

The MEDEX Primary Health Care Series

***Caring
for Your
Sick Child***



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The MEDEX Primary Health Care Series

*Caring
for Your
Sick Child*

COMMUNITY LEARNING MATERIAL

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16

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5	Red Eye	32
Caring for Your Child	8	Burns	34
Caring for Your Sick Child	14	Poisonings	36
Diarrhea	16	Early Care Is the Best Care	38
Vomiting	20	The Community Health Worker Can Help You	39
The Weak and Thin Child	22	Health Workers at the Health Center Can Help You	40
Fever	24		
Colds and Coughs	26		
Scabies	28		
Sores	30		

Many people have contributed to this booklet. They include health workers of the Village Health Worker programs in Lesotho. But more than anything else, the patience and cooperation of the people in communities helped to make this booklet possible.

4

INTRODUCTION

Who Is this Booklet for?

This booklet is for anyone involved in caring for children. This booklet is for parents. This booklet is also for people who work with parents, children, and families.

This booklet can be used in homes, schools, health centers, community meetings, and anywhere people talk about caring for sick children.

How Can You Use this Booklet?

You can use this booklet in many ways. Here are some ways you can use this booklet. You may think of other ways to use this booklet in your community.

You can use this booklet to help you remember ways to care for sick children in the community.

You can use this booklet to find out how people in the community take care of sick children.

You can use this booklet as a teaching aid. The booklet can help you share ideas about good care for sick children. This booklet can help you discuss ways of caring for sick children.

Parents can also use this booklet to read about how to care for a sick child at home.



Why is this child healthy?

This child is healthy because his mother takes good care of him. What does good care mean?

Good care means mother tries to make sure her child does not get sick. Good care also means that mother gives good care to her child when he gets sick. Mother gives good care to her child right away. Then her child does not get more sick.

How should mother take good care of her child when he is sick?

You can find the answer to this question in this booklet.

All parents want their children to be happy and healthy. This booklet will share with you how to take good care of your child when he is sick.

Why is this child unhealthy?

This child is unhealthy because something went wrong. What could have gone wrong?

Maybe his mother did not take good care of him when he was sick. Maybe his mother did not know how to take care of him when he was sick.

Maybe his mother did not know that the community health worker can help to take care of her sick child. Maybe his mother did not know that the health workers at the health center can help to make her sick child better.

You can learn about these things in this booklet. Read and discuss this booklet with your friends and neighbors. Then you can learn from each other how to care for your children when they are sick.

Caring for Your Child

Good care for a child begins before he is born. A pregnant woman should eat plenty of good food. A pregnant woman needs to eat for herself and her baby inside. Then her baby is not born weak and thin.

A pregnant woman should visit the health center regularly. The health worker at the health center will check to see if the pregnant woman and her baby are healthy.

A pregnant woman should go to the health center for a special injection in the last three months of her pregnancy. This special injection will help so her newborn baby does not get sick with a serious illness called tetanus.



Mother should breast-feed her baby from the first day. Then her baby does not get sick with many common health problems. Breast milk from the first day helps the baby stay healthy.

Mother should breast-feed her baby for as long as possible. Mother should breast-feed her baby for at least two years. Breast milk is clean. Baby does not get sick with diarrhea often with breast milk. Breast milk helps the baby stay healthy.



As a baby grows he needs more food. With enough food a baby grows strong and healthy. A strong baby does not get sick often.

A mother should continue to breast-feed her baby for at least two years. At four months the baby needs breast milk and extra food. Give the baby soft foods from four months.

At the time the child is one year old he should eat half as much food as his mother. Feed the child many different kinds of foods. You can learn more about the care a child needs in the booklet for Your Child booklet.





Children stay healthy when they eat clean food. Always wash your hands before preparing food. Wash your hands and your child's hands before feeding your child.

Wash vegetables that the child eats raw. Give your child freshly cooked food each time you feed him.



