

Low Birth Weight Cases in Indonesia Still High

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The number of low birth weight (LBW) in Indonesia is quite high. The WHO ranks Indonesia in the ninth place with over 15.5 percents of all births every year.


"Indonesia is among the 10 countries in the world with high number of low birth weight, others include India and Bangladesh," said Dr. Ekawaty L. Haksati., Sp.A(K)., MPH,IBCLC., Perinatology expert in Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Gadjah Mada, on Monday (16/11).

Eka said such conditions were caused by births before 37 weeks into pregnancy or premature babies, also babies born on the right term but weighing less than 2,500 grams.

The high number of low birth weight in Indonesia is, among others, caused by the low nutrient intakes for mothers and the infants. Busy schedules of the mother may also increase stress. "This case often happens to unwanted pregnancies, too," she said.

"To prevent premature births, the mother has to stay fit with adequate nutrition, having regular pregnancy checks," said the head of the Maternal Perinatal unit of Dr. Sardjito General Hospital. She suggested people who have less than 2,500 gr infants to choose the proper delivery unit with sufficient facilities.

Eka revealed the premature case contributed to the high mortality rate in babies. According to the WHO, in 2013 the natal rate in Indonesia in 2010 was 4,371,800 with 15.5 per 100 liveborns there were 675,700 premature cases.



Further Eka said premature babies were the ones with the highest risk, for example, pregnancy before 37 weeks causes the organ unready so vulnerable to health problems, such as respiratory system, function of the heart, digestion, hearing, vision, and infection vulnerabilities.

“Underweight babies, therefore, need special care appropriately,” she confirmed.

Kangaroo Mother Care

Eka said premature or low birth weight babies were born with low body temperature, so it is important to maintain the right temperature to prevent hypothermia.

“The Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) treatment which allows skin to skin touches between mother and baby have many benefits for the baby,” she explained. This treatment is cheap, safe, and easy which maintains the body temperature of the baby, increase the life of the baby as well as the bond between them.

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