

# A GUIDE

*To Making Life Better  
In Our Community*

This book belongs to

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Cover photograph showing a community coalition meeting in Kuje Area Council of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. Photograph by Dr. Garba Safiyanu, COMPASS FCT.

## INTRODUCTION

We face many challenges in our daily lives. Members of our community are getting sick with malaria, sexually transmitted infections and other illnesses. Some women suffer problems during pregnancy and many of them die during or after childbirth.

Very few children receive all the immunizations they need to protect them

PHOTO: DR. GARBA SAFIYANU



**TOGETHER**  
*we can make life better!*

from easily preventable diseases, and our children get sick and sometimes die as a result.

In Nigeria, many children aged 6-11 do not go to school. We see them in our community idle or engaged in work.

Many of these challenges are difficult, but it is possible for individuals, families and communities to find solutions to these problems so that we can all live healthy and educated lives!

This booklet will help individuals, families and communities understand health and education issues that affect ALL OF US every day. It contains information about a wide range of health and education topics and helps us learn more about how to be healthy and educated.

Let's take time to discuss these topics with our family, friends, health providers, and teachers in our community.

## HOW WILL THIS INFORMATION HELP US?

The information in this guide will:

- ✓ Help us to talk about health and education issues with our families, friends and other community members, especially those who can not read.
- ✓ Help us to discuss health issues with our health providers or community health workers.
- ✓ Help us to discuss education issues with teachers or school officials.
- ✓ Serve as a guide on health and education issues during our community meetings and other events.
- ✓ Empower us to share our ideas and opinions with journalists or broadcasters from our local radio station.

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## EDUCATION

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HOW TO KEEP SCHOOL  
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BETTER



## GOING TO SCHOOL IS IMPORTANT

**G**oing to school is an important event in the life of every child. When children go to school and get an education, there are many benefits for them, their families, and their communities.

### **Education:**

- ✓ Provides an opportunity for our children to learn and to develop their minds.
- ✓ Increase the chances of our children to get a good job later in life. A good job means earning more money and providing a better life for our families.
- ✓ Gives our children the knowledge and skills to lead healthier lives.
- ✓ Provides the necessary starting point for further studies.
- ✓ Gives our children a better quality of life.



Allows us to be proud of our children and happy when they are successful in life.

Provides a community with more knowledge and resources to address its problems and work to improve community conditions.

PHOTO: SEMERE SOLOMON



**To make life better in our community, we will discuss the benefits of education with our families and friends and enroll all our children in school!**

## FINISHING SCHOOL IS IMPORTANT

*"It is little by little that a bird builds its nest." - Nigerian Proverb*

**A** child enrolled in school should stay in school until he/she finishes the 9 years of basic education. However, education does not need to stop here. All families and communities should support our children to give them as much education as possible, such as secondary school and beyond.

### **Our children should finish school because:**

- ✓ A complete education has more value. With each year, new information and skills are learned.



Primary education is the first step to further studies. It can lead to secondary school and university. What our children learn in primary school helps them to be successful at higher levels.

A child who stays in school will make greater achievements.

Keeping a child in school helps to prevent early marriage, teenage pregnancy and child labour.

Primary education is free and a right of every Nigerian child. But all children need the support of their families and communities.

**To help support our children in school, we need to:**

Become involved in the school's Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).

Provide support to families who can't afford school supplies, books or uniforms.

Encourage all families in the neighbourhood to have their children enroll and finish the nine years of basic education.

Reduce the involvement of children in commercial activities such as teachers sending children to sell things for the school or for teachers during school hours.

Make sure our children go to school regularly and check on their progress to know how they are performing in school.

**To make life better in our community, we will support our children and those in our community to complete the nine years of basic education!**



**TOGETHER**

*we can make life better!*

## GIRLS ARE MISSING FROM OUR SCHOOLS

Many people in Nigeria think that only boys should go to school, so they do not enroll their daughters. Girls make great contributions to our families, communities and national development, but they still face difficulties that make it hard for them to go to school. Thus, girls cannot achieve their full potential.



PHOTO: AUWALU KAWU

## **It is important for us to know that:**

The more time a girl spends in school, the more likely she is to grow up to be a healthy mother who will take care of her own children and send them to school.

An educated mother has healthier children, healthier pregnancies and safer deliveries.

Educated girls and women have the knowledge and self-confidence to protect themselves and their children from HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

Education increases a girl's ability to achieve economic independence in society.

**To make life better in our community, we will enroll our daughters in school and discuss the importance of sending girls to school in our community!**

## CHILD LABOUR KEEPS CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL

Child labour occurs when parents or guardians make a child work when that child should be in school.

*"The child we fail to build (train) will sell the house that we built".*

*- Nigerian adage*

Examples of child labour include:

- ✓ Sending children to hawk to make money for the family when they should be in school or doing their homework.

PHOTO: LIZ GILBERT/DAVID AND LUCILE PACKARD FOUNDATION COURTESY PHOTOSHARE



**TOGETHER**  
*we can make life better!*

Sending children to live with and assist relatives or friends as houseboys or girls instead of being in school.

Withdrawing children from school to work as an apprentice.

Withdrawing children from school to stay home to take care of younger brothers and sisters.

### **Effects of Child Labour**

Child labour puts a child at greater risk of:

Accidents/injuries and sometimes death.

Poor performance and dropping out of school.

Exposure to theft, armed robbery, rape and drug abuse.

Ending up with a poor future.

**In order to discourage child labour we should:**

Enrol and retain our children in primary school and beyond.