Feed your child with a clean cup and spoon. Keep the food and drinking water covered. Then dust, flies, and other insects do not dirty the food and drinking water. Dirty food can make your child sick. Clean food helps to keep your child healthy.



Children grow up healthy in a clean home. Keep your home clean. Make sure your child has a clean place to play. Make sure your home is safe so your child does not have accidents.



Children stay healthy if they live and play in clean surroundings. Be sure to keep the area around your home clean and safe. Throw rubbish in rubbish pits. Make sure you clean up after your child goes to the latrine.



Children stay healthy in a clean community. Work with others in the community to keep the community clean. What are some of the things you can do with others in the community to keep the community clean?



Healthy habits also keep children healthy. Teach your child healthy habits when your child is young. Children should be clean. Bathe your child every day if possible. Keep your child's hair tidy and combed or brushed. Make sure your child cleans his teeth at least once each day. Clean children stay healthy.



Also teach your child when to wash his hands. Help your young child to wash his hands. Children should wash their hands:

- Before eating or drinking
- Before touching food or the water container
- After playing
- After going to the latrine

When parents have healthy habits children learn healthy habits.

Caring for Your Sick Child



Food for a Sick Child

A sick child needs food. A sick child becomes weak. Without food a sick child becomes weaker. A sick child may not be able to eat a lot of food. Feed a sick child small amounts of food at a time. Feed a sick child small amounts of food many times a day. Feed a sick child at least five or six times a day. A sick child needs plenty of food to become stronger and to get well.

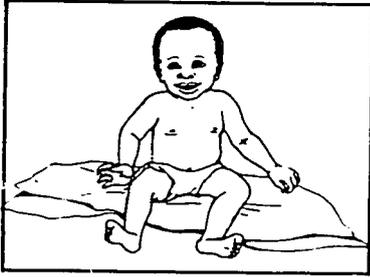
A sick child sometimes becomes fussy. He may not want to eat. He may have difficulty eating. Make food that a sick child can eat easily. Make the food soft if the child has difficulty eating. The sick child needs the food. Encourage the child to eat. Feed him many times a day. Continue to breast-feed a sick child.

Without food a sick child becomes very weak and thin. A weak and thin child becomes sick more often.

Fluids for a Sick Child

A sick child loses fluids from his body. Some illnesses make a child lose a lot of fluids. Diarrhea, vomiting, and fever make a child lose a lot of fluids very fast. If a sick child does not drink water or other fluids he becomes dry. A dry child becomes more sick. He may even die. Give a sick child plenty of fluids. Give a sick child fluids that he likes. The amount of fluids the child drinks is important. The kind of fluids the child drinks is not important.

A child with diarrhea and vomiting loses a lot of fluids and salts from his body. You will learn to make a special drink at home to care for a child with diarrhea or vomiting.



Diarrhea

Even with good care, children sometimes become sick. Children sometimes get diarrhea. With good care a child with diarrhea becomes better again. Without good care a child with diarrhea can become very sick. The child may even die.



Children who are breast-fed get diarrhea less often. When children eat clean food and drink clean water they get diarrhea less often.

A child with diarrhea loses a lot of food from his body. Give the child soft foods to get stronger again. The child may be able





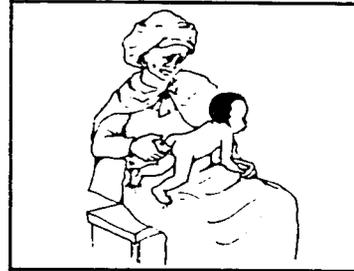
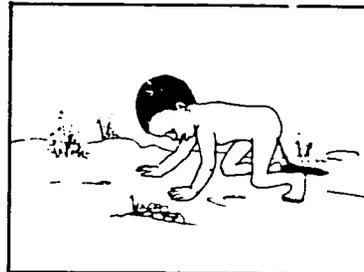
to eat only a small amount of food at a time. Feed the child small amounts of food many times a day. Feed the child at least five or six times a day. Without food the child becomes weak and thin.



