

IMCI COMMUNITY COMPONENT



Guide for directors of community-based organizations



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Child and Adolescent Health
Family and Community Health
Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI)



**American
Red Cross**



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INTRODUCTION



Children are born into families, but as we know from the African proverb, *"It takes a village to raise a child."* Children's survival and development are the result of the combined efforts of the family and community, their cultural practices and customs, and their environmental living conditions.

Children's first learning experiences happen at home. Later, as their world gradually expands beyond the home, their exposure to other people and institutions—including daycare centers, schools, churches, health care facilities and community organizations—dramatically influences their development. Parents count on these support services to help their family and children thrive.

Thus, there is a strong connection between family and community. The positive synergy between these two elements helps a child develop and lead a healthy and productive life.

The reality of our community is that there are many problems related to health, education, nutrition, safe drinking water, etc.

Our role as community leaders is to assist families in seeking solutions to problems they identify and to help organize their efforts to successfully achieve those solutions.

This guide discusses how to fulfill our role as community leaders who are responsible for the health of children under 5 years of age and pregnant women.

1

Justification

Most likely, a child is born healthy if his mother took care of herself during the pregnancy (e.g., by eating well, receiving a tetanus vaccination, having regular prenatal checkups, giving birth at a health care facility, etc.).

Once children are born, they live in a **physical environment** very different from the mother's womb. Depending on where children live, they may be exposed to inherent environmental risks (e.g., contaminated sources of drinking water, exposure to viruses, toxins and other pathogens, extreme climate or weather patterns, etc.) Coping with this physical environment can be a life-long challenge.

Likewise, newborn children become part of a **social environment** that includes family and community. They are exposed to local customs and cultures, and the economic productivity and prosperity of their families and those around them. This social environment helps to shape their attitudes and perceptions.

The family

A child's healthy development and education are reinforced during the process of socialization in the family and community.

Children grow up in a physical and social environment made up of varied relationship circles. Typically, they belong to small relationship circles consisting of mother, father and family members. By adolescence, children are part of broader circles consisting of neighborhood, schools and clubs. As adults, they become part of more general circles, such as the community, district and larger organizations.

A child's well-being is affected by the knowledge, attitudes and practices of these social circles. Imbedded in her culture are positive health practices that need to be reinforced as well as negative ones that must be corrected. This guide will highlight some of these behaviors.



A child's development will differ depending on family practices and the living conditions in the home and community.

Thus, families with **INADEQUATE PRACTICES** expose the child to the risk of illness, aggravated illness and even death.

In contrast, if the family implements some **KEY FAMILY PRACTICES**, the child will **GROW UP HEALTHY**.

For example:

Every year, **MORE THAN 500,000 CHILDREN DIE** in the Americas before reaching 5 years of age.
BUT WHY DO THEY DIE?

	
Close to 257,000 of these deaths are caused by MALNUTRITION AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES , such as pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria, which could be prevented or treated.	Many of these deaths could be prevented if the families KNEW and IMPLEMENTED SOME HEALTHY PRACTICES .
<input type="checkbox"/> The majority of infant deaths are due to perinatal causes.	The majority of these deaths could be prevented with adequate care provided to the mother before, during and after childbirth.
<input type="checkbox"/> More than 97,000 die each year from pneumonia.	Ten percent of these deaths could be prevented with quality food in sufficient quantity starting at 6 months of age.
<input type="checkbox"/> More than 90,000 die each year from diarrhea. <input type="checkbox"/> Many children die because they ARE NOT TAKEN IN TIME to be seen by health care personnel or they do not receive the necessary treatment and care.	Almost all of these deaths could be prevented by timely care, adequate treatment, regular food and plenty of fluids.
<input type="checkbox"/> Almost 30,000 of these deaths are related to malnutrition.	Many of these deaths could be prevented if children were fed only breast milk up to 6 months of age.
<input type="checkbox"/> Malaria is a cause of illness and death in some children.	Many deaths could be prevented if children slept under insecticide-treated mosquito nets.
<input type="checkbox"/> Measles cases have been reduced considerably, but vaccination coverage has to be maintained.	Measles could be more easily eliminated if children were to receive a measles vaccination before they reached 1 year of age.

The absence of these key practices among adults who are raising children under 5 years of age leads to serious problems.

The community

Before age five, all of the support that contributes to children's development comes from within the family and community, e.g. daycare centers and health facilities. As children grow older, their network of relationships expands. They begin to interact with people from school, clubs, neighborhood and community recreation centers. Parents, too, contribute to children's development by participating in the dynamics of the community, i.e. by belonging to women's organizations, local committees or clubs, boards of directors of various organizations, and committees of the Red Cross.