Discuss the bad effects of child labour on children's health and education with friends and relations.

Discourage friends and relations from withdrawing their children from school for child labour.

PHOTO: ADEOLA OLUNLOYO



**To make life better in our community, we will actively discourage friends and relations from withdrawing their children from school for child labour!**



**TOGETHER**  
*we can make life better!*

## HOW TO KEEP SCHOOL CHILDREN HEALTHY

**O**ur children need to eat enough of nutritious foods to perform well in class and to prevent health problems and diseases.

Good personal hygiene helps to prevent health problems, including diarrhoea, worm infestation and head lice, that affect the general well-being, school attendance and performance of the child.

Proper environmental sanitation in school makes it a beautiful and better place to teach and learn. It also helps to prevent the occurrence and spread of certain infectious diseases in school and in the community.

**In order to help our children maintain good health and perform well in school we should:**

- ✓ Assist our children to maintain good personal hygiene which involves: bathing, brushing of teeth everyday, washing of hands with soap and water

before and after eating and after using the toilet; regular cutting of finger nails; wearing of clean clothes and shoes.

- ✓ Make sure that our children eat three meals a day of nutritious food including groundnuts, green leafy vegetables, tomatoes, fish, meat, eggs, snails and fruits.



PHOTO: AYOBISI OSUNTUSA

**To make life better in our community,  
we will fully support our children to  
eat nutritious food and maintain good  
personal hygiene!**

## PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS MAKE OUR SCHOOLS BETTER

It is important for parents and community members to become involved in school activities. Our involvement helps schools to become a better learning environment. For example:

- ✓ We can influence decisions made at school through the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).
- ✓ We can support the teachers to feel more committed and perform better.
- ✓ We can be actively involved in school activities.
- ✓ Our involvement will help develop a healthy relationship between the community and the school.

**To play an active role in our children's schooling, we should work together as a community to:**

Provide adequate learning materials such as pens, text books, and exercise books for every child.

Provide uniforms, shoes, and school bags.

Monitor the progress, performance and attendance of our children in school.

Ensure that school assignments are done and submitted on time.

Allow children to spend some time playing with friends.

Attend PTA meetings, pay levies when due, donate basic items for the classrooms.

Mobilise resources from the community (LGA, Association, wealthy members).

Insist that resources be used wisely by pupils, staff, school management and educational authorities.

Volunteer to help maintain the schools e.g. contribute labour for bricklaying, electrical services, carpentry, and plumbing.

Support teachers by encouraging them and reinforcing their rules when our children are at home.

PHOTO: ADEOLA OLUNLOYO



**To make life better in our  
community, we will fully support  
our children and become involved  
in the PTA!**

# **PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH**

**EATING GOOD FOOD DURING  
PREGNANCY**

**STAYING HEALTHY DURING  
PREGNANCY**

**STARTING ANTENATAL CARE  
EARLY**

**PREVENTING MALARIA  
DURING PREGNANCY**

**HOW TO KNOW WHEN  
SOMETHING IS WRONG  
DURING PREGNANCY**

**PLANNING FOR CHILDBIRTH**

**GOING FOR CHECKUPS AFTER  
CHILDBIRTH**

## EATING GOOD FOOD DURING PREGNANCY

**P**regnant women need to eat the right foods to help themselves and their unborn babies stay healthy.



PHOTO: PATHS/DFID



**The foods that a pregnant woman should eat include:**

**Staples:** Rice, spaghetti/macaroni/noodles, bread, yam, semolina/semovita, beans, plantain.

**Animal Foods:** Milk, beef, chicken, fish, egg, organ meat such as liver, kidney, heart.

**Fruits:** Citrus including oranges and tangerine, grapes, mango, banana, apple, water melon, pawpaw, pineapple.

**Vegetables:** Spinach, okro, waterleaf, pumpkin leaf (*ugwu*), cabbage, carrot, cucumber, celosia (*shokoyokoto*), corchorus (ewedu), garden egg.



Pregnant women need to get information about what to eat from the health workers. Eating good foods helps them stay healthy and helps their babies grow.

Eating a lot of the right foods is important for pregnant women especially for young pregnant women because their own bodies are still growing. This means they must have enough food for their own growth as well as for the growth of their babies.

If pregnant women do not eat enough of the right foods, there is a high chance that their babies will be born small and weak. The babies will also be more likely to get sick or not grow properly.

They also need vitamins supplement like ferrous and folic acid.

**To make life better in our community, we will ensure that all pregnant women seek information from the health worker on what to eat during pregnancy!**

## STAYING HEALTHY DURING PREGNANCY

**E**very family wants a healthy baby and a healthy mother. With families and community members help, our pregnant women will have a better chance of staying healthy and of giving birth to healthy babies.

In order to deliver a healthy baby and keep the mother healthy, family members should encourage pregnant women to:

- ✓ Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- ✓ Take routine vitamins supplement.
- ✓ Get more rest than usual; at least 1 hour of rest during the day and go to sleep early at night.

Avoid lifting and carrying heavy loads. This can make the baby move around in the wrong way inside the mother and can even result in losing the baby.

Take a daily bath. Washing will help avoid illness for the mother and the baby.

Wear comfortable shoes and loose clothing as it allows the baby to move freely.

**To make life better in our community, we will assist any pregnant woman to stay healthy, eat good food, and be comfortable!**

## STARTING ANTENATAL CARE EARLY

**P**regnancy is a normal process in the life of women. However, the mother and/or her baby may have some difficulties. The best way to help avoid these problems is to make sure pregnant women start antenatal care early to have all the necessary checkups.