A child with diarrhea also loses a lot of fluids from his body. Without water or other fluids the child becomes weak and dry.

What can you do so a child with diarrhea does not become weak and dry?

Give the child water and other fluids to drink. The child needs about one cup of water or fluids for every loose stool.



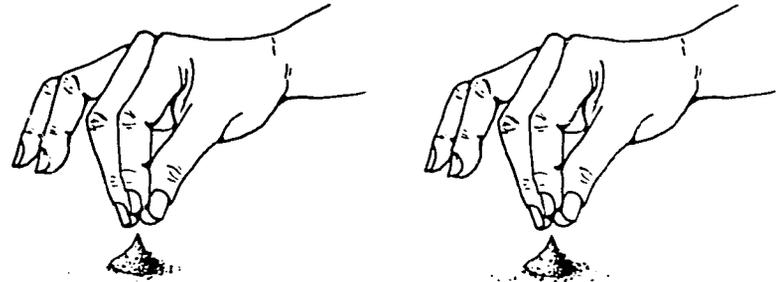
What can you do when your child has more than three loose stools in a day?

When a child has three or more loose stools in a day he is losing a lot of fluids from his body. The child needs good care. Without good care the child will become weak and dry. The child may even die.

Make a special drink for the child. Make the drink with boiled water, salt, and sugar. Here is how to make the special drink.

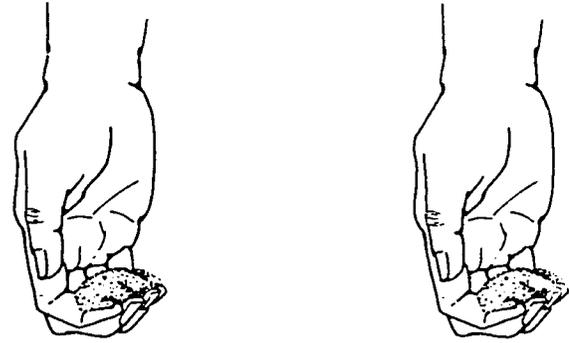
Wash your hands well with soap and water. Boil a little more than four cups of water. After boiling the water add:

Two pinches of salt



Then add:

Two handfuls of sugar



Mix the water, salt, and sugar. Let the mixture cool. Pour the mixture into a clean cup. Feed this special drink to your child with a clean spoon. Give the child one cup of this special drink for every loose stool.

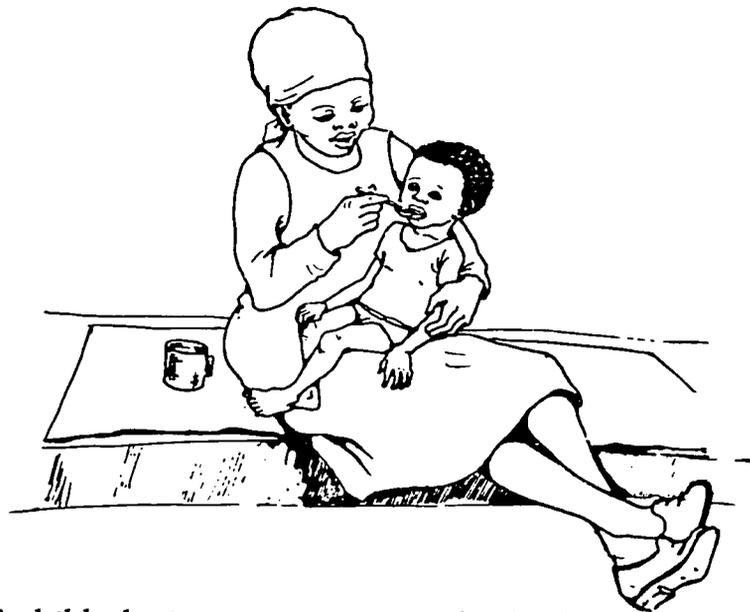
If the child is not better in three days, take him to the community health worker. The child may have to go to the health center.