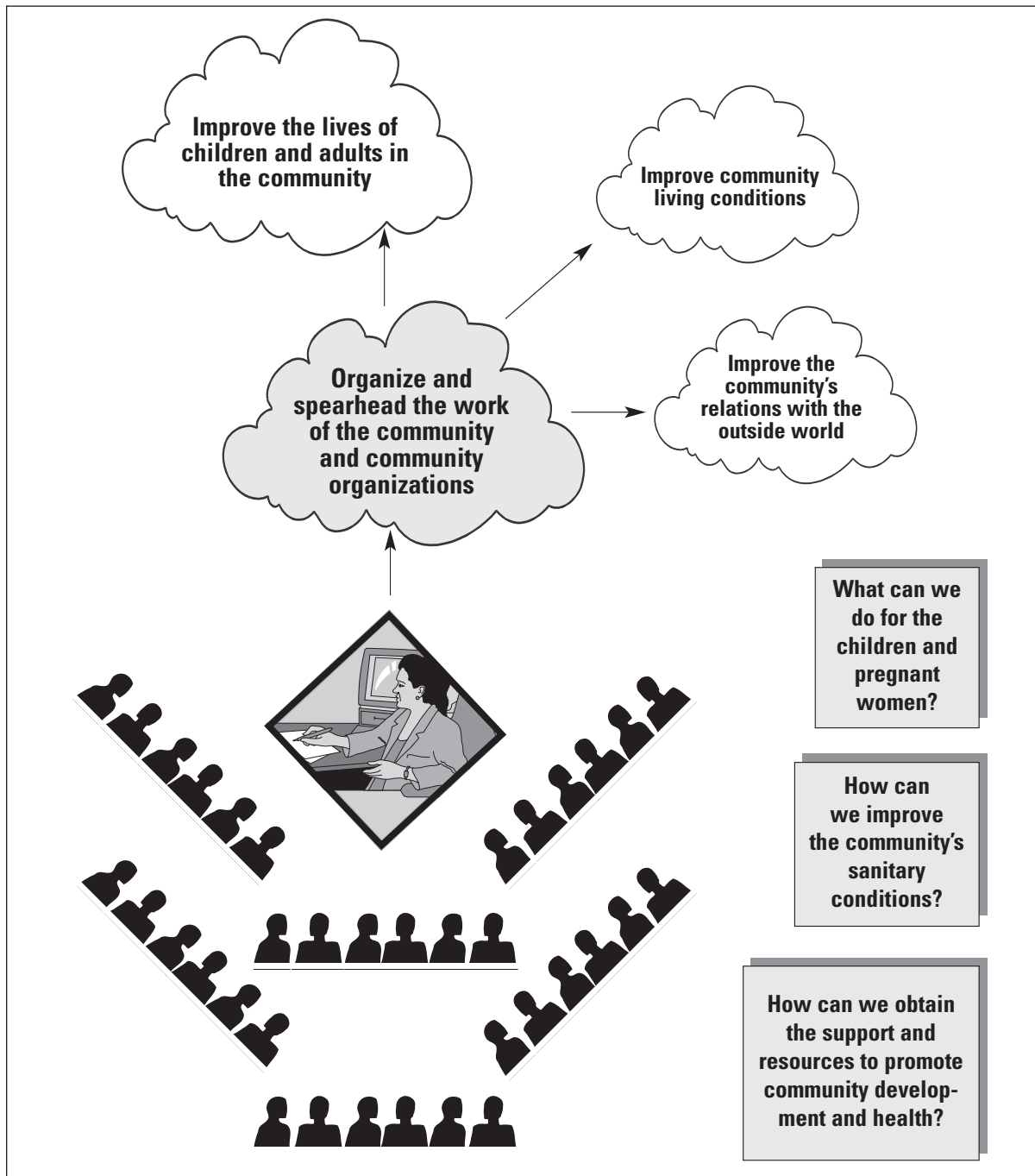
Thus, there is a very strong connection between families, schools, health care facilities and other community resources.

All play a role in teaching children what they need to know in order to lead healthy, productive lives, and all help foster social relationships and interpersonal bonds.

Health, self-esteem, and knowledge are fundamental to children's development. Children must grow up healthy, learn to live in harmony with other children, love themselves, accept their own limitations, and respect the rights of others. They should maintain a curiosity about life, discover their potential, persevere in the face of challenges, stay motivated until they accomplish their goals, and gain self-confidence throughout life.

All of us want to live a better life. We all need to be active community members if we want to enjoy physical, mental and social fulfillment.

As community leaders, it is our job to:



How many children under 5 years of age and how many mothers who give birth become sick or die each year in our locality? Why?

2

What is IMCI and what is the goal of its community component?

The mortality rate of children under 5 in a given community reflects a number of factors: Culture and child-rearing practices; environmental conditions; and the quality of—and access to—health care facilities and health education for parents.

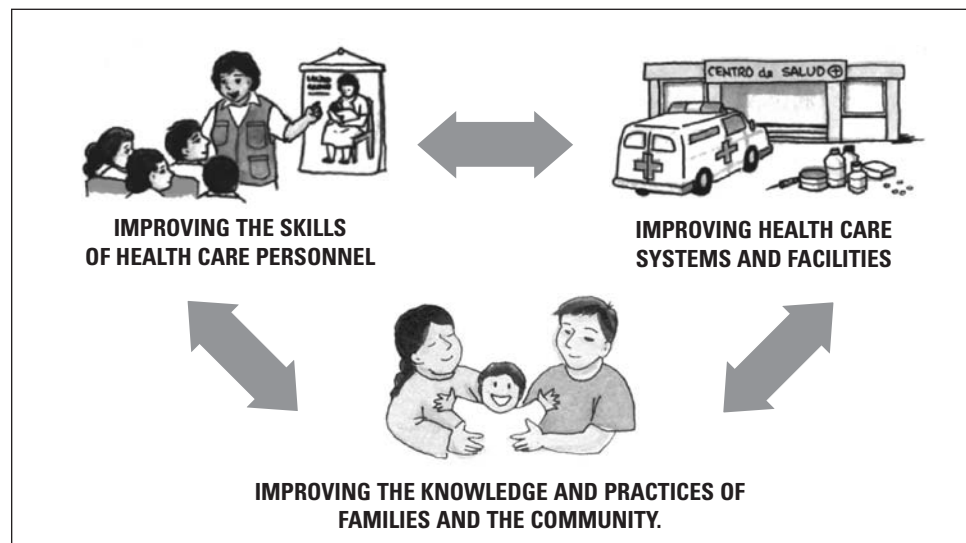
The science and technology exist to control the diseases that cause the majority of deaths among children under 5 years of age. However, many children continue to die.

