

Self Care Series: Book Four



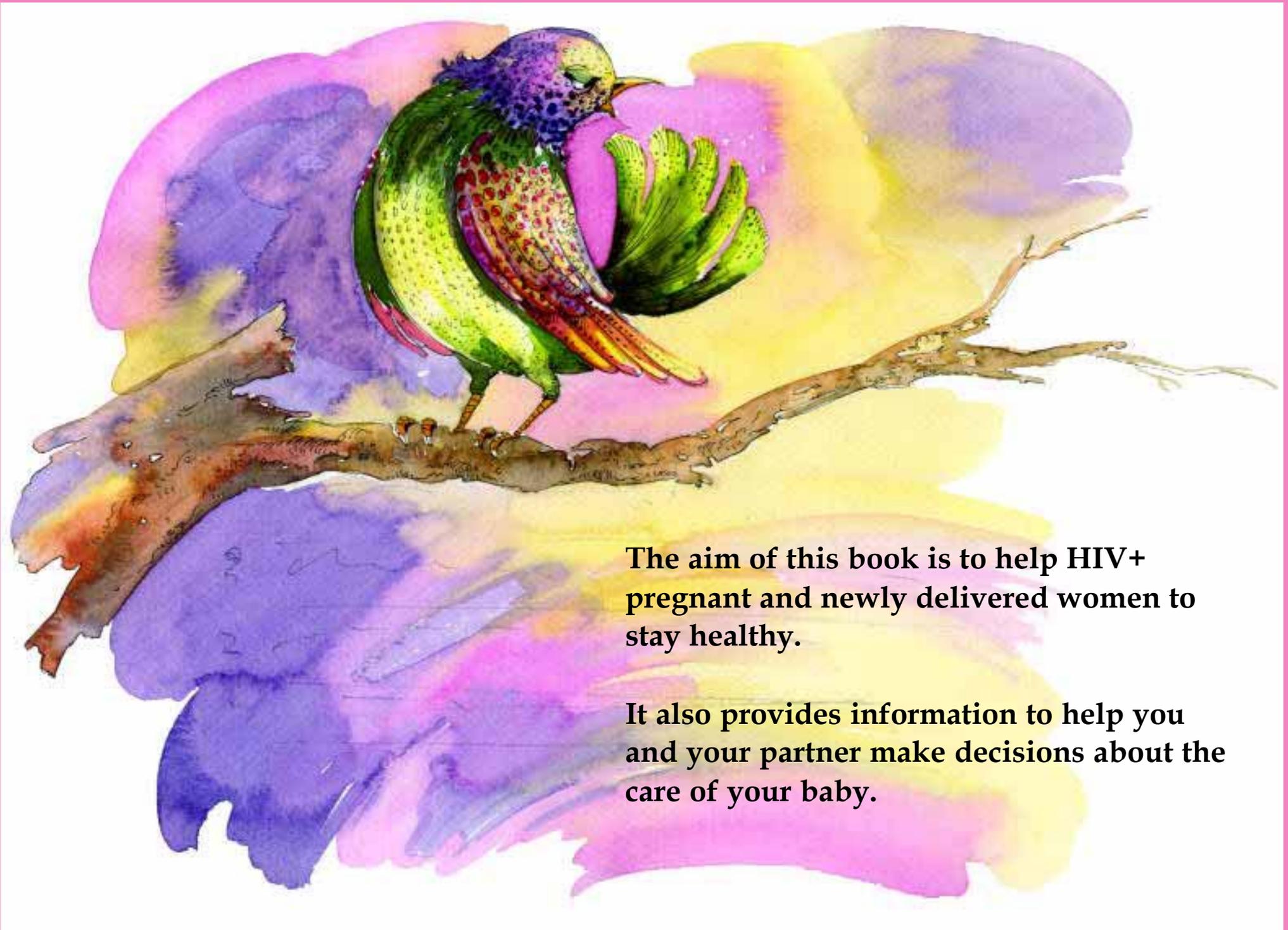
Staying Healthy For Mothers Living with HIV

Self Care Series: Book Four

Staying Healthy:
For
Mothers Living with HIV



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The aim of this book is to help HIV+ pregnant and newly delivered women to stay healthy.

It also provides information to help you and your partner make decisions about the care of your baby.

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The background of the page is a watercolor illustration. On the left, there is a large green palm tree. In the lower-left and bottom-center, there are pink and purple flowers. On the right side, a portion of a person's face is visible, rendered in soft watercolor tones. The overall style is soft and artistic.

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WHAT IS HIV TRANSMISSION TO INFANTS?

How is HIV transmitted to a baby?