Vomiting



When a child has vomiting, he loses a lot of fluids from his body. Without fluids the child will become weak and dry. The child may even die. Give the child the special drink. You can learn how to make the special drink on pages 18 and 19.



A child who is vomiting cannot drink a lot of the special drink. Give the child the drink with a clean spoon. The child can take small sips at a time. Give the child about one cup of the special drink for every time the child vomits. Even if the child vomits the special drink, continue to feed him the drink.



A child who has vomiting also loses a lot of food from his body. Without food the child becomes weak and thin. A weak child does not get better soon. Give the child soft foods to eat. Give the child clean foods.

The child cannot eat a lot of food at one time. Give the child small amounts of food many times a day. Then the child will get enough food to become strong and to get well.



Even if the child vomits the food, do not give up. Give the child the foods he will eat. Encourage the child to eat. Continue breastfeeding the child. The child needs plenty of food to get better.

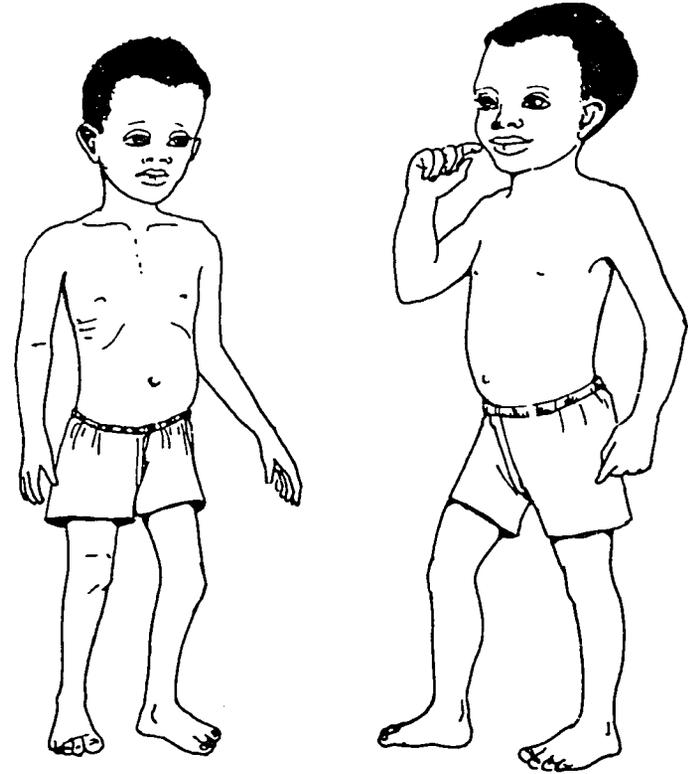
If the child is not better in three days, take him to the community health worker. The child may have to go to the health center.

The Weak and Thin Child

These two children are the same age. The child on the left looks weak and thin. The child is undernourished. He does not get enough food. An undernourished child becomes weak and thin without enough food. An undernourished child gets sick often. He becomes even weaker because he gets sick often.

The best care for a child who is undernourished is food. Give the weak and thin child food at least four or five times a day. Continue to breast-feed the child.

Feed the child good foods like porridge made with whole wheat, corn meal, or rice. Add beans, lentils, or vegetables. Add meat or eggs if the family eats them. These are good foods for the undernourished child. At first the child may not be able to eat the food easily. Make the food as a porridge or gruel.



With plenty of good food the child becomes healthy. Continue to feed the child more food. The child needs more food to stay healthy. Food keeps the child healthy and strong. A healthy and strong child does not get sick often. Some weak and thin children may take three or four months to get better. Do not give up. Keep feeding the child as much food as the child will eat.



Continue to breast-feed the child for as long as possible.

If the child is very weak and thin, take him to the community health worker. The community health worker will show you how to make a special porridge that the child can eat to make him better. If the child does not get better, you may have to take the child to the health center.



Fever

A child's body gets hot when he has fever. What can you do to help your child when he has fever?

