestyle and habits (smoking, alcohol intake), diet, antibiotic use, stress, exercise, etc. continue levels continue to shape the composition and diversity of the gut microbial population.

One of the most well-understood roles of the gut microbiota is its contribution to

digestion. While our bodies can break down most carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, they need help from these microscopic friends to digest complex carbohydrates like fiber. The by-products (short-chain fatty acids or SCFAs) that are released after digestion of fibers help reduce gut inflammation and may guard against colon and rectal cancers. Moreover, the microbiota helps in the absorption of vitamin K and some B vitamins.



In the presence of a balanced gut microbiota, the pathogens find it difficult to colonize the gut as they fail to compete with good bacteria for nutrients and sites to attach. Moreover, good bacteria release chemicals that directly inhibit the growth of harmful microbes. Even if some pathogen succeeds in colonizing the gut, the good bacteria help in preventing a condition called 'leaky gut'. When one talks about a healthy gut microbiota, it means the gut that has balanced and diverse population of beneficial microbes. This balance is called Eubiosis and is imperative for good health. Healthy gut flora is generally comprised of a large number of bacteria like *Lactobacillus*, *Peptoniphilus*, *Ruminococcus*, *Clostridium*, and *Eubacteria*, along with *Bacteroides* and *Prevotella*. Bacteria like *Bifidobacterium*, *Proteobacteria*, *Fusobacteria*, etc are also found but less abundantly. The composition of the resident flora of the gut may get changed due to infection or inflammation, changes in diet such as uptake of high sugar and low fiber food, processed foods with additives, drug intake, or even personal hygiene and genetic makeup of the host. When this delicate balance is disrupted, and the ratio of bacterial population changes,

the condition is called dysbiosis. Dysbiosis represents a decrease in the ratio of *Lactobacillus*, *Bifidobacterium*, and *Bacteroides* species and an increase in *Enterobacteriaceae* and *Fusobacterium*, leading to infective and metabolic disorders.

Gut dysbiosis has been linked to many serious diseases like Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), allergies, asthma, heart diseases, liver diseases, and even colorectal cancer. IBD is always associated with gut dysbiosis as it is believed that an imbalance in the gut microbial population leads to chronic inflammation. Without early-life exposure to a diverse range of microbes may obstruct the development of a robust immune system, increasing the chances of allergic diseases like eczema, hay fever, and asthma in later stages of life. The gut dysbiosis may also precipitate cardiovascular diseases through the production of metabolites that affect cholesterol levels and blood pressure. One of the common mechanisms of liver damage is increased intestinal permeability due to gut dysbiosis, which leads to increased concentration of bacterial metabolites in blood. These activate the immune cells in the liver, which cause inflammation. The increased population of alcohol-producing bacteria can increase the serum alcohol level substantially to cause liver injury. Additionally, decreased production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) and bile acid toxicity can result in fatty liver and inflammation.

Studies have shown that gut flora and obesity are interrelated. The experiment on two mice, where one was grown in a sterile condition, inhibiting formation for balanced gut flora and another was grown in a normal environment, showed that the mice with balanced gut microbiota grew to be lean and healthy whereas the one without balance flora became morbidly obese, even though both had the same diet. Studies on human subjects have proved that obese individuals often exhibit lower microbial diversity and an altered ratio of beneficial microbes.

The gut microbiota also plays an important role in glucose metabolism and insulin sensitivity, and gut dysbiosis may assist in the development of type 2 diabetes. It has been observed that reversing gut dysbiosis by diet modification may help in the prevention and management of type 2 diabetes

PRESERVING YOUR GUT MICROBIOTA

It is hence imperative that our lifestyle and food habits be preserve the microbial balance of our gut. Several good choices can help us in doing so. The important ones are:



Fiber-rich diet (prebiotics)

variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, etc.



Ensure Frequent Intake of Fermented Foods (probiotics)

including yogurt/curd.



Decrease intake of processed Foods, Sugar and Artificial Sweeteners

Take antibiotics only when necessary and prescribed by a registered medical doctor. It is good to take probiotics after the completion of a course of antibiotics



Reduce Stress

Chronic stress can cause dysbiosis. Meditation, yoga, or even a vacation in nature can reduce stress



Drink plenty of water

Probiotic and Prebiotic Supplements: other than curd/yogurt and a fiber-rich diet, probiotic and prebiotic supplements are available commercially, which can be taken when needed.

By appreciating the complex relationship between our health and the gut microbiota and adopting better lifestyle choices, we can dynamically contribute to our well-being. This invisible universe within our body embraces huge potential, and by nurturing it, we can lead a life of long-term health and vitality.

The Importance of Playing with Children Under 5 for Their Overall Development

Dr. Iqra Khan, Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics

Playing with children under the age of five is essential for their cognitive, emotional, and physical development. This early stage is a critical period for brain growth and learning, and interaction with parents and family members plays a vital role.



1. Cognitive Development:

Through play, children explore their surroundings, develop problem-solving skills, and boost their imagination. Simple games like building blocks or pretend play stimulate thinking and creativity.

2. Emotional Bonding:

Playing strengthens emotional connections between children and family members. It builds trust, helps children feel loved and secure, and enhances their ability to express and understand emotions.

3. Language and Communication:

Talking, singing, and storytelling during play improves vocabulary and communication skills. Children learn how to express their thoughts and listen to others.

4. Physical Growth:

Active play like running, jumping, or dancing supports motor skills and physical strength. It helps children develop coordination, balance, and healthy habits.

5. Social Skills:

Interactive play teaches children how to share, cooperate, and resolve conflicts, laying the foundation for healthy social relationships.

In conclusion, play is not just fun—it is a powerful tool for nurturing a child's mind, body, and heart. Parents and families play a key role in making this time meaningful.

Notes

