

VHT-Guide to Healthy Homes



Boil Your Drinking Water

1) Clean water: Water should be boiled, filtered or treated before drinking. Contaminated water is a major source of illness and death.

2) Hand-washing: Always use soap when washing hands, especially before preparing meals, before eating meals, after using the latrine, and after handling sick children to prevent illness. It is one of the cheapest and most effective ways to limit the spread of disease and keep your family healthy.



Use soap to wash hands



Install Ventilated Pit Latrines

3) Toilets: All people should have a toilet for disposing of feces. Best are the VIPs (ventilated, improved pit latrines), but all latrines should have a cover and it should always be placed over the opening after use to prevent flies from spreading germs that cause illness. If you don't have a latrine, you need to build one.

***4) ORS:** Far too many kids die from diarrhea. You can save many kids' lives by giving them oral rehydration solution (ORS) in packages available free at the local health center, or with Recommended

Home Fluids (RHF) to treat. Just remember: "a pinch of salt and a handful of sugar in a liter of *clean* water." Whatever amount the

child loses in diarrhea, replace this same amount with ORS. Continue giving ORS for as long as the diarrhea continues, and each day make a new solution of ORS. *Every* household should be able to demonstrate how to mix and use ORS. ORS should only be given to individuals with diarrhea, never to someone healthy or to prevent diarrhea from occurring.

ORS: 1, 2, 3



1) A pinch of salt



2) A handful of sugar



***5) Mosquito Nets:** All people, especially children and pregnant women should sleep under mosquito nets, which reduce malaria deaths by 25% (1 of every 4 deaths prevented). The best nets are those treated with insecticide (ITNs) and most need to be retreated with chemicals every few years. Remember, your family will save money by buying and sleeping under a mosquito net and retreating every few years because you won't need to spend money on transport to a health facility or buy expensive medicines at a local clinic every year. By preventing malaria you won't lose money by not being able to work and you won't need to spend money paying for funeral

costs when someone dies from malaria. Buy good insecticide-treated nets, retreat them, and *use*



3) In one liter of clean water, prepared daily

them.

6) Malaria: It is important to remember that fever is *not* the same as malaria. Many illnesses cause fever, which is your body's reaction to infection. But malaria is a *specific* disease that is only caused by a bite from a female mosquito. Other important symptoms of malaria include headache, joint pains, loss of appetite and sometimes vomiting. If more than one of these symptoms occurs with fever, then the illness might be malaria and the person



should be treated with a specific drug against malaria, like Coartem, *within 24 hours*, otherwise the risk of death is much higher. Children, especially under five years old, and pregnant women are the most at risk of dying.



***7) Lung Infections:** An illness with a fever, cough, and often with rapid breathing or difficulty breathing is probably a lung infection called pneumonia. This must be treated with *antibiotics*, which you can get from a local health facility. Antibiotics are not the same drugs that are used to treat malaria. Tuberculosis is an illness that causes cough that lasts much longer—often many weeks,



Pneumonia is cough with fever

Pneumonia is cough with fever

Treat with antibiotics

that also causes fever, breathing problems, and weight loss; you should be seen at a health facility and treated for either pneumonia or Tuberculosis.

8) Pregnant women:

- a) All should have at least 4 visits with a local health center during the pregnancy (called antenatal care).
- b) During these visits, she should receive 2 injections to prevent tetanus (infant seizures and death).
- *c) The mother should breastfeed the baby within one hour after birth, including the “first milk.” She should then feed the newborn baby with breast milk exclusively (no water, tea, soda, or any other drinks or foods) for the first 6 months, and then continue giving breast milk plus food until at least one year. Artificial breast milk in poor countries like Uganda triples the risk of the infant dying.
- d) Most HIV positive women in Mukono should breast-feed exclusively for 6 months and then transition to different foods/ liquids, but all HIV positive women should seek counseling from the health center.



e) Following birth, every mother should receive 3 post-natal visits: within 24 hours, at 1 week, and at 6 weeks to begin the immunization schedule and check the baby and the mother for possible signs of serious health problems. For the mother, danger signs after delivery that warrant an immediate health center visit include heavy bleeding, fever, and abdominal pain.