Early antenatal care is important to monitor the health of a woman and her unborn baby.

The husband should give the wife all the necessary support during this period.

During checkup visits, the health worker will:

- ✓ Check the mother and the baby.
- ✓ Provide guidelines, medicines or vaccines a pregnant woman needs to stay healthy.
- ✓ Advise a woman if there are problems and refer her to the appropriate health centre for service or treatment if needed.

A woman should have her first check-up as soon as she believes she is pregnant, or within the first 3 months of pregnancy. She should then visit the health care worker as directed, usually at least four times during the pregnancy.

Going for checkups does not guarantee an easy delivery. All pregnant women are advised to deliver with a trained health worker who can provide the necessary assistance in case of a problem.

PHOTO: LIZ GILBERT/DAVID AND  
LUCILE PACKARD FOUNDATION  
COURTESY PHOTOSHARE



To make life better in our  
community, we will encourage  
pregnant women to seek  
antenatal care services  
at the health centre!

## PREVENTING MALARIA DURING PREGNANCY

**M**alaria is an illness caused by the bite of a mosquito that is carrying the malaria parasite. During pregnancy, a woman's ability to fight disease is reduced, so she is more likely to get malaria. Malaria during pregnancy can cause sickness or death to the mother and the unborn baby. Malaria can also cause a baby to have low birth weight, be small and weak, be born early or be born with serious health problems. It is good to prevent pregnant women from getting malaria.

### **To prevent malaria, pregnant women should:**

Visit a trained health worker who will give her tablets at least twice during pregnancy.

Sleep under a long lasting Insecticide Treated Net (ITN) throughout pregnancy. The ITN will stop mosquitoes from biting her.

**A pregnant woman should go to her health center for treatment of malaria if she has any of the following signs:**

- Fever
- Shivering
- Headache
- Muscle and joint pain
- Stomach pains/vomiting
- Labour pains before nine months
- Dizziness
- Difficulty breathing
- Feeling sleepy
- Loss of consciousness
- Convulsion
- Yellow looking skin
- Loss of water / fluids

**To make life better in our community, we will encourage all pregnant women to sleep under a long lasting ITN and visit the health for proper treatment of malaria!**



## HOW TO KNOW WHEN SOMETHING IS WRONG DURING PREGNANCY

**P**regnancy is a very special time for everyone in the family. Sometimes a pregnant woman, no matter how healthy she is, can develop problems that need immediate attention. Signs that a pregnant woman needs to get care at a health centre immediately include:

- ✓ Bleeding from her private parts.
- ✓ Swollen feet, hands and face.
- ✓ Severe headache, blurred vision, fits or convulsions.
- ✓ Severe stomach pains.
- ✓ Labour pains before 9 months.
- ✓ Little or no movement by baby.

The health worker is trained to recognize and prevent problems in pregnancy and can treat the pregnant woman if she has difficulties. The health worker can also refer her to the proper hospital for care and treatment if necessary.

**To make life better in our community, we will take pregnant women with danger signs to the nearest health centre immediately!**

## PLANNING FOR CHILDBIRTH

**E**very pregnancy is a special event because it introduces new life into the world. It is important that we prepare for delivery **BEFORE** it occurs. We have to:

Decide where the delivery will take place.

Arrange for a skilled health worker to help with the delivery.

Decide how the pregnant woman will be transported to the health centre before labour begins.

Plan ahead by saving money for proper care of the mother and child.

**There are some basic items that are needed before the delivery. These include:**

clothes for the baby.

money for transport and medical treatment.

New clean blade, cloth, soap, cotton wool and sanitary pads, baby oil.

These items should be packed ready long before labour begins.

*Note that no matter how healthy a woman is, there is a chance that something can go wrong unexpectedly. Be prepared before labour begins!*

**To make life better in our community, we will make sure that all pregnant women and their families prepare the items needed for a safe birth!**

## GOING FOR CHECKUPS AFTER BIRTH

Sometimes things can go wrong after a baby is born. Many deaths of the mother and the baby occur after the birth of the baby. For that reason, it is important for all women to visit a health centre and receive proper medical care after the birth of a baby.

A mother should visit a health centre two times after the baby is born.

**Two weeks after the birth:** This first visit allows the health worker to make sure that the mother and baby are recovering properly from the birth. The health worker can identify and care for any difficulties or complications that might have arisen.

**Six weeks after the birth:** The second visit should be six weeks after delivery. Any additional visits should be arranged with the health worker as needed.

During visits to the health centre, the mother will have the chance to ask questions about breastfeeding,

immunizations, sexual relations, child spacing or any other concerns she may have.

We should support the mother and baby to go for these checkups by making arrangements for transport and clinic fees.

If a mother visits the health centre after the birth of her baby, it will help make sure that the mother and baby are on the road to a speedy recovery and a happy and healthy life.

PHOTO: PATHS/DFID



**To make life better in our community, we will encourage every woman to visit the health centre after birth to ensure mother and baby are recovering!**

# BREASTFEEDING AND NUTRITION

FEEDING BABIES FROM BIRTH  
TO 6 MONTHS

FEEDING BABIES AFTER 6  
MONTHS

VITAMIN A FOR CHILDREN AND  
MOTHERS

PHOTO: PATHS/DFID



## FEEDING BABIES FROM BIRTH TO 6 MONTHS

A baby should be put to breast as soon as delivered. Essentially, the baby should be fed with the first yellowish milk (colostrum) produced by the mother. This yellowish milk is high in nutrients and protects newborn babies from infections.