In response, the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have developed a strategy for preventing these deaths, known as Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI).

The IMCI strategy is an integrated set of curative, preventive and promotional actions that are taken in **health care facilities** as well as in the **home** and **community**.

- In health care facilities these actions focus on **timely detection** and **effective treatment**.
- In the home and community the focus is **disease prevention** and **promotion of healthy practices** for the care of children and pregnant women.

The strategy consists of three components aimed at:



2. What is IMCI and what is the goal of its community component?

The goal of the community component is to ensure that families implement healthy practices for the safe development of children by:

- Protecting their healthy growth,
- Taking preventive measures so that they do not become ill,
- Providing adequate care in the home when they are ill,
- Detecting in a timely manner signs that require immediate treatment and seeking help.

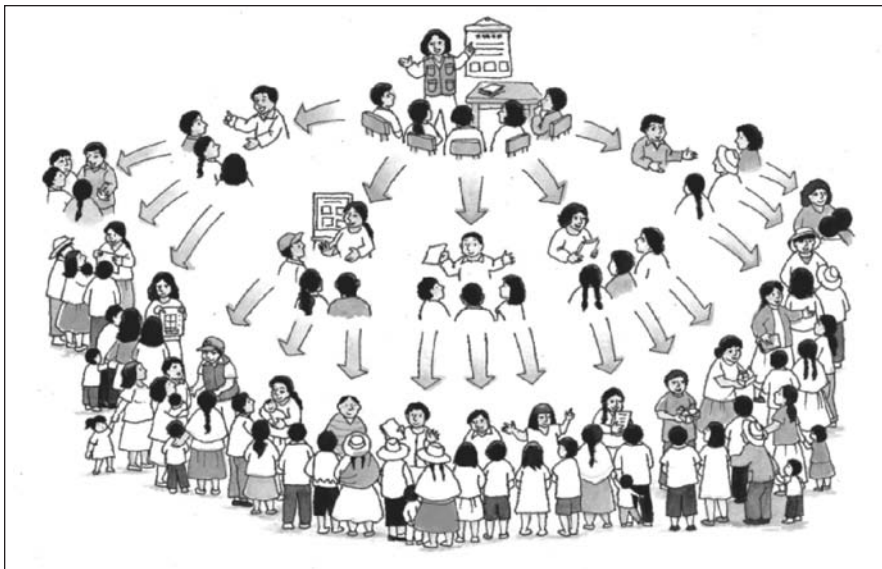
In order to save lives, it is important to achieve widespread implementation of Community IMCI as rapidly as possible. Its success will be reflected in the increasing numbers of safe childbirths and the improved health of children worldwide.

3

Working within a network

Although the challenge is big, we can reduce mortality and improve the health of children with the use of 16 Key Practices.

These key practices must be used and promoted widely by all caregivers and community health personnel. Over time, these practices will be adopted by future generations and ingrained into the culture of communities. For now, we must work together to reach one household at a time.



We must work within a network.

In order to promote this guide among fellow leaders and earn their commitment to Community IMCI, we must make use of meetings with leaders of our own and other communities. We should present and explain the experiences we have had using IMCI in our community.