Use Condoms

9) Family Planning/ Prevention of STDs like HIV: HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. Sexually active people should use condoms during sex to stop the spread of HIV, which is not spread by witchcraft, mosquitoes, sharing food, or shaking hands. Since it is difficult to provide food, clothing, and school fees for many children, families should plan smaller family sizes by using some form of birth control. All the family planning methods that your health provider recommends work well. Both the husband and wife should go to the local health center to discuss family planning options.



Prevent AIDS



Large Families...



Few resources and many deaths



Small Families...



More resources and opportunities



10) Newborn Care: Newborn Babies are at risk of getting dangerous diseases and infections; half of newborn deaths occur within the first 3 days after birth. It is important for VHTs to visit mothers with new babies as soon as possible after birth. If babies have any of the following symptoms, they should be sent to the nearest health center right away: breathing fast or working hard to breathe, not breast-feeding or feeding poorly, losing weight or looking thin, vomiting, not urinating, feeling warm, having yellow eyes or skin.





Child receiving drops

***11) Vaccines:** are harmless injections or drops in the mouth that prevent serious illnesses and death. A vaccine gives the body the ability to fight off certain dangerous diseases like polio, measles, and tetanus that can cripple and kill. All children should receive all vaccines at their local health centers, and parents should keep track of the child's immunization progress using the Child Birth Card. All kids without all vaccinations should get them as soon as possible. The following schedule is recommended:



Child receiving immunization

- 1) At Birth—Polio 0, BCG (TB);
- 2) At 6 weeks—Polio 1, DPT (diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus), Hepatitis B, Hib (pneumonia);
- 3) At 10 weeks—Polio 2, DPT (diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus), Hepatitis B, Hib (pneumonia);
- 4) At 14 weeks—Polio 3, DPT (diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus), Hepatitis B, Hib (pneumonia);
- 5) At 9 months—Measles.

*In addition to vaccinations, every 6 months starting from birth until 5 years of age, parents should take their children to the Health Center to receive Vitamin A, which helps prevent blindness and strengthens the body to fight other diseases. If any child is not vaccinated, the best time to start these vaccines is today.

***12) Nutrition:**

Many illnesses in children are caused by poor nutrition, which can lead to death, blindness, and severe brain damage. There are two types of Malnutrition called marasmus and kwashiorkor. Marasmus is caused by a lack of all food types and mostly affects children under 5 years old. Any of the following are signs of marasmus: underweight, appear very thin with visible ribs, skin appears larger than their body, the skin forms folds below the buttocks, and they have an appetite for food. Kwashiorkor is caused by a lack of protein that mostly affects children between the ages of 6 months and 3 years. Any of the following are signs of kwashiorkor: swollen feet, hands or both; thin, reddish hair that falls out easily; a large distended belly; and they have little interest in their surroundings. *Take children with any of those signs to health centers for evaluation and treatment to prevent death.* You can easily prevent or treat malnutrition by eating a healthy diet with *all three* types of foods: 1) Body-building food (proteins) like groundnuts, fish, beans, milk, meat, soya products, peas; 2) Energy-giving food (starches) like rice, sorghum, cassava, maize meal, yams, sweet potatoes, and bananas; and 3) Protective food (Vitamins and minerals) like fruits—paw-paws, pineapples, water melon, oranges, passion fruits—and vegetables—greens, cabbage, onions, egg plant, tomatoes, pumpkin.



Marasmus



Kwashiorkor

Kids, and you, need *All Three* food groups:



1) Body-building foods (Proteins)



2) Energy-giving foods (Starches)



**3) Protective foods
(Vitamins & Minerals)**