Breast milk provides all the food babies need for the first 6 months of life. No other food or drink, not even water is needed during this period.

Breast milk contains substances which protect babies from diarrhoea, cough, cold and other illnesses, so babies are less likely to get sick when exclusively breastfed.

Breastfeeding helps establish affection between the mother and baby as well as help prevent mothers from becoming pregnant too soon.

Giving babies other foods or drinks in the first six months of life expose them to the risk of getting diarrhoea or other illnesses from the food, drink, bottle or cup which may have germs.

The nursing mother should eat a variety of good foods to stay healthy and produce enough breast milk for her baby.

There is a chance that a woman infected with HIV can pass the disease onto her baby through breastfeeding. Women who are HIV positive or suspect that they may be infected should visit a health facility to confirm their HIV status and be counselled on appropriate feeding of their babies.

**To make life better in our  
community, we will ensure  
all mothers breastfeed their babies  
exclusively from birth  
to six months old!**



## FEEDING BABIES AFTER 6 MONTHS

**A**fter 6 months, babies need to begin to eat other foods, but it is still important to continue breastfeeding day and night, as often as the child wants.

It is important that we help babies learn to eat different foods. Let us use the table below as a guide.

Age of child	Number of feeding per day
6 - 8 months	2 - 3 meals in addition to breast milk
9 - 11 months	3 - 4 meals in addition to breast milk
12 - 24 months	4 - 5 meals in addition to breast milk

For proper growth and protection against diseases, children need a variety of good foods, such as thick porridge enriched with pounded groundnuts or mashed beans or ground-up meat or fish powder or with a mix of vegetables and fruits.

Foods rich in iron also help to ensure children's physical and mental development.

Good sources of iron include:

Liver

Non fatty meats and fish

Eggs

Regular consumption of iodized salt is important to control iodine deficiency disorder and ensure mental development.

Mothers should take care to prepare the baby food properly to ensure the food is soft and edible for the child to eat.

We should always wash our hands with soap and water before preparing food and before feeding a child.

From birth to age two, children should be weighed every month at home or health centre. A young child should grow well and gain weight fast. If a child has not gained weight for about two months or the

child refuses breast milk or doesn't eat for a long period of time, the child should be taken to a health facility.

During any illness, children need to continue to eat regularly and breastfeed. After an illness, children need at least one extra meal every day for at least a week.

PHOTO: AUWALU KAWU



**To make life better in our community, we will feed our children who are six months old and above with a variety of good foods and breast milk!**

## VITAMIN A FOR CHILDREN AND MOTHERS

**V**itamin A helps children to grow, develop, see well and protects them against diseases. Children should receive Vitamin A at the age of 6 months from a health facility and continue every 6 months until the age of 5 years (59 months).

**Vitamin A can also be found in many foods such as:**

Green leafy vegetables.

Yellow fruits and vegetable (paw-paw, mangoes, carrots)

Animal sources such as (liver, milk, meat, egg and other dairy products)

Red palm oil

**Lack of Vitamin A can cause blindness and expose children to diseases.**

Mothers should also receive Vitamin A supplements within six to eight weeks after delivery of their babies to ensure their milk supply is enriched with vitamin A.

**Vitamin A supplements should be taken by babies as follows:**

**First dose:** At six months.

**Second dose:** Four to six months after.

Mothers and caregivers can get more information about Vitamin A supplementation from health facilities.

To make life better in our community, we will ensure all mothers and their babies receive Vitamin A supplements from a health facility!

# ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION AND SUPPLEMENTAL IMMUNIZATION (POLIO)

IMMUNIZATION PROTECTS US  
FROM DISEASES

COMPLETING THE  
IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE  
FOR CHILDREN

POLIO: FREQUENTLY ASKED  
QUESTIONS

PHOTO: DR. AUWALU KAWU



## IMMUNIZATION PROTECTS US FROM DISEASES

**I**mmunizing our children is the best way to protect them against dangerous diseases that could cause disability, illness or even death. Immunization is good because:

It protects children from diseases that can cause disability or kill.

It saves children's lives.

Healthier children can do better in school.

Parents spend less money on getting treatment, because their children are not often sick.

Communities can take pride in eliminating diseases from their area.

**Immunization protects against the following diseases:**

Polio

Tuberculosis

Diphtheria

Tetanus  
Pertussis  
Whooping cough  
Hepatitis B  
Measles  
Yellow Fever

A child who has received ALL the immunizations for these diseases will be protected. If a child only gets some of the immunizations, he or she is not fully protected and could still get the disease.

Making sure that every child has all of his or her immunizations in the first year of life is our responsibility.

We should visit the health facility to get all the necessary information about when a child should be taken for immunizations.

**To make life better in our  
community, we will ensure  
that all our children are  
fully immunized!**



## COMPLETING THE IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN

**W**e should bring our children to the health centre **5 times in the first year of life** for complete immunization. We should use the schedule on the next page as a guide.

A child's immunization card should be brought to every immunization session and anytime the child is brought to the hospital.

Sometimes small problems or side effects might occur as a result of the immunization, such as mild fever or swelling at the place where the injection was given. These are normal and should not cause concern. However, if a child gets a high fever or convulsions, we should take the child to a health centre immediately.