HIV can be transmitted from an HIV+ mother to her child:

- During pregnancy or during labour and delivery.
- After birth through breastfeeding.
Researchers agree that a baby of an HIV+ mother stands a 1 in 7 chance of become HIV+ through breastfeeding. This risk is reduced if the baby is exclusively breastfed.



When a woman is HIV+ and pregnant, there is a risk that HIV will pass to her baby. But even without special treatment, most babies born to mothers who are HIV+ will not be infected with HIV.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY BABY FROM HIV?

The better the health of the mother during pregnancy and delivery, the less likely she is to transmit HIV to her child.

There are several things you can do to reduce the risk of HIV transmission to your baby.



Attend a government approved center for voluntary counseling and testing. If you are HIV negative, you will receive information about protecting yourself and your baby from future HIV infection. If you know you are HIV+, you can learn how to reduce the risk of transmission to your baby.



Attend health services in your community that provide care for pregnant women. Always use a condom for sex throughout your pregnancy and after delivery.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HAVE A HEALTHY AND SAFE PREGNANCY?

**Receive antenatal care from qualified health staff.
You should have a check up at least 3 times during your pregnancy.**



You will be able to discuss any worries/problems with the health staff. You will receive a vaccination against tetanus. You will be able to make a plan for feeding your baby safely.



You will be given iron tablets to prevent anemia.

Consider telling the health staff that you are HIV+. They will be able to give you appropriate care and advice. It will be easier to discuss problems with them. They will also understand your special needs.

WHAT SHOULD I EAT TO STAY HEALTHY DURING MY PREGNANCY?

Pregnant women need extra food to stay healthy and to help their baby grow strong and healthy inside the uterus. Nutritious eating can help you stay healthy and strengthen your immune system. All pregnant women need daily iron and folic acid supplements. The health center will provide these supplements. Iron and folic acid supplements keep you strong and prevent anemia and birth defects.



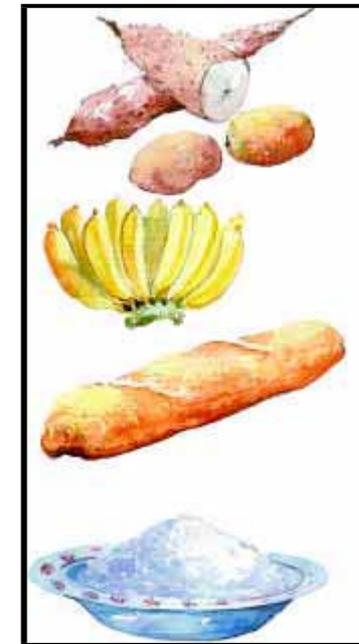
1. GROW FOODS

Grow foods include all kinds of meat, fish, eggs, and some kinds of beans, especially soy beans.



2. GLOW FOODS

Glow foods have vitamins to help the body work well. Most fruits and vegetables contain vitamins. Dark green leaves contain many kinds of vitamins.



3. GO FOODS

Go foods provide energy. Rice, sugar, bread, and all foods made from these things are go foods. Fats are also go foods. Adding fat or oil to rice or food is an easy way to add energy.

EXTRA INFORMATION

What if I cannot afford to buy food?

Food does not need to be expensive to be nutritious. Food from the field or forest is also nutritious. Eat foods that are easily available and plentiful in your community.

Avoid buying cigarettes, alcohol or other unhealthy items. Use the money to buy nutritious food instead.

OTHER HELPFUL THINGS YOU CAN DO DURING PREGNANCY



Get plenty of rest. If possible avoid heavy work such as carrying water.



Keep clean by daily bathing and wearing clean clothes.

Seek immediate advice from a qualified medical person if:

- You have any bleeding from the vagina.
- You have a headache with swelling of legs and hands.
- Your baby is not moving.
- You have fever or chills.



Avoid smoking, alcohol and sleeping pills. They are harmful to you and your baby. They will also reduce your appetite.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Other things you can do during your pregnancy:

- Join a support group for people living with HIV/AIDS. Ask a counselor about the location of support groups – there may be one in your community or close by. Talking to other people living with HIV can be helpful.
- Take time to relax and do things you enjoy with friends and family.
- Do daily light exercise such as gentle walking. Your housework may be enough exercise.

WHAT TREATMENT IS AVAILABLE TO REDUCE THE RISK OF HIV TRANSMISSION TO INFANTS?

A special drug treatment is available in Cambodia that can reduce the risk of HIV transmission to infants. This treatment cannot completely stop HIV transmission, but it can reduce the risk. This drug is given by mouth to the mother during labour and later to the baby.