A child loses a lot of fluids when he has fever. Make sure the child with fever drinks lots of water or other fluids. Then the child does not become more sick. Give the child about one-half cup of fluids every hour to drink.

Also give the child with fever soft foods to eat. Food will make his body strong so he can get well.

A child with a very hot body needs special care. Help cool the child's body right away.

Remove the child's clothing. This will help cool the child's body.

Soak a cloth in a basin of cool water.

Gently wash the child's whole body with the wet cloth. The water will help cool the child's body.

Take the child with fever to the health center if his body does not cool.



Colds and Coughs



Children often get colds. Colds spread from one person to another. A child with a cold may seem tired and upset. A child's body sometimes gets a little hot when he has a cold. This is not serious. The child needs good food to get better. The child also needs fluids to get better. With plenty of food and fluids, the child gets better in three or four days.

Some children also get a little cough with a cold. This is not serious. Feed the child more often. If the child does not feel like eating, make soft foods for the child.

If the child's cough does not get better in one week, take the child to the community health worker. You may have to take the child to the health center.

Scabies

Scabies is sometimes called the itch or the itching illness. If one person gets scabies, then the whole family gets scabies. If a child has scabies, then the rest of the family may also have scabies.

This is why it is important to treat the whole family for scabies at the same time. A medicine like Lindane lotion helps to take care of scabies. The whole family should use the medicine. Each person should do these things





First, wash your body with soap and clean water.

Put the lotion on your whole body. Put the lotion on all parts of your body except your face. You can use a small cloth to put the lotion on. Leave the lotion on your body until the next day. Then wash your body with soap and clean water.

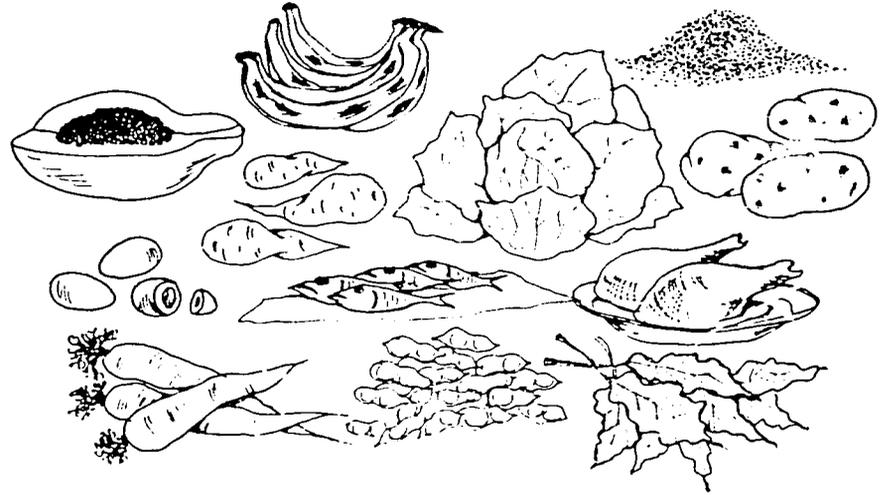


Wash your clothes and the clothes of every person in the family with soap and water. Dry the clothes in the sun. Also put your bedding and mattresses in the sun.

Sores



Children with scabies scratch a lot. Then they get sores. Children also get sores from small injuries. Children who are strong and healthy do not get sores often. Children who eat plenty of good food stay strong and healthy. Give your child good foods like whole grains,



fruits, vegetables, beans, lentils, and eggs. Then your child stays healthy and does not get sores.

A clean child also gets sores less often. Make sure your child bathes every day if possible.



You can help a child with sores. First, wash the sore with soap and clean water. Wash the sore about three times. Cover the sore so flies do not get on it. Make sure the child keeps the sore clean. Give the child plenty of good food to help him stay healthy.

Red Eye

A person with red eye has red, painful, watery, or pussy eyes. Red eye spreads from one person to another. Children get red eye more often than grown-ups. How can you help so your child does not get red eye? Make sure your child does not rub his eyes with dirty hands. Do not let flies sit on your child's eyes.