<b>Visits</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Types of Immunization Required</b>	<b>Diseases which Immunization Prevents</b>
1	At Birth	Oral Polio (OPV), BCG, HBV1	Poliomyelitis, Tuberculosis and Hepatitis B
2	6 Weeks	DPT1, HBV2, OPV1	Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Hepatitis B and Poliomyelitis
3	10 Weeks	DPT2, OPV2	Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, and Poliomyelitis
4	14 Weeks	DPT3, OPV3, HBV3	Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Poliomyelitis and Hepatitis B
5	9 Months	Measles and Yellow Fever	Measles and Yellow Fever

**To make life better in our community, we will ensure that our children complete the immunization schedule!**

## **POLIO: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Is the polio vaccine different from vaccines for other immunizations?**

No, the polio vaccine plays the same role as other immunizations. It works to prevent the polio disease in children. However, the polio vaccine is in drops, which means it is given by mouth rather than by injection.

### **Why is there so much pressure on parents to accept the polio vaccine when there are so many other problems to be addressed?**

It is unfortunate that there are so many problems in our communities and solutions are sometimes slow in coming. But problems must be addressed one at a time. The eradication of polio is one readily available solution to a terrible problem. Many children are crippled due to polio and are not able to lead active

lives. The only way to save children from this lifelong burden is to prevent it from happening. This is why we are all encouraging parents to immunize their children. When polio is eliminated, no family will ever have to worry about this crippling disease and its associated paralysis.

### **What age should a child be immunised with the polio vaccine?**

Every child under five years old should be given the oral polio vaccine, including newborn babies. We all need to work together to ensure that all newborn babies and every child under five years of age receive the polio drops whenever the vaccinators bring it to our door or at a health post near us.

PHOTO: BBC NEWS



## **Should a sick child be given the polio vaccine?**

Yes, it is safe to give a sick child the vaccine. The drops do not have any effect on the illness and will not make the child sicker.

## **Is the Oral Polio Vaccine safe?**

Yes, the vaccine is completely safe and will not harm our children. There are lots of rumours that are not true about the vaccine. It is NOT contaminated with HIV or family planning drugs. The polio vaccine protects children from polio infection so they can live healthy, productive lives. Millions of children across Nigeria have taken it, with no bad effects. It is the same vaccine that is used in all States of the Federation and throughout the world to prevent this crippling disease in children.

## **How many doses should be given to a child?**

A child can be given repeated doses of the polio vaccine until the polio virus no longer exists in the community. Repeated vaccinations ensure full protection from the polio virus. The virus will continue to threaten children's health as long as it remains active in Nigeria. The multiple doses will not harm the child and can protect the child for life.

## **When are the immunization campaigns this year?**

Immunization days takes place several times a year. We should listen for announcements on the radio and in our community for information about the dates of the next immunization campaign in our area.

**To make life better in our community, we will ensure that every child in our community receives the polio drops during the next immunization campaign!**

# DIARRHOEA

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT  
DIARRHOEA AND HOW TO  
PREVENT IT

HELPING A CHILD WITH  
DIARRHOEA AT HOME



PHOTO: PATHFINDER MOZAMBIQUE

## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT DIARRHOEA AND HOW TO PREVENT IT

**D**iarrhoea is caused by eating food or drinking water that has germs in it. These germs get into the food from dirty hands and dirty eating utensils such as plates and cups. Germs can also be found in water.



PHOTO: PATHS/DFID



Diarrhoea means having 3 or more watery stools a day. Diarrhoea kills children by draining liquid from the body. As soon as diarrhoea starts, it is important that the child be given extra liquid, as well as regular foods to replace this loss. If the liquid is not replaced quickly, diarrhoea can easily weaken or even kill the child.

A child's life is in danger if there are several watery stools within an hour or if there is blood in the stool. In this case, we should immediately get help from a trained health worker.

A child who has diarrhoea and water loss may develop loose skin, sunken eyes or become very weak and inactive. If a child shows these signs, we should take him or her to the nearest health centre for treatment right away.

## Prevention

We should wash our hands and those of our children with soap and water (or ash and water) after using the toilet, before touching or preparing food or eating food.

Dispose of faeces in a latrine or toilet or bury them.

PHOTO: PATHS/DFID



To make life better in our community, we will wash our hands with soap and water, keep our homes clean and watch out for danger signs of diarrhoea in children!

## HELPING A CHILD WITH DIARRHOEA AT HOME

**D**iarrhoea can lead to a serious loss of water, fluids and salts from the body. Continued loss of these fluids can result in the death of a child. It is possible to stop this loss by replacing the water, fluids and salt with Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT). We can buy the Oral Rehydration

PHOTO: ADEOLA OLUNLOYO



Solution (ORS) sachet at the pharmacy or the health centre. We can also make our own treatment using a solution called Salt Sugar Solution or SSS.

**To prepare the SSS, we should:**

1. Boil water and then let it cool in a covered container.
2. Take a clean empty bowl and clean teaspoon.
3. Pour enough of the cool boiled water to fill one clean bottles of Coke or Fanta.
4. Add one teaspoon of salt into the clean boiled water in the bowl.
5. Add 10 teaspoons or 5 cubes of sugar into the bowl.
6. Stir the mixture thoroughly until the sugar and salt are completely dissolved.
7. We should NOT store the SSS for more than 24 hours. We should throw away any solution that has not been used at the end of 24 hours and make a new solution.

