

National Program of Feeding Optimization Among Children Aged 1-3 Years in the Russian Federation

An Expert Club meeting took place at the Scientific Center of Children's Health on December 02, 2015. It was dedicated to the beginning of implementation of the National program of feeding optimization among children aged 1-3 years in the Russian Federation. The program is aimed at implementation of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health adopted by the World Health Organization. The event was organized under the aegis of the Union of Pediatricians of Russia with support of Nutricia.

Leading pediatricians, pediatric dieticians and gastroenterologists, heads of departments of pediatrics – representatives of almost 50 cities of Russia, from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok – attended the meeting to discuss the National program and share expert opinions on the ways of implementing this program.

The first 1,000 days of life are a crucial period in a child's life when nutrition and other external factors of epigenetic impact define the ways of genetic program realization and program a child's health in the future. That is why nutrition, especially diets of under-3 children, is an important component of preventive medicine. According to the Union of Pediatricians of Russia, pediatricians are often insufficiently competent in the sphere of diets for children aged 1-3 years. Usually, over-1 children are quickly switched to adult/family diet, which does not correspond with capabilities of their digestive systems and often leads to excessive macronutrient intake or micronutrient deficiency and, therefore, to nutritional, neuropsychic and immune status disorders, development of alimentary-dependent conditions and gastrointestinal tract's dysfunctions.

Results of a study of actual diets of almost 2,000 children aged 12-35 months in the Russian Federation show that diets of most children are imbalanced: they lack in essential foodstuffs, such as meat, dairy products, fruits, vegetables, specialized infant food. Such eating behavior violations unfavorably affect metabolism, condition of digestive organs, lead to deficient/excessive consumption of certain ingredients, which may result in excess body weight even at a young age.

The adopted program is aimed at optimizing feeding of children aged 1-3 years, which is an important factor of improving children's health in the Russian Federation and forming nation's health. The program represents a logical continuation of the National program of feeding optimization among infants adopted at the Congress of Pediatricians of Russia in 2009.

The project of the National program of feeding optimization among children aged 1-3 years was launched at the initiative of the Union of Pediatricians of Russia more than 3 years ago. The idea of developing such a document received active support of specialists from all over Russia; more than 90% of physicians admitted an urgent need in such a document.

The primary objectives of the Program include the development of scientifically-based approached to organization of nutrition of children aged 1-3 years and practical recommendations on rational feeding of children of such age. Without any doubt, in order to execute this project it is necessary to develop a unified program of education and knowledge improvement in the sphere of nutrition of children aged 1-2 years for university students, pediatricians, public health officials, pedagogues and psychologists. It is necessary to improve regulatory documents on organizing nutrition of children aged 1-3 years given new data and principles provided in the Program.

The following specialists took part in the Expert Club's scientific discussion: deputy head of the Scientific Center of Children's Health, corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Professor, MD, PhD Leyla Seymurovna Namazova-Baranova; head of the pediatric nutrition department at the Scientific Center of Children's Health, Professor, MD, PhD Tatyana Eduardovna Borovik; head of the department of pediatrics at the Russian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education, Professor, MD, PhD Irina Nikolayevna Zakharova; principal specialist

at the laboratory of age-related nutritiology of the Research Institute of Nutrition, MD, PhD Mariya Vladimirovna Gmoshinskaya; principal research fellow at the pediatric nutrition department of the Scientific Center of Children's Health, MD, PhD Vera Alexeyevna Skvortsova; head of the special psychology and correctional education laboratory of the Scientific Center of Children's Health, EdD Svetlana Borisovna Lazurenko; scientific director of Nutricia, PhD in Medicine Alexandra Vitalyevna Surzhik; chief pediatrician of the Northwestern Federal District, Professor, MD, PhD Elena Markovna Bulatova (Saint Petersburg); Professor at the department of hospital pediatrics of the Kazan State Medical Academy, MD, PhD Natalya Viktorovna Rylova (Kazan); assistant professor at the department of pediatrics of the Altay State Medical University Denis Sergeyevich Fugol (Barnaul); head of the department of propedeutics of childhood diseases at the Ural State Medical University, Professor, MD, PhD Natalya Evgenyevna Sannikova (Yekaterinburg); chief dietician of the Krasnodar Krai Marina Leonidovna Makarenko (Krasnodar) etc.

Each speaker emphasized importance of adequate feeding organization. The participants discussed not only general matters, but also specific issues of organizing feeding of children aged 1-3 years, such as prevention of eating behavior violations, excess body weight and obesity, as well as diet therapy in the event of a tendency towards constipations and deficient conditions.

Meeting participants gave consideration not only to medical issues, but also to psychological-pedagogical aspects. For example, M.S. Rtishcheva covered the role of the family in eating behavior formation at each age stage of a child's development, sociopsychological background of eating behavior violations in children and the most common mistakes of parents in her report.

L.S. Namazova-Baranova mentioned in her report that "It is difficult to overestimate the significance of adopting the National program of feeding optimization among children aged 1-3 years. However, this is only the first stage. We are facing hard work on implementing recommendations. One of fields of work will be to introduce the document's provisions into educational programs of medical universities and universities of postgraduate education. It is important to make the use of rational feeding principles a routine practice actively promoted by pediatricians. This will promote better parental awareness of dietary issues. We believe that these and other measures will allow optimizing diets of children aged 1-3 years and reduce the spread of alimentary-dependent conditions among children."

At the conference closing, Professor T.E. Borovik summarized the discussion by saying that successful implementation of the Program's principles is possible only if efforts of all those who directly or indirectly influence children's health, i.e. of medical science representatives developing new approaches to feeding organization and prevention of alimentary-dependent conditions, pediatricians who face questions of parents every day, medical administration, public health officials, pedagogues at children's preschool establishments, psychologists, professional educational system specialists, are consolidated. Support of socially responsible business is required to execute the program. Mass media play a significant role as well.

The primary provisions of the Program were presented at the press conference for the mass media before the Expert Club meeting. High media interest demonstrated not only lack of information about the nutrition of over-1 children, but also an acute need in the adopted document.

The conference closing include symbolic adoption of a Manifesto reflecting goals and objectives of the Program. All the specialists signed the Manifesto in token of personal intention and readiness for active implementation of the adopted recommendations, as well as for active attraction of attention of fellow physicians and the wider public towards issues of feeding children aged 1-2 years.