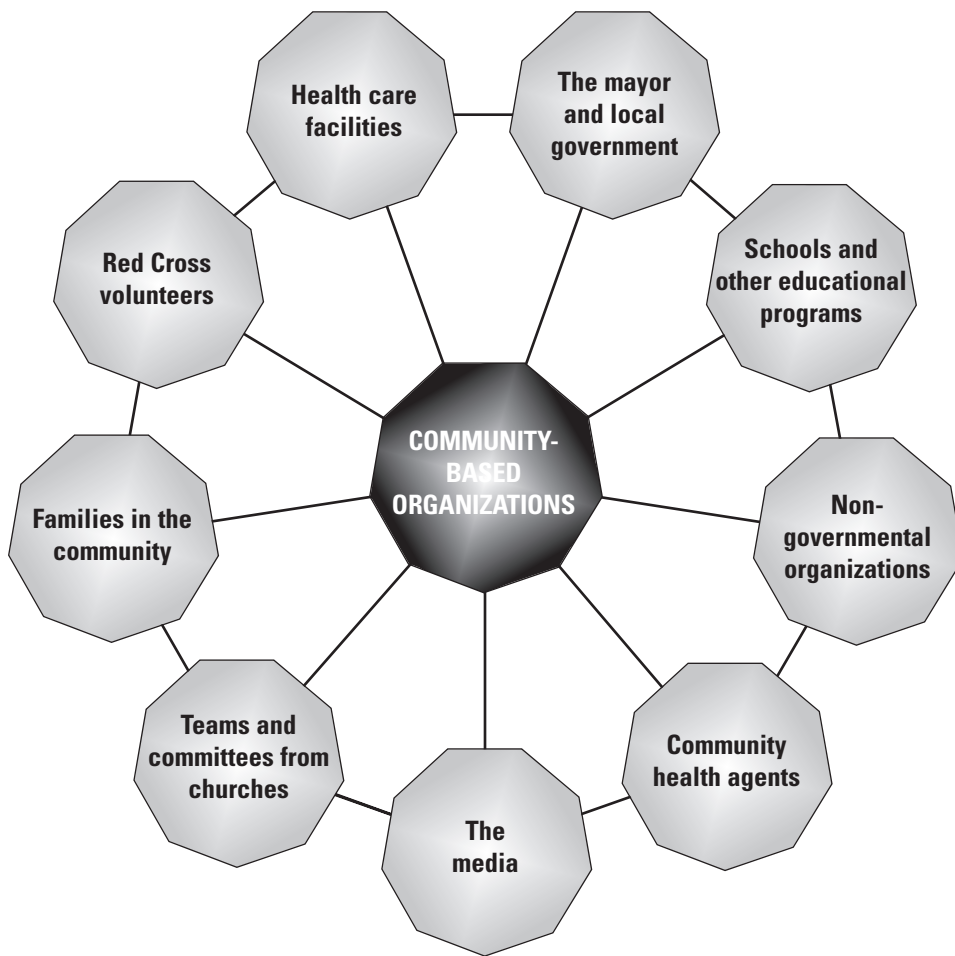
Each director or community leader represents the opportunity to reach all the members of the organization she heads. The more leaders who participate, the greater the coverage. Together the leaders constitute a network that makes it possible to reach all the families in the community.

Let us take advantage of every opportunity we have to exchange information and coordinate efforts with other leaders, community health agents (CHAs), health care professionals, municipal employees, Red Cross volunteers and other social players that can contribute to our goal to improve health practices.

4

Who makes up the network of children's health advocates?

Numerous institutions and people play a part in improving children's health. Together we can form a huge network.



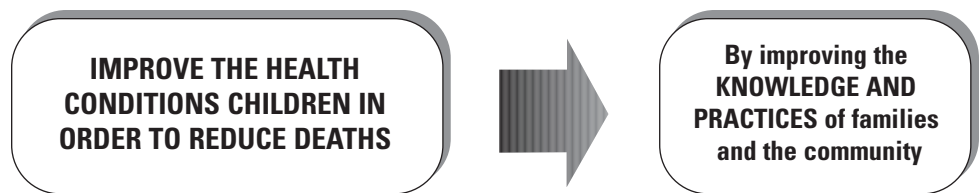
We are all responsible for community health. **Directors of Community-based organizations** share this responsibility. We are part of the network.

5

What can social players accomplish by working together?

We all are recognized “social players” in the community to the degree that we contribute to its social dynamics.

All social players such as Red Cross volunteers, health care facilities, community health agents, schools, churches and local organizations can help implement Community IMCI by sharing knowledge, promoting health practices to be implemented in the home, and reinforcing these practices in the community. Working together, we can have an even greater impact. We can:



By working together in a coordinated manner and promoting key practices, social players can reduce the number of deaths among children under 5 years of age in the Region of the Americas.

Let's review the 16 Key Practices:

For the proper growth and physical and mental development of boys and girls:



1. Breast milk only.



2. Semisolid and solid foods and continued breastfeeding.



3. Adequate amounts of vitamin A, zinc, iron.



4. Affection, play, conversation. Meeting their needs.

5. What can social players accomplish by working together?

For disease prevention:



5. All vaccinations completed according to age.



6. Clean environment, safe water, hand-washing.



7. Sleeping under mosquito nets in areas where malaria and dengue are endemic.



8. Protecting yourself against HIV/AIDS. Caring for children.

For home care:



9. Food and more fluids when children are sick.



10. Appropriate care and treatment when children are sick.



11. Protect children against mistreatment and neglect.



12. Father's participation in child care and family health.



13. Protection against injuries and accidents.

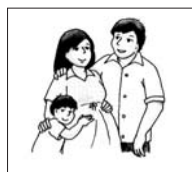
For seeking care outside the home:



14. Recognizing danger signs. Seeking timely help.



15. Following the advice of health care personnel.



16. Prenatal checkups. Tetanus vaccination. Nutrition. Childbirth at a health care facility. Support from family and the community.