You can help the child with red eye. First, wash your hands with soap and clean water. Wash around the child's eyes and eyelids like this:

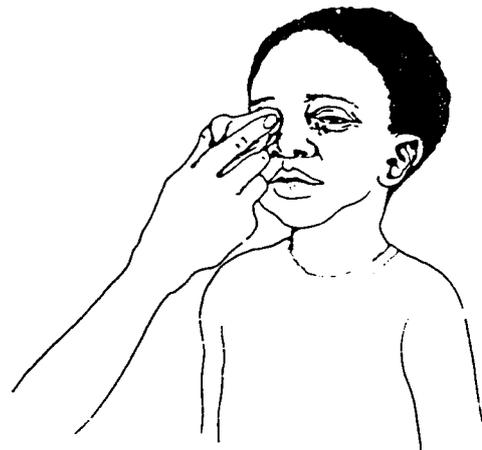
Cut narrow strips of clean cloth.

Boil the strips of cloth for five minutes in clean water.

Let the strips of cloth cool

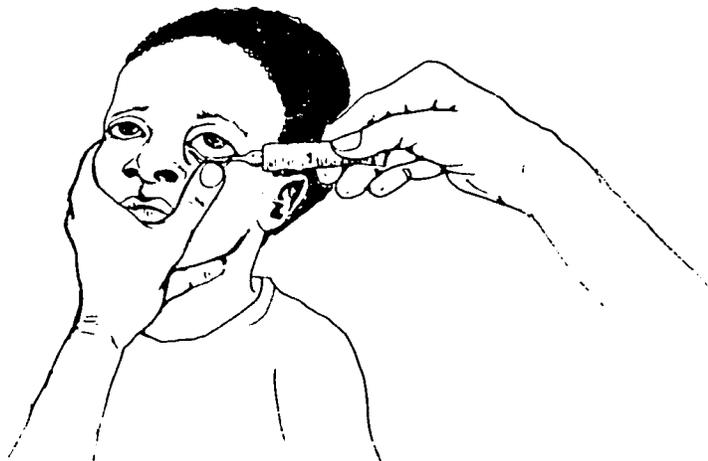
Wash all the pus from around the child's eyes and eyelids with the strips of clean cloth.

Wash down and away from the child's eyes.



The community health worker will put some special eye ointment in the child's eyes. The community health worker will show you how to put the eye ointment in the child's eye. This is what you will do:

Wash your hands with soap and clean water.
Put the ointment on the inside of the lower eyelid.



Do not let the tube of ointment touch the eye. A dirty tube will spread red eye to others.

Put the ointment in both eyes this way.

If the child is old enough, ask him to blink his eyes. Blinking helps to spread the ointment in the eyes.

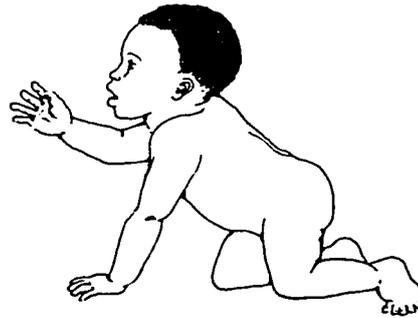
Wash the child's eyes and put in the eye ointment four times each day for five days. See the community health worker every day if possible.

