Significance of Deworming

Why in news?

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Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) conducts deworming drive twice a year.

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What is Deworming?

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- Deworming is a process to kill worms commonly tape, round and hook worm, that infest bodies of children below 18 years of age.
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- As per the guidelines, children aged below two years are given 200 gm of Albendazole tablet, a drug to treat parasitic worm infestation, and school-going children are administered 400 mg tablets.
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- The Albendazole tablet paralyses the muscles of these worms, the worm loses its grip of intestinal tract and is flushed out of the human body.
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- A worm takes six months to mature and start sucking, therefore the exercise is carried out biannually.
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- Deworming has no serious side effects, but it can cause nausea and vomiting if a child has worms.
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- The medicine disrupts the worms which leads to uneasiness in the stomach.
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Why is the significance of deworming?

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- Parasitic worms and their larvae are generally found in contaminated food and water.
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- In slums children walk bare feet and they frequently contract worms.
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- The worm first enters the blood circulation system and its larvae land up in the larynx, from where it finally reaches the gastrointestinal tract.
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- The hook, round and tapeworm grow by sucking blood from its host in this case the human body.
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- Loss of blood leads to a drop in haemoglobin level and causes anaemia, thus deworming kills these worms and helps prevent anaemia.
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- The National Family Health Survey-3 data suggests anaemia is widely prevalent in all age groups.
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- Its prevalence is 56 per cent among adolescent girls (aged 15-19) and 70 per cent among children below five years.
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What are the other initiatives of government in this regard?

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- Under the National Iron Plus Initiative Union Health Ministry is providing weekly dose of iron and folic acid tablets to children aged 1-18 years.
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- This is to prevent iron deficiency and chances of anaemia.
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- Various municipal schools in India conduct this drive by giving a weekly dose of 100 mg iron and 500 mg folic acid to adolescents (10-19 years), dosage varies for different age groups.
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Source: Indian Express

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