6

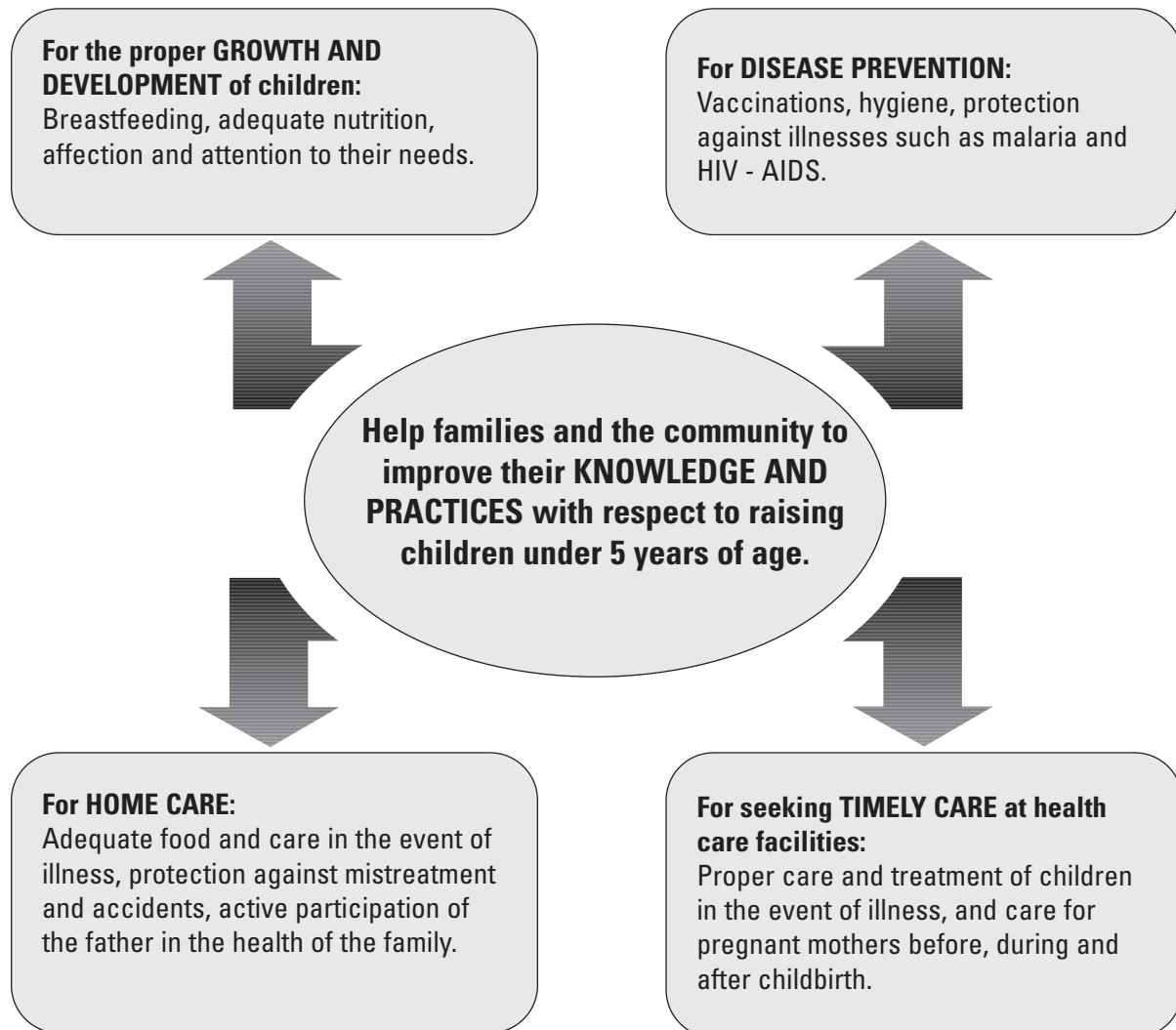
What can we do from our community-based organization?

As directors, we have an ongoing relationship with members of the community. We know that families and communities greatest wealth is their children.

Because our children are important to the community, it is our job to work for them. We can do this most efficiently by integrating strategies to improve the health of children and pregnant women into our organizations' goals and plans.

As leaders, we serve our children by giving them a healthy community in which to live. To achieve this, we must support family compliance with the 16 Key Practices outlined in this guide. Being part of a healthy community will enable us to be better leaders and attain greater recognition and social importance. We must work together with directors of other organizations to have the greatest impact.

What practices can we promote?



With whom can we work?

■ Health care facilities and networks

Health care facilities and networks need up-to-date information on children and pregnant women in the community in order to visit and counsel the families. They can also train members of our organizations to better meet people's health needs and educate them in disease prevention.

■ Red Cross Volunteers

Red Cross Volunteers can train members of our organizations to better meet people's health needs and educate them about ways to prevent illnesses.



■ Non-governmental and governmental organizations

These organizations organize or participate in various health campaigns: vaccination, environmental cleanup, nutritional education, family planning, etc.

■ Community committees or associations

Community committees or associations are elected by the population and can coordinate with municipalities for community tasks.

■ Community-based organizations

These organizations participate in various activities to improve the health of their community. They manage resources—both human and financial—that can be mobilized to assist health care facilities and community authorities in meeting community needs.

We must work with all of these groups.

7

How can we do this?

As Directors, we can work to promote Community IMCI

- a. Within our community,
- b. Within our own organizations,
- c. In coordination with other institutions and the media.

A. Within our community

It is very important to have up-to-date information regarding our community if we want to coordinate with and support other institutions. We need to ensure that at least one local organization is keeping accurate records of:

- Children under 5 years of age and pregnant women,
- Children and pregnant women who have died,
- The illnesses and most frequent health problems of children and pregnant women over the past three to six months.

We should report the results to the health care facility or network in our area.

B. Within our own organization

We must make sure that our organization coordinates with appropriate health care personnel or community health agents to maintain a **monitoring system** of the community's primary health care problems. For example, data would be collected on malnourished children, children who are not up-to-date on their vaccinations according to their age, pregnant women who do not get checkups during pregnancy, etc.