8. When storing the solution, make sure the bowl is covered.

**ORAL REHYDRATION THERAPY (ORT)**  
■ How to prepare Salt Sugar Solution ■

CLEAN BOILED WATER

+

2 35cl BOTTLES

SALT

1 LEVEL TEASPOON

+

SUGAR

10 LEVEL TEASPOONS  
(1 = 5gms x 10g)

OR

120g x 1

MIXING BOWL

Use boiled, cool water (discard after 24 hours) and make a new batch.  
Start giving the oral Salt Sugar Solution (SSS) as soon as diarrhoea starts.

When a child is having diarrhoea, we should give the SSS to the child as often as he or she will take it. If the child vomits, we should wait ten minutes and then give the mixture again more slowly and in smaller amounts. We may need to give a spoonful over and over again until the child can take larger amounts.

### **Caring for a child with Diarrhoea**

A child with diarrhoea needs to continue eating and drinking water regularly.

Nursing mothers should continue exclusive breastfeeding of babies below the age of 6 months.

Children above 6 months should be breastfed, given foods as well as SSS. The child needs an extra meal everyday for at least 2 weeks.

If SSS is given properly and the child is not getting better, or having blood in the stool, we should take the child to the health facility.

Diarrhoea kills many children, but it can be easily managed if everyone in the community knows how to take care of it as soon as it starts.

**To make life better in our community, we will give Salt Sugar Solution as recommended by a health worker to a child who is having diarrhoea!**

## MALARIA

HOW TO KNOW WHEN A CHILD HAS MALARIA

CARING FOR A CHILD WITH MALARIA AT HOME

USING INSECTICIDE TREATED NETS (ITNs) TO STOP MALARIA

PHOTO: PUBLIC HEALTH IMAGE LIBRARY (PHIL)





## HOW TO KNOW WHEN A CHILD HAS MALARIA

**M**alaria is an illness caused by the bite of a mosquito that is carrying the malaria parasite. When a mosquito bites a person who has the malaria parasite in his or her blood, the mosquito picks up the parasite and puts it in the blood of the next person that it bites. After a few days, that person develops malaria. Only mosquitoes can pass malaria from one person to another.

Someone with malaria usually has fever. When a child has fever, family members can take steps to help treat the fever at home. These steps will be discussed in the next section.

PHOTO: COMPASS OFFICE BAUCHI



**The following are signs that a child has malaria:**

- Fever
- Headaches
- Loss of appetite
- Bitterness in the mouth
- Painful joints
- Nausea, vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Weakness
- Unusual sleepiness

Malaria is a major cause of death for children, so a child with these symptoms should be taken to the nearest health centre or hospital immediately for treatment.

We can get more information about malaria, how to stop it, and how to treat it from a health worker.

**To make life better in our community, we will learn to recognize the signs of malaria in a child!**

## CARING FOR A CHILD WITH MALARIA AT HOME

**M**alaria remains one of the most common causes of death in children. A child can die from malaria within a few hours, so caregivers must act quickly to treat the child.

PHOTO: ADEOLA OLUNLOYO



PHOTO: COMPASS BAUCHI OFFICE

**As soon as we think a child has malaria/fever, we should take the following steps:**

Sponge the child with lukewarm water to reduce the fever.

Take the child to the health centre for treatment.

Follow the treatment instructions as given by the health worker.

Give all the drugs as instructed by the health worker.

Continue giving the treatment even if the child feels better.

**If we see any of the following signs in a child, this is very serious, and we should take the child back to the health centre immediately:**

Very high fever

Severe headache

Refusing to eat  
Vomiting  
Convulsions  
Little or no urine  
Dark urine

PHOTO: COMPASS OFFICE BAUCHI



To make life better in our  
community, we will take our  
children sick with malaria to the  
health centre for proper treatment!

## USING INSECTICIDE TREATED NETS (ITNs) TO STOP MALARIA

**I**nsecticide Treated Nets or ITNs are nets treated with a substance that kills insects. They come in different sizes, shapes and colours for both children and adults.

ITNs kills any mosquito that touches them. It also prevents mosquitoes from entering the room where the nets are hung.

Everyone is advised to buy long lasting ITNs because they offer protection against mosquitoes for a longer period.

ITNs are especially important for pregnant women and children under 5, but everyone in the family should sleep under a net if

possible. To use an ITN, we should hang it over the bed or sleeping mat.

Poles are not mandatory to mount the net. It can be tied up with strings.

PHOTO: KHADIJAH I. NUJU & ADEOLA OLUNLOYO



To make life better in our community, we will ensure that all children under 5 years old and pregnant women **ALWAYS** sleep under a long lasting insecticide treated net!

## CHILD SPACING

SPACING OUR CHILDREN

SHORT AND LONG TERM WAYS  
OF CHILD SPACING

WHEN WE HAVE FINISHED  
HAVING CHILDREN

CHILD SPACING IS ALSO FOR  
MEN

CHILD SPACING FACTS

PHOTO: LIZ GILBERT/DAVID AND LUCILE PACKARD  
FOUNDATION COURTESY PHOTOSHARE





## SPACING OUR CHILDREN

**T**here are a variety of modern products and devices that can help couples to space their children. These are usually called, modern child spacing methods or family planning methods. All of the methods are safe, easy to use and effective! A health worker can help us choose the best modern method for us and our partners.

Using child spacing methods allows us to have children when we are ready and to space the number of children we have over the years.

**Child spacing has benefits because it helps to:**

- ✓ Prevent unplanned pregnancies.
- ✓ Save the lives of women. If we can prevent risky pregnancies, a lot of death caused by pregnancy and child birth will be prevented.

Save the lives of children. If children are born years apart, they have a better chance of surviving .