Where can I receive treatment to reduce the risk of HIV transmission to my baby?

To receive treatment to reduce the risk of transmission to your baby, you will need to have voluntary counseling and testing. Find the nearest center to your home that provides this service.

What will happen when I attend a center that offers voluntary counseling and testing?

At the center, you will receive counseling before testing and again after you receive your results. If you are HIV negative, you will learn how you and your partner can prevent future HIV infection and protect your baby. If you are HIV+, you will learn about treatment and care to reduce the risk of HIV transmission to your baby.

EXTRA INFORMATION

If you decide that you want to receive treatment to help reduce the risk of HIV transmission to your baby, you will need to deliver in a health facility that provides this service.

Does this treatment have any harmful effects for me or my baby?

No, the treatment does not have any harmful side effects for mother or baby. It has been used safely for several years in other countries.

This treatment reduces the risk of HIV transmission to infants. It does not have any benefits for the mother's health and does not change her HIV+ status.

WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE TO DELIVER MY BABY?

The best place to deliver your baby is in a health facility with a trained medical person.

What should I do during labour and delivery?

If possible, deliver in a center that provides the special drug to reduce the risk of HIV transmission to infants.

Consider telling the medical staff that you are HIV+. They can help you to have a normal delivery and protect you and your baby from complications.



If you do not deliver in a center that provides the special drug, deliver at a health center or referral hospital that has trained midwives and doctors.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Other things that will help you during labour and delivery:

- Ask a woman who you know well to stay with you throughout labour and delivery.
- Encourage your partner to stay with you during this time.
- Walk around as much as possible during labour. Walking can ease the pain and also speed up the delivery.
- Eat light meals and drink plenty of water and other fluids.
- Shower as often as possible and wear clean clothes during labour.

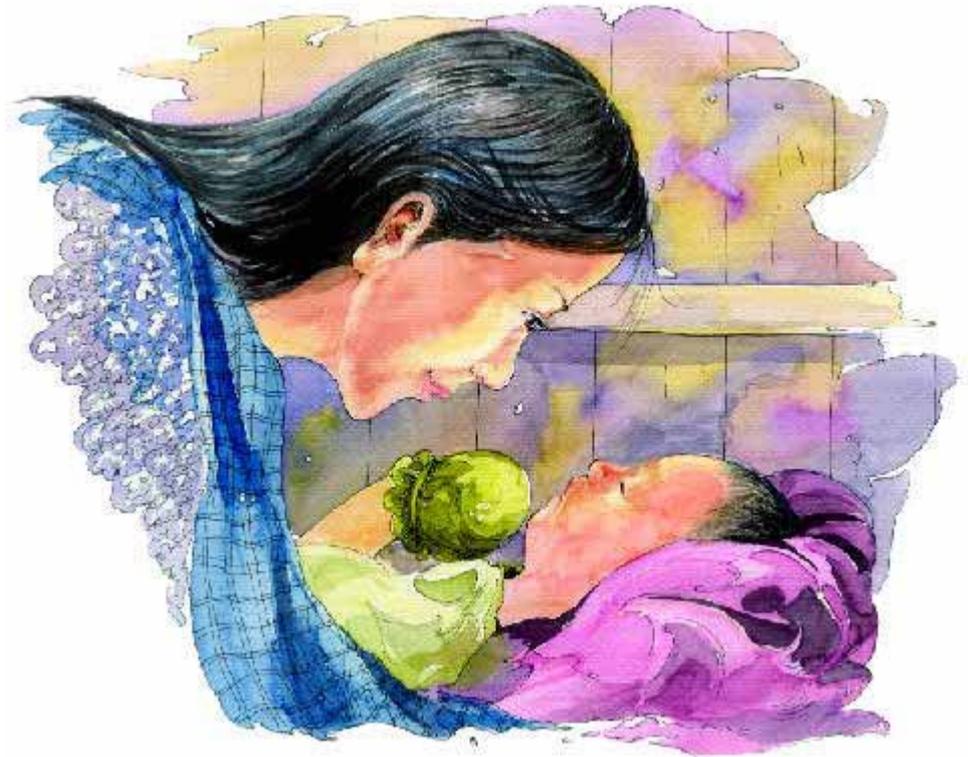
WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO FEED MY BABY IF I AM HIV+?

Breastfeeding carries some risk of infecting your baby with HIV. About 1 out of 7 babies who are breastfed by HIV infected mothers will become HIV+.

Here are some things to think about before you make a decision about how to feed your baby:

- Is it difficult for you to access affordable quality health care?
- Is it difficult to obtain clean drinking water in your community?
- Is the cost of milk formula too high? The cost of milk formula is about 176US\$ = 686,400 Riel for six months. There will also be the cost of fuel for boiling water.
- Are diarrhea and chest infections common problems for babies in your community?

If you answer “yes” to these questions, then exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of your baby’s life is the best and safest way to feed your baby.



The Cambodian Ministry of Health recommends that all mothers exclusively breastfeed for the first 6 months. Breast milk contains everything your baby needs for the first 6 months.

WHAT DOES EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING MEAN?

Exclusive breastfeeding means giving your baby nothing except breast milk from the moment he/she is born. **NO WATER, NO TEA, NO MILK FORMULA, NO FRUIT JUICES, NO HONEY, NO SUGAR, NO RICE WATER, AND NO DUMMIES.** (Medicines prescribed by a qualified medical person can be given.)



Mixed feeding is giving a baby breast milk and also other fluids or foods such as milk formula, sugared water, rice water, flavoured milks or fruit juices.

MIXED FEEDING SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

Mixed feeding carries the highest risk of HIV transmission. This may happen because any fluid or food except breast milk can damage the lining of the baby's stomach and intestine making it easier for the HIV virus to enter.

Important:

Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months is one of the best ways to make sure your baby stays healthy. Infants who are not breastfed are more likely to die in the first 6 months of life from diseases such as diarrhea and chest infections.

HOW DO I EXCLUSIVELY BREASTFEED?



Good attachment

Breastfeed within the first hour of birth so that the baby gets the full benefit of colostrum and other nutrients which protect the baby against infections.



Give nothing but breast milk for the first 6 months of life. Do not give any water, tea, milk formula, rice water, tinned sweet milk, juices or sugared water.



Poor attachment

Make sure the baby is attached properly to the breast while feeding. This is when the baby is in a comfortable position with his/her body straight, head facing your breast, and held close. His/her mouth needs to be wide open and to cover most of the brown area around the nipple. His/her chin should touch the breast.



Use a condom when having sex. This will help prevent re-infection with HIV or other STIs and thus reduce the chance of transmission to your baby.

WHAT IF I AM WORRIED ABOUT BREASTFEEDING MY BABY?

If you feel worried about breastfeeding your baby, then consider these 3 options. Do not make a decision until you consider all the options carefully. Discuss the options with an experienced health worker who knows about prevention of transmission of HIV to infants.



You can express your breast milk and heat it until it boils. Then cool it and feed your baby this breast milk with a cup. (Heating breast milk until it boils kills HIV in the breast milk.)



Another woman could exclusively breastfeed your baby.



You could feed your baby with infant milk formula.

HEATING EXPRESSED BREAST MILK

Expressed breast milk can be kept for up to 8 hours at room temperature. It must be kept in a clean container and covered. After heating the milk, it should be used within 1 hour.

You will need:

- Fuel to heat the milk
- Extra time to express your milk and cup feed your baby
- Clean containers with lids to store the expressed milk and keep it clean
- A small pan to heat the milk
- Water and soap for cleaning utensils and your hands
- A small cup for feeding your baby

Milk should be brought to a boil and then removed from the heat. Allow the milk to cool before feeding.



IMPORTANT: if you decide on this method, you will need the support of an experienced midwife to teach you how to express your breast milk and how to cup feed in a safe and clean way. Your baby should be fed exclusively on breast milk for the first 6 months.

WHAT DO I NEED TO CONSIDER IF I WOULD LIKE ANOTHER WOMAN TO EXCLUSIVELY BREASTFEED MY BABY?

If another woman breastfeeds your baby, you and your partner will need to consider:

- The woman selected should be counseled, tested and shown to be HIV negative. She will need to repeat the HIV blood test in 3 months.
- If the woman is sexually active, she and her partner will need to be counseled about always using a condom for sex, so that she does not become infected while breastfeeding your baby.
- The woman should be available for as long as you need her. Your baby should be exclusively breastfed for six months. She should agree to exclusive breastfeed and know what this means.
- The woman breastfeeding your baby has a small risk that she may get HIV from your baby while breastfeeding. She should receive counseling from an experienced counselor.

You will need help from an experienced health worker to help you organize this. You will need to have a good relationship with the other woman. A relative living in the same house or nearby would be best.



You need to stay as close to your baby as possible and provide all other care so your baby will also bond with you.

WHAT DO I NEED TO CONSIDER FOR FEEDING MY BABY WITH INFANT FORMULA?

You and your partner should consider:

- Do you have money to buy substitute feeding for at least 6 months? This will cost at least 176 US\$= 686,400 Riel (44 tins of 450grams at 4US\$ per tin)
- Do you have clean water available and the time and fuel needed to boil the water frequently for mixing formula and for cleaning the cups, etc.?
- Can you afford to buy a large saucepan, a kettle, plastic cups, washing liquid soap and a special brush for cleaning the utensils?
- Are you able to access affordable and good quality health care if your baby has any health problems?



If you answer “yes” to all the 4 points above, then it is possible to feed your baby with infant formula.

If you decide to feed with infant formula, never mix with breastfeeding. You must practice strict hygiene. Ask an experienced health worker to demonstrate preparing the formula in a clean and correct way. Using a cup for feeding is preferable to a bottle as it is easier to keep clean and free of germs.

EXTRA INFORMATION

When you breastfeed, your baby is exposed to some risk of HIV infection. Some experts advise that an HIV+ mother who is breastfeeding should stop breastfeeding as soon as possible around 6 months. Then she should prepare and give her infant other nutritious foods.

Parents need to make the decision about what is best in their situation. If your baby starts to take complementary foods easily, it may be possible to exclusively breastfeed for 6 months and then stop as soon as your baby is able to take from 3 to 5 nutritious complementary feeds a day. If you want to continue giving breast milk to your baby, you could express your breast milk, boil it and feed your baby with a cup.

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Important

Never mix breast milk and milk formula. There may be a higher risk of HIV transmission with mixed feeding.

These fluids are unsuitable for feeding your baby and may cause sickness and malnutrition:

- Rice water
- Sweetened condensed milk
- Sugared water
- Coconut water
- Tea
- Flavored milks

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO STAY HEALTHY AFTER DELIVERY?



1. Rest and gentle exercise

Resting for a few days after delivery is good for you, but it is not necessary for you to lie down for weeks. After the first day, get up and walk around for a while. It will help your body return to normal faster.



2. Eat nutritious foods

Eating well helps you regain strength and keeps you healthy. Eat foods from all the three food groups. Drink plenty of water and nourishing fluids like soya bean milk and coconut water.



3. Keep clean and fresh

Washing regularly is important especially when you have extra blood loss. Take special care to clean the genital area frequently.

Seek medical help if you have:

- Severe bleeding from the vagina
- Fever
- Bad smelling vaginal discharge
- Severe abdominal pain
- Painful swollen breasts
- Convulsions

EXTRA INFORMATION

Other things you can do to stay healthy after delivery:

- Avoid alcohol, it is bad for you and your baby's health.
- Avoid injecting vitamins following delivery. Injecting vitamins is expensive and unnecessary. It is better to spend money on buying food. If you feel you need to take vitamins, buy oral vitamins. They are cheaper than injections and have the same effect.
- Continue taking iron and folic acid tablets, they will help to prevent anemia after delivery. They are provided free at the health center. The health center staff will also give you a Vitamin A capsule after delivery. If you are breastfeeding, this will protect your baby from Vitamin A deficiency.

Caring for blood stained clothes and materials:

- Dispose of blood stained clothes by burning or burying in a deep hole.
- To wash soiled clothes, rinse clean with water and soak in bleach for an hour.
(Make bleach solution by mixing 1 teaspoon of bleach powder to 1 litre of water.)
- Then rewash the clothes with soap and water and hang to dry in the sun.
- Then wash your bed, mat and any other clothes soiled by blood and hang in the hot sun to dry.

HOW SHOULD I CARE FOR MY BABY?

Your baby needs:

Lots of love

The best way to provide love is to keep the baby close to you. If you are breastfeeding, put your baby to your breast as soon as possible after delivery, so that your baby can receive the special fluid called colostrum and other nutrients which protect and nourish him or her.

Frequent feeding

If you are breastfeeding, feed often. Do not give anything except breast milk. It has everything your baby needs to stay healthy.



Seek medical care immediately if your baby has:

- Fever
- Poor sucking/feeding
- Pus from the cord
- Difficulty breathing
- Yellow skin and eyes

Immediately after delivery, your baby should be dried with a clean cloth and put naked onto your chest. This will keep your baby warm and happy. Cover yourself and baby with a warm cloth. Always keep your baby close to you. Bathe your baby daily. It is not necessary to use soap on a newborn baby's skin.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Other things to do for your baby

- Make sure the cord is kept clean and dry. Clean with alcohol and apply gentian violet daily.
- Put clean clothes on baby daily.
- Do not overheat your baby by wrapping too tightly or keeping wrapped in heavy blankets.
- Wash bottom and genitals with water every time the baby passes stool or urine.
- Change wet clothes frequently.