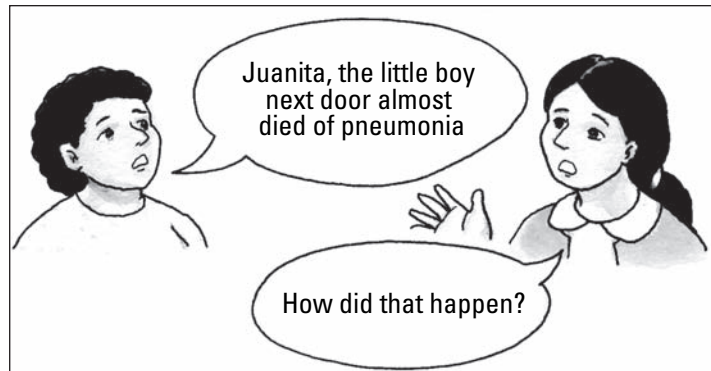
Actions:

- Identify homes where there are problems.
- Talk to the parents or caretakers.
- Make referrals to health care facilities.
- Return for a follow-up visit to see if the problem was corrected or solved.

Additionally, we should include the following items in the agenda of our organization's conferences and meetings:

- A presentation of the data collected regarding illnesses and problems in our community;
- An explanation of why those problems occur and with which key IMCI practices they are associated;
- A proposal for the formation of a special committee or task force to address the health problems identified.

For example:



In this example, parents did not know how to recognize the danger signs for pneumonia and thought that it was a severe case of the flu. They gave the child a pill for the fever and cough syrup. When the child was gasping for breath and the fever was not going down, they finally took the child to the health care center.

What must we do so that this scenario does not happen again?

Learn to recognize the signs of pneumonia (e.g., cough and rapid breathing) so children with this illness will be taken to the health care center promptly.

To educate members of our organization, we can invite one of the players in the network (e.g., a health care worker, Red Cross volunteer or a community health agent) to attend a conference or meeting to explain and promote the 16 Key Practices of Community IMCI.

C. In coordination with other institutions and the media

Our community has many resources and we should tap all of them. We must:

- Know the location and heads of other institutions that work in the health care domain;
- Inform our members how to access their services;
- Mobilize our members to participate in health campaigns held in the community (e.g. vaccination, environmental clean-ups, etc.);
- Motivate members to participate in educational activities that we can set up with other institutions: E.g. talks and workshops on topics related to the health of children and pregnant women (e.g. breastfeeding and diet, disease prevention, making mosquito nets in areas where malaria is endemic, etc.)

Our organization should also identify the mass media sources in the community and use them to help coordinate all health initiatives and campaigns.

APPENDIX Information on key practices

What are the key practices?

Everything that you should know to counsel families regarding the health of girls, boys and pregnant women.

For the proper growth and physical and mental development of boys and girls

Practice 1:

They must be fed only breast milk up to the age of 6 months.

If the mother has HIV - AIDS, alternatives to breastfeeding must be offered for her baby.

- BREAST MILK is a perfect food. It is the only food that protects boys and girls against many illnesses.
- Babies should nurse whenever they want, day and night, at least eight to 10 times a day.
- Babies should not drink water, juices or mates; breast milk quenches thirst.
- The more times the baby nurses, the more milk the mother will have. Suction stimulates milk production.
- It is important that the mother eats well, drinks plenty of fluids and stays calm in order to have plenty of milk.
- It is good to caress, talk to and look at the baby while breastfeeding.
- If the baby has problems nursing, the mother should talk to the community health promoter for advice regarding the correct position and a proper latch on the nipple.

* * *

**If the baby does not want to nurse, the mother should
take her to a health care facility.**

**LET'S PREVENT DEATH DUE
TO MALNUTRITION.
Breast milk only up to 6 months of age**

For the proper growth and physical and mental development of boys and girls

- Practice 2:** Starting at 6 months of age, children should be given a sufficient quantity of quality fresh foods according to their age in addition to breast milk
- As of 6 months of age, boys and girls should eat THICK PURÉES of cereal, mixed vegetable and meat stew, and vegetables accompanied by a SPECIAL FOOD: egg, liver or fish.
 - As of 1 year of age, they should already be eating a good ration of the family olla (stew). They should eat three times a day: Breakfast, lunch and dinner, and have two between-meal snacks: Fruit, milk, bread, mazamorras (maize puddings), etc.
 - The foods should be fresh and varied, preferably products from the region and in season.
 - BOYS and GIRLS should eat THE SAME AMOUNT of food.
 - Continue breastfeeding up to 2 years of age. Breastfeeding may be continued after this if the child and the mother so desire. Continued breastfeeding will contribute to the prevention of diseases.

* * *

If the child does not want to eat and loses weight, he/she should be taken to a health care facility.

**LET'S PREVENT DEATH DUE TO MALNUTRITION.
Semisolid or solid foods starting at 6 months
of age and continued breastfeeding.**

For the proper growth and physical and mental development of boys and girls

Practice 3: Foods should contain adequate amounts of micronutrients, especially vitamin A, zinc and iron, or these should be given as a supplement --that is, in addition to their foods.

- Boys and girls should receive the proper dose of micronutrients, primarily VITAMIN A and IRON, in their foods or as a supplement in addition to their meals.
- VITAMIN A protects the mucous membranes and stimulates the formation of antibodies, which are the body's defenses against illnesses.
- IRON prevents anemia, it is important for the formation of red blood cells and protects against infections. It is absorbed better if ingested together with citrus fruits (vitamin C).