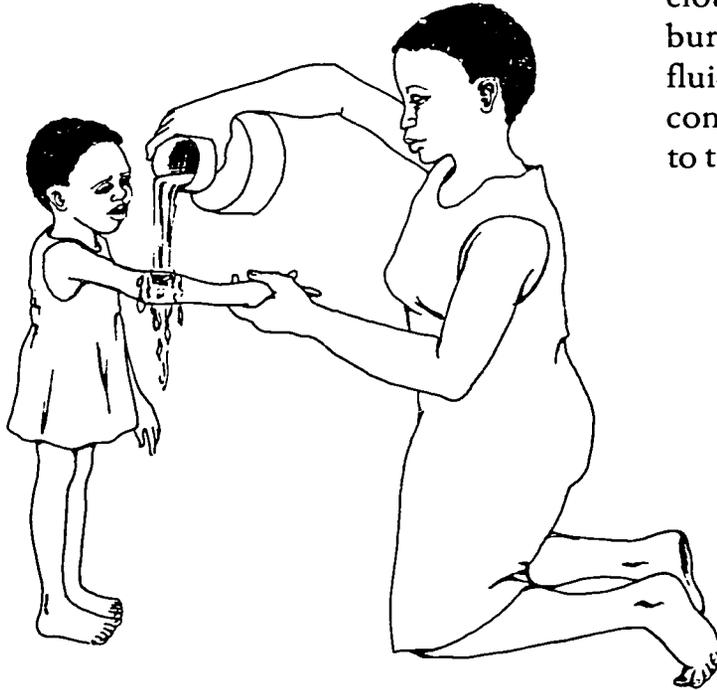
If the child's eyes do not get better in four or five days, you may have to take him to the health center.

Burns

Children suffer from burns more often than grown-ups. Children get burns from open fires. Children also get burns when cooking pots with hot liquids spill on them. Parents can help protect their

children from burns. Make sure that the cooking area is safe for children. Make sure that young children are not able to get into the cooking area or near an open fire.





When a child gets burned, pour cool, clean water over the burned area right away. Cover the burn with a clean, wet cloth. Do not put oil or medicine on the burn. Give the child cool water or other fluids to drink. Take the child to the community health worker. You may have to take the child to the health center.

Poisonings

Children can get poisoned very easily in the home. Some things in the home that are poisonous are:

DDT	Lye for making soap
Pesticides	Caustic soda
Petrol	Paraffin
Paint	Medicines

Parents should keep all poisonous things out of reach of children. Parents should keep all medicines out of reach of children.

You can help a child who may have taken a poison.

Look in the child's mouth. Smell the child's breath.



If there is no smell of paraffin or petrol,
TRY TO MAKE THE CHILD VOMIT.

If there are no sores in the child's mouth,
TRY TO MAKE THE CHILD VOMIT.

Stick a finger or a spoon in the child's
throat to make him vomit. Let the child
vomit as much as he can.

**DO NOT MAKE AN UNCONSCIOUS
CHILD VOMIT.**

When the child has finished vomiting,
give the child plenty of water, milk, or
other fluids to drink. Take the child to the
health center.

If you smell paraffin or petrol in the child's
mouth, **DO NOT MAKE THE CHILD
VOMIT.**

Give the child plenty of water, milk, or
other fluids to drink. Take the child to the
health center right away.



Early Care Is the Best Care

The best care for a sick child is early care. Children are small and become seriously ill very quickly. This is why it is important to take care of a sick child right away.

Give a sick child water and other fluids to drink. Give a sick child soft foods many times a day. Care for a sick child as you have learned in this booklet.

See the community health worker if you are not sure what to do. Do not wait. If the child looks very sick see the community health worker at once. Be prepared to take the child to the health center if necessary.



The Community Health Worker Can Help You

See a community health worker when your child is sick. See the community health worker as soon as possible. Children can become very ill very quickly. Some illnesses can even make a child die.

The community health worker has been trained to care for many common health problems. The community health worker can help you. The community health worker can show you how to care for your sick child.

The community health worker can also share with you how to care for your child so your child stays healthy. See the community health worker regularly, especially when your child is young. The community health worker can help you so your child does not become sick often.



Health Workers at the Health Center Can Help You

You may have to take your child to the health center if he is seriously sick. The health workers at the health center are trained to care for many health problems. See a community health worker when your child is sick. The community health worker may ask you to take your child to the health center as soon as possible. Do not waste time. The child may become very sick.

At the health center there are trained health workers. There are also many medicines to care for sick children. The health workers can help you so your child does not get sick again. They will also share with you how to make sure the illness does not spread to others in the family.