Immunizations and yellow card

Take your baby to the nearest health center as soon as possible after birth to receive immunizations to protect against common infectious diseases. The health staff will monitor your baby's weight and give you a yellow card. Take your baby to be weighed as often as you can in the first year.

How can I know if my baby is HIV+ or not?

A baby born to a mother who is HIV+ may have the mother's HIV antibodies in its blood until it is 18 months old. The only way of knowing if a baby is HIV+ or HIV- is to test the baby's blood at 18 months old. Before that time, it is difficult to know if a baby is HIV+.

WHAT IS SAFER SEX AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Safer sex means that blood and sexual fluid from one partner do not enter the other partner's body during sex. Condom use is one form of safer sex. Safer sex is important because it protects you from various sexually transmitted diseases.

What if both people are HIV+?

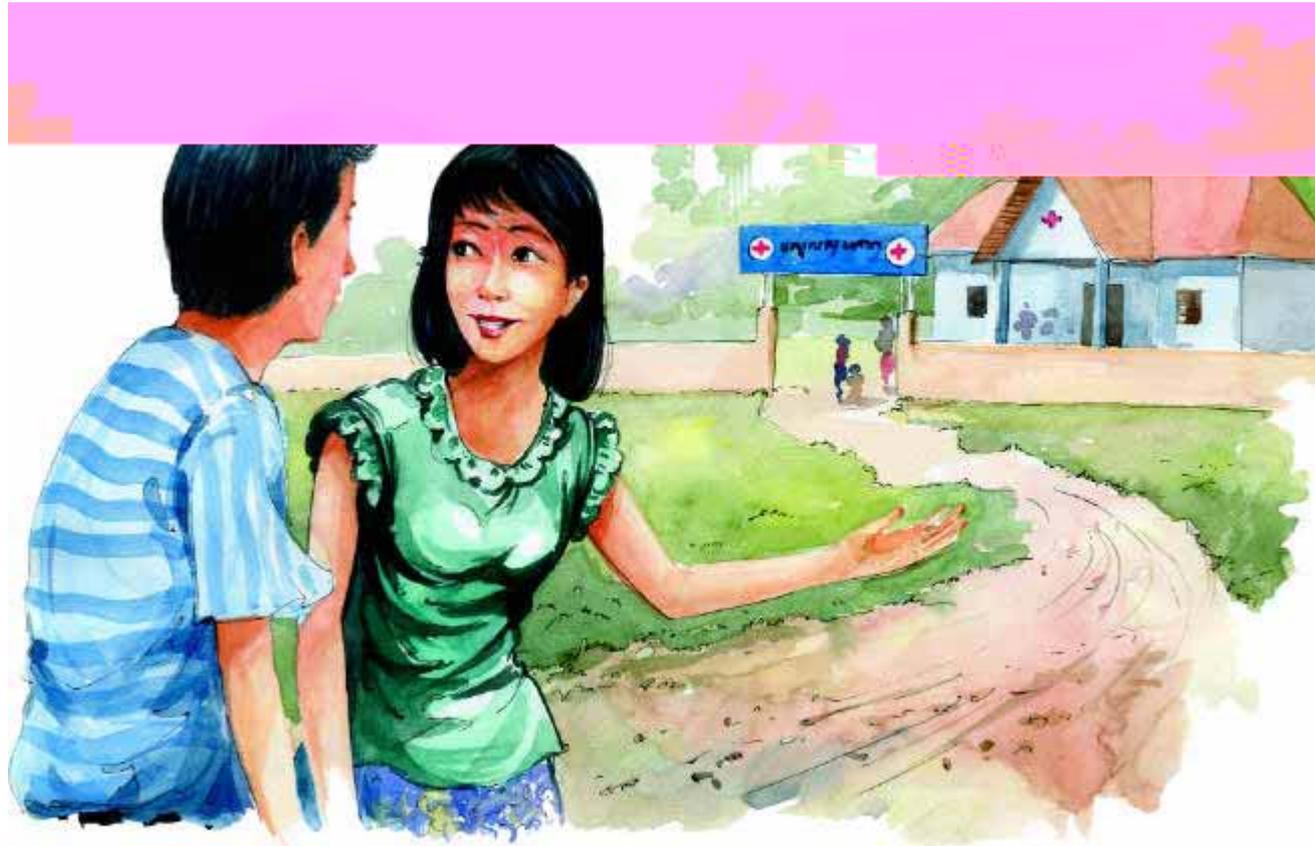
- It is important to use a condom even if both partners are HIV+, because it is possible to be re-infected with a different type of HIV.
- Using a condom also protects you from other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Using a condom can also help prevent another pregnancy.



People who are HIV+ can still enjoy a satisfying sex life. But they should always use a condom during vaginal, anal and oral sex.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT BIRTH SPACING?

When you have a newborn baby it is important to think about family spacing. Your body needs time to recover from pregnancy and delivery. Your new baby needs plenty of care and attention from parents so that she/he can grow strong and healthy.



As soon as possible after delivery, consult with health center staff and ask about family spacing methods. These services are cheap. The health staff have been trained to counsel and help you and your partner.

When you use a condom correctly every time you have sex, it will also help prevent pregnancy. Exclusive breastfeeding also offers some protection against pregnancy for the 6 months after delivery.

WHEN SHOULD I START COMPLEMENTARY FOODS?

At 6 months, breast milk is still the most important part of the baby's diet. But after 6 months, all babies need additional complementary foods. If you are HIV+ and want to continue giving breast milk after your baby is 6 months old, express the breastmilk, boil it and feed with a cup (see page 16). Give breast milk first followed by other foods.



From 6 months old start complementary foods.

HOW DO I START COMPLEMENTARY FOODS?

From 6 months old start complementary foods.

- Give mashed and soft foods 3 times per day after you have breastfed your baby. Give the baby 2-4 spoonfuls at each meal. If the baby is not being breastfed, give 5 times per day at this age.
- Good foods for this age are rice porridge, mashed banana and mashed egg yolk. As soon as your child is able to eat rice porridge, add mashed food such as banana, egg yolk and dark green or orange vegetables to enrich it.
- Give the baby 1 food at a time so that he or she can get used to a new taste and texture.
- Wait about 4 days before introducing another food.

Important:

Children take time to learn to eat. They often spit food out, but this does not mean they dislike it. Give encouragement and be patient.

EXTRA INFORMATION

From around 9 months of age:

At 9 months, babies should receive a mix of foods including rice, meat, fish, eggs, oil, vegetables and fruit. They need to eat foods that have a lot of energy and nutrients. The best diet for babies is a mix of foods from all 3 food groups.

- Food should continue to be chopped and cooked until soft.
- Give food 5 times a day, e.g. 3 meals and 2 snacks. Babies have smaller stomachs than adults and need to be fed smaller more frequent amounts.
E.g. Rice soup mixed with vegetables, oil and some fish, egg or soft meat.
- Once or twice a day the baby can eat a meal or snack without first breast feeding.
- The baby should now be taking 1/2–1 cup of food per day.
- If not breastfeeding, your baby should be taking extra food.

WHAT CAN MY CHILD EAT AFTER 12 MONTHS OF AGE?

From 12-23 months

- Mothers can give their babies vegetables and meat from the family soup and stir fried dishes.
- Foods still need to be cut in small pieces and should not be too hard or spicy.
- Feed the child at the same time as the rest of family 3 times per day.
- Also give the baby 2 snacks such as banana, boiled egg or a piece of bread.
- Every meal should contain a variety of foods.



Over 24 months

- Children should eat at least 3 meals per day with family. They can also have 2 snacks.
- Children should eat energy and nutrient rich foods. They particularly need to eat foods rich in iron and Vitamins A and C.
- They also need to have oil and fat to help absorb the vitamins and for energy.
- Use iodized salt for preparation of children's food.

From 12-23 months:

At this age, children are ready to start eating the same foods as other family members.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Complementary foods should be:

- Available near your home, affordable, fresh and easy to prepare
- Liked by your child
- Rich in energy, protein and other nutrients
- Clean and free from germs
- Contain no bones or hard bits
- Not too warm or spicy
- Easy to eat

Complementary food should be clean and safe

Food contaminated by germs or chemicals can make your baby sick with diarrhea and other diseases.

- Cook food well
- Do not store food outside for longer than 2 hours
- Avoid contact between raw and cooked foods
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating
- Keep all food preparation areas very clean. Use a clean bowl and spoon when feeding your baby.

Always wash your hands before preparing food and before feeding your baby. Keep all food covered and protected from flies and other insects.

HOW CAN I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS HEALTHY?

Signs that a young child is healthy and well nourished:

- Growing and gaining weight
- Eating well
- Active, happy and playful
- Not sick often
- Recovers quickly from common children's illnesses such as colds



A healthy child is active, happy and playful.

HOW CAN I HELP MY BABY STAY STRONG AND HEALTHY?



Weigh your child regularly at the health center. By regularly weighing your child, you can tell if your child is growing and gaining weight normally. The health staff will also check your child for any problems and provide early treatment.

Seek early treatment from a qualified medical person if your child becomes sick.

Do not self treat by buying medicines from a pharmacy. This can be dangerous for your child.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Protect your child against common childhood diseases. Make sure your baby receives the full course of vaccinations. If you live in a remote village, the health staff usually come to the village to do immunizations. Use a mosquito net to protect your baby when sleeping.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Good personal hygiene

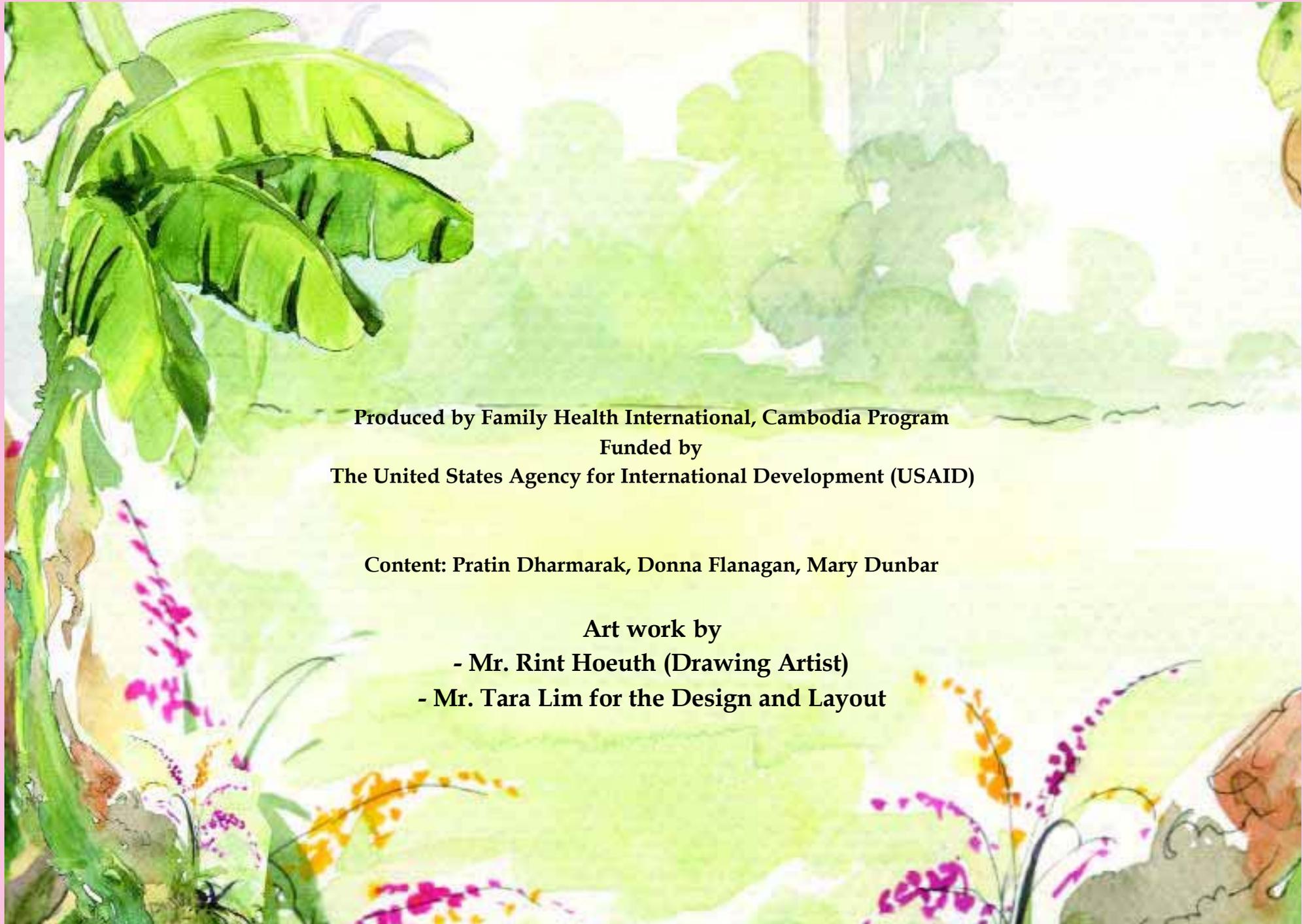
Clean your child frequently with soap and water, wash his/her hands before eating and after using the toilet. Do not let your child crawl on a dirty floor or near dirt or animal stool.

Keep your home and surroundings clean

Keep animals out of the house, use a toilet/latrine or dig a hole to bury stools. Store food away from rats and other pests.

Love

All children need lots of love and attention from their parents and family. Talking, hugging and kissing your child is very important to show your love for him/her. Play is also important for all children. It is through playing that children explore and learn about the world around them.



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