* * *

**If the child is pale or becomes ill very frequently,
he/she should be taken to a health care facility.**

**LET'S PREVENT DEATH DUE TO MALNUTRITION.
Adequate doses of vitamin A and iron.**

For the proper growth and physical and mental development of boys and girls

Practice 4: They must be given lots of love and helped to progress by responding to their needs, talking to them, and playing with them

- Boys and girls need LOTS OF LOVE and STIMULATION to develop their intelligence and skills.
- Mothers and fathers should smile at them, hug them, talk to them and play with them, feed them properly, and respond to their requests and biological needs. Parents should also teach them good hygiene and nutritional practices, and practices with respect to their relationships with others and with their surroundings.
- They must receive checkups at a health care facility to see whether they are growing and developing normally.

* * *

If the child has problems standing up or walking, or if the child does not see or hear well, he/she should be taken to a health care facility.

**LET'S PREVENT DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS
Lots of love and stimulation.**

For disease prevention

Practice 5: Children must be taken to a health care facility to receive all the necessary vaccinations before their first birthday.

- To raise healthy and strong boys and girls, they have to be PROTECTED from serious or fatal diseases. VACCINES are the best protection.
- Vaccines are given by dose based on the child's age.
- By 1 year of age, the child should have received all the vaccinations and doses. In this way, the child will be protected.
- Some vaccines can cause slight pain, malaise and fever after administration; explain to parents that these discomforts disappear rapidly

VACCINATION SCHEDULE

Age	Vaccine	Protects against	Dose
At birth	BCG Polio	Tuberculosis Poliomyelitis	Sole 0
2 months	DPT Polio	Diphtheria – Tetanus – Whooping cough Poliomyelitis	1
3 months	DPT Polio	Diphtheria – Tetanus – Whooping cough Poliomyelitis	2
4 months	DPT Polio	Diphtheria – Tetanus – Whooping cough Poliomyelitis	3
9 months	Yellow fever	Yellow fever	Sole
12 months	Measles	Measles	Sole

* * *

If the child misses a vaccination or dose, he/she should be taken to a health care facility.

**LET'S PREVENT DEATH DUE TO MEASLES
AND OTHER DISEASES.
All vaccinations and doses completed
by 1 year of age.**

For disease prevention

Practice 6: Children should be provided with a clean environment, free of feces and trash, and be given safe water. You should always have clean hands before preparing meals and feeding them.

- Diarrhea and parasitic diseases are caused by lack of hygiene and sanitation: trash, dirty bathrooms, contaminated water. These diseases slow the growth of boys and girls and can result in their death.
- Diarrhea and parasitic diseases are caused by lack of hygiene and sanitation: Trash, dirty bathrooms, contaminated water. These diseases slow the growth of boys and girls and can result in their death.
- You must ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER before preparing meals, before eating, and after going to the bathroom.
- Drinking water should be BOILED OR CHLORINATED: Add two drops of chlorine bleach for each liter of water and wait half an hour before drinking.
- Foods and water tanks should be kept covered to prevent contamination.
- LATRINES OR BATHROOMS must be kept CLEAN: Clean every day with bleach and dispose of paper in a garbage can with a lid. If there are no latrines, you must defecate in a hole far away from your house and cover up the feces and used paper with dirt.
- TRASH must be kept OUTSIDE THE HOUSE and buried far away if there is no municipal trash collection.

* * *

**If the child has diarrhea or is dehydrated,
he/she should be taken to a health care facility.**

**LET'S PREVENT DEATHS DUE TO DIARRHEA.
Hand-washing, safe water,
clean bathrooms and trash in its place.**

For disease prevention

Practice 7:

In areas where malaria and dengue are endemic, children must be protected from mosquitoes with suitable clothing and insecticide-treated mosquito nets for sleeping.

- Malaria or paludism is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito that lives in gutters, wells and pools of stagnant water and feeds on blood.
- These mosquitoes bite in the outdoors and also enter houses to bite people, generally during the evening and night.
- In order for children to be protected, insecticide-treated MOSQUITO NETS must be used for sleeping, CLOTHING THAT COVERS their arms and legs should be worn, and the house should be protected with screens on doors and windows.
- GUTTERS must also be DRAINED AND CLEANED, stagnant pools must be filled in with dirt and stones, and water tanks should be tightly covered.
- In the event of fever, a blood test must be performed. The full treatment must be taken if the disease is confirmed.

* * *

**If the child has a fever or exhibits any type of bleeding,
he/she should be taken to a health care facility.**

**LET'S PREVENT DEATH DUE TO MALARIA.
Mosquito nets for sleeping. Gutters free
of stagnant water and wells covered.**

For disease prevention

Practice 8: Parents should adopt appropriate behaviors to prevent infection from HIV-AIDS. People who are positive for the virus, particularly boys, girls and pregnant women, should receive medical attention, care and advice.

- AIDS is a disease produced by a virus called HIV, which ATTACKS the body's DEFENSES, leaving us unable to fight any illness.
- It can be transmitted by UNPROTECTED SEXUAL RELATIONS with people who are carriers of the virus.
- It can be transmitted via the BLOOD—transfusions or contact with infected blood.
- It can be transmitted FROM MOTHER TO CHILD during pregnancy and child-birth.
- To protect yourself and to prevent infection, safe sex practices are recommended: ABSTINENCE, ONLY ONE PARTNER, PROPER USE OF CONDOMS.
- To the extent possible, AVOID all CONTACT WITH INFECTED BLOOD: transfusions, tattoos, used razors or syringes.
- TIMELY detection and TREATMENT OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES is essential, since they constitute an “open door” for the AIDS virus.