Improve the well-being of the family. Parents with well spaced children are better able to provide them with enough food, clothing, health care, housing and education.

PHOTO: ADEOLA OLUNLOYO



**To make life better in our  
community, we will space our  
children by using modern child  
spacing methods!**

## SHORT AND LONG TERM WAYS OF CHILD SPACING

**S**hort-term child spacing methods last for a short time. They must be used regularly to prevent unplanned pregnancies. Examples of these methods are:

- ✓ The pill
- ✓ The condom (male and female)
- ✓ The diaphragm/cervical cap



PHOTO: ADEOLA OLUNLOYO

Spermicides  
Natural family planning  
Injectables

Short-term methods often require that we take them everyday or use them each time we have sex or for a shorter period not more than 3 months. For example, a woman needs to take the pill every day to prevent pregnancy. Or a man must use a condom properly, each and every time he has sex, to prevent pregnancy.

Short-term methods are appropriate for couples who want to delay the birth of their first child. Couples who want to space the births of their children can also use a short-term method.

Long-term child spacing methods last for many years. Couples who use these types of methods can space their children over

an extended period of years. Examples of these methods include:

Norplant

Intra Uterine Contraceptive Device (IUCD)

Long term methods do not have to be taken daily like the pill. They do not require that we use them every time we have sex, like the condom. After insertion, they last for a long period of time.

Long-term methods do not prevent pregnancy forever. They can be stopped if we want to have a baby.

Long-term methods are appropriate for couples who want to delay the birth of their next child up to five or more years. They are appropriate for couples who do not want to have another baby and do not want permanent method.

It is important to know that many of these short and long term methods only help to prevent pregnancy. They do not protect against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) or HIV/AIDS.

For more information and counselling on which child spacing method is best for our needs, we should talk to a trained health worker.

**To make life better in our  
community, we will get  
counselling on what child spacing  
method would work best for  
our family!**

## WHEN WE HAVE FINISHED HAVING CHILDREN

**I**t is very important for us to have all the facts in order to make decisions about the number of children we want and can properly support.

When we have decided that we do not want any more children or cannot have more children due to medical/health reason, we can choose to use a permanent child spacing method. Using this method means that we will no longer be able to have children. Once a permanent method is used, we cannot change our minds and have a child.

### **Types of permanent methods include:**

- ✓ Sterilization for women, which is called tubal ligation.
- ✓ Sterilization for men, which is called vasectomy.

Permanent methods do NOT affect our ability to have a normal sex life. The word

sterilization means “not able to reproduce”. It does NOT mean that we will not be able to have sex. After sterilization, we will look and feel exactly as we did before and can have sex just as before, except that now we will not have to worry about pregnancy.

Vasectomy for men involves a minor surgery. The man is able to resume his normal sexual life. Tubal ligation for women also involves minor surgery and the woman is able to resume normal sexual life as soon as she can.

If we want to consider a permanent child spacing method, a trained health worker can provide us with more information.

**To make life better in our community, we will choose a permanent child spacing method that best suits our needs when we decide that we do not want any more children!**



## CHILD SPACING IS ALSO FOR MEN

**H**usbands and wives should decide together the number of children to have and when to have them. They can seek information from a trained health worker who can talk to them about modern child spacing methods. It is best if both of them make the choice.

- ✓ Husband and wife should decide together how they want to space their children.
- ✓ Birth spacing is not just for women. Men should understand that by spacing their children they have a better chance of having a happy, healthy home.
- ✓ Men who space their children and who go with their wives for child spacing counselling can be proud of their modern and responsible behaviour.
- ✓ We should encourage our male friends and relatives to discuss the use of child spacing methods.

**To make life better in our community, we will encourage our male friends and relatives to support their wives in choosing and using a modern child spacing method!**

## CHILD SPACING FACTS

**T**here are a number of common myths and rumours about child spacing that are incorrect. It is important for everyone to get the facts from trained health workers.

### **The facts about child spacing**

Child spacing does not cause barrenness and impotence.

Child spacing methods do not affect the sexual performance of men or women in any way.

Child spacing does not stop people from having children forever.

Child spacing allows individuals and couples to have the number of children they want at the time they want to have them.

Child spacing is not for women only. Child spacing is a joint responsibility for men and women. It can be practiced more effectively when husbands and wives support each other.

Child spacing does not encourage promiscuity or waywardness among women.

Using child spacing methods will not change women's sexual behaviour.

Let's share these facts with our spouses, friends and families so that everyone will know the truth about child spacing and its benefits.

**To make life better in our community, we will know the facts about child spacing and discuss them with others!**

## TEENAGE PREGNANCY

PREGNANCY BEFORE THE AGE  
OF 18 YEARS

PREVENTING TEENAGE  
PREGNANCY

WHAT HAPPENS IF A WOMAN  
HAS AN UNSAFE ABORTION

HEALTH CARE AFTER AN  
UNSAFE ABORTION



PHOTO: ADEOLA OLUNLOYO

## PREGNANCY BEFORE THE AGE OF 18 YEARS

**T**eenage pregnancy means a girl gets pregnant before she reaches the age of 18 years. This can sometimes happen within the context of early marriage or to youth who are unmarried.

**Teenage mothers face the risk of increased health problems, both for themselves and their babies. Such problems include:**

- ✓ The baby arrives too early and does not survive.
- ✓ The baby is born dead.
- ✓ The baby is born too small.
- ✓ The pelvic area of a young girl is not fully grown and the baby gets stuck during delivery.
- ✓ The young girl is unable to finish school, thus limiting her future opportunities for work.
- ✓ The young girl may have difficulties supporting her new baby financially.

## PREVENTING TEENAGE PREGNANCY

**To prevent pregnancies, young people should:**

Stay away from sex.

Avoid situations that might lead to sex, such as getting too close to or being alone with someone from the opposite sex.

Stay away from people who might pressure them into having sex.

Set their life goals and work towards them.

Go to a Youth Friendly Services (YFS) Health Centre for counselling on modern child spacing methods.

**To make life better in our community, we will discuss with teenagers the problems that can occur to young girls when they get pregnant. We will encourage adolescents to visit a YFS Health Centre!**

## WHAT HAPPENS IF A WOMAN HAS AN UNSAFE ABORTION

**A**bortion is the end of a pregnancy on or before 28 weeks.

### **There are 2 types of abortion:**

Spontaneous abortion happens on its own (miscarriage).

Induced abortion happens when actions are taken to end the pregnancy.

Complications of abortion include severe bleeding, infection, infertility and death.

A woman experiencing complications of abortion should go to a health centre immediately for services.

It is safer to prevent an unwanted pregnancy than to engage in an unsafe abortion.

**To make life better in our community, we will explain to others the consequences of abortion and refer them to a health centre for counselling and services!**

## HEALTH CARE AFTER AN UNSAFE ABORTION

**A**fter an abortion, women may suffer some complications and need urgent medical attention.

Women should go to a health centre immediately for services when this happens.

**At the health centre, a health worker will:**

- ✓ Identify and respond to the woman's emotional and physical health needs and other concerns.
- ✓ Treat incomplete and unsafe abortions and potentially life-threatening complications.



Provide counselling on child spacing methods, in case of induced abortion in order to prevent future unplanned pregnancies.

Receiving these services after an abortion reduces sickness and death from complications and teaches a woman how to prevent future unplanned pregnancies.

**To make life better in our community, we will encourage all women who experience problems from an abortion to seek care at the health centre!**

## SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs) AND HIV/AIDS

COMMON STIs

HIV/AIDS CAN BE PREVENTED

## COMMON STIs

**S**exually transmitted infections (STIs) are diseases that are spread through sexual intercourse.

### **Common STIs include:**

- ✓ Gonorrhea
- ✓ Syphilis
- ✓ Herpes
- ✓ Chlamydia
- ✓ Trichomoniasis
- ✓ Candidiasis
- ✓ Genital Warts
- ✓ HIV

STIs are spreading at an alarming rate and are increasing among young people. People who have sex without a condom are at great risk of getting an STI.

**The following are signs that someone might have an STI:**

Painful urination

Stomach pain

Smelly discharge from private parts

Bleeding between menstrual periods

Fever

Sores on the private parts

Rashes on the private parts

If we have these symptoms we must seek treatment immediately at a health centre.

**There are three ways to decrease the chances of getting an STI:**

1. Staying away from sex.
2. Being faithful to one partner who is also faithful to his/her partner and who does not have HIV.
3. Correctly using a new condom every time we have sex.

**To make life better in our community, we will take measures to prevent the spread of STIs and seek treatment in case we are infected.**

## HIV/AIDS CAN BE PREVENTED

**H**IV/AIDS is a disease that is spreading rapidly around the world and in Nigeria. A cure has not yet been found, but it is possible to prevent HIV/AIDS.

HIV means Human Immuno-deficiency Virus. The infection slowly destroys the body's ability to fight diseases. Someone can have it for many years without knowing.

AIDS means Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. At this stage the body becomes very weak and is exposed to different diseases.

HIV is spread from one person to another through body fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal fluid and breast milk.

HIV can be detected by getting professional Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) at a health centre or hospital. Testing is recommended for anyone who has engaged in risky behaviour such as sharing sharp objects with people, having unscreened blood transfusion and sex without a condom with someone who does not know his/her HIV status or who is HIV-positive.

### **HIV can be spread by:**

Having sex without a condom with a person who has HIV. It only takes ONE sexual act with an infected person to result in the passing of HIV.

A pregnant mother who is infected with HIV can pass it to her unborn baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.

Sharing sharp and piercing objects like an injection needle, a razor or a cutting knife with anyone infected with HIV.

We can not get the disease by touching, shaking hands or hugging. It cannot be spread by eating at the same table, using the same toilet, or sharing the same bed with an HIV infected person. Let's remember that HIV can **ONLY** be spread through blood and sex.

### **Signs of HIV/AIDS**

People who are infected with HIV do not show any sign. The only way to confirm is by going for a test.

People who have AIDS become sick with different diseases because their body is too weak to fight the infections. Proper care and management must be given at this stage.

### **HIV can be prevented by:**

- ✓ Staying away from sex.
- ✓ Being faithful to one person who is also faithful to his/her partner and who does not have HIV.

Correctly using condoms every time we have sex.

Avoiding sharing sharp and piercing instruments such as injection needles, blade, razor or cutting knife.

Every single person in the community has the responsibility to protect him or herself and others from HIV/AIDS. It is possible to prevent the spread of HIV in Nigeria if everyone accepts the responsibility to avoid passing on the infection.

**To make life better in our community, we will protect ourselves from getting HIV/AIDS!**



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### **EDUCATION**

For questions on the education topics in this booklet, we should contact the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) in our state or the nearest Local Government Education Authority (LGEA).

### **HEALTH**

For questions on the health topics in this booklet, we should contact the State Ministry of Health (SMOH) or the nearest Heal facility.

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