* * *

Anyone who is positive for HIV or AIDS, especially children, has a right to receive medical attention, advice and support at a health care facility under strict confidentiality.

**LET'S PREVENT INFECTION FROM AIDS.
Safe sexual relations.**

For home care

Practice 9: Boys and girls should continue to receive their regular food and extra fluids, especially breast milk, when they are sick.

Feeding during an illness:

- For babies UNDER 6 MONTHS OF AGE: Give them only BREAST MILK, more often and for longer periods of time.
- Babies OVER 6 MONTHS OF AGE should get their REGULAR FOOD and PLENTY OF FLUIDS.
- If possible, the frequency and number of feedings should be increased until the child recovers.

* * *

**If a sick baby does not want to nurse,
take him/her to a health care facility.**

**LET'S PREVENT DEATH DUE TO MALNUTRITION.
Regular food and plenty of fluids
for sick children.**

For home care

Practice 10: Children should receive appropriate care and treatment for their illnesses.

- Many children's infections can be cured easily at home.
- For DIARRHEA: Give the child plenty of fluids, preferably BREAST MILK or ORAL REHYDRATION SALTS (ORSs): one packet in 1 liter of cold boiled water.
- If you do not have any salts, prepare a homemade solution: 8 level teaspoons of sugar and one level teaspoon of salt in 1 liter of cold boiled water. Give the fluid a little at a time so that the child does not vomit.
- For FEVER: Place CLOTHS SOAKED IN LUKEWARM WATER on the child's forehead, stomach and armpits, and keep the child out of drafts.
- For COLDS: If the child has phlegm and a cough, he/she should drink BREAST MILK, or WATER if the child is not being breastfed.
- If the child has a stuffy nose, place tiny drops of lukewarm water with a little bit of salt added in his/her nose.
- YOU DO NOT HAVE TO GIVE SYRUPS or other remedies that the doctor has not prescribed.

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**If the child does not improve with home remedies,
he/she should be taken to a health care facility.**

**LET'S PREVENT DEATH DUE TO LACK OF CARE.
Home remedies and regular food.**

For home care

- Practice 11:** Mistreatment and neglect of children must be avoided and the necessary measures should be taken if these occur.
- Abuse and mistreatment constitute any behavior that causes physical, psychological, sexual or moral harm to another person.
 - Boys, girls and women are the primary victims of abuse and mistreatment.
 - Neglect and abandonment consist of leaving boys, girls and women without support, guidance and care when they need them.
 - The above can be prevented by COUNSELING PARENTS to adopt a RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIP with one another and with their children, by seeking conflict resolution via DIALOGUE, by AVOIDING PUNISHING children physically (by hitting) or psychologically (by yelling and insults), and by avoiding situations that give rise to abuse and mistreatment: ALCOHOLISM is one of the main causes of the mistreatment and abuse of children and women.
 - These can be prevented by TALKING WITH BOYS AND GIRLS in order to DETECT cases of MISTREATMENT, and referring them to the proper agency, authority or facility so that appropriate measures can be taken.

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If you know of any cases or detect any signs of mistreatment or abuse, refer the case to the child protection agencies, the police or a health care facility.

**LET'S PREVENT CHILD ABUSE
AND MISTREATMENT.
Mutual respect, dialogue, and no physical or
psychological punishment.**

For home care

- Practice 12:** The father should actively participate, just like the mother, in children's health care and in the decisions regarding the health of the family.
- The man and the woman should share responsibility for decisions regarding health of boys, girls and pregnant women.
 - As a leader of community organization. You can help to ensure that MEN PARTICIPATE MORE ACTIVELY by inviting both men and women to attend school meetings and by talking with them whenever you see them about their children's needs and problems.
 - SUGGEST to fathers that they experiment with NEW ROLES like cooking for the family, taking charge of the children's hand washing before eating, and taking care of them when they are sick.
 - For the benefit of the entire family, ADVISE PARENTS on the importance of shared decisions; for example, having their children vaccinated, taking them for health care checkups, and seeking medical care when the children need it. Men and women together should plan their family so as not to place the mother and family at risk with dangerous childbirths and children who will not be cared for as they should be.

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If the father does not participate in tasks relating to the health of his family, the children will suffer.

Family health care and health care decisions are shared responsibilities of the father and mother.

For home care

Practice 13: Children must be provided a safe home and protected against injuries and accidents.

- Some accidents and injuries do not occur by chance, but rather due to LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND NEGLIGENCE on the part of adults.
- Small boys and girls are discovering the world; they display curiosity by touching and tasting everything they see. This is good and normal, but it constantly places them in situations of risk.
- The job of parents and adults in general is to CONTROL THE RISK IN ORDER TO PREVENT INJURY.
- With a SAFE HOME: It is recommended that dangerous objects and products, such as matches, lit candles, hot pots, sharp tools, toxic products, and electrical cords be placed out of reach of children. If there are small children in the household, put up protections (such as rails and bars) in places where they could fall.
- With PRECAUTIONS taken outside the home: It is recommended that wells or water tanks that children could fall into be covered with heavy lids; that children not be allowed to play in weeds where there might be dangerous animals; and that they not be allowed to cross dangerous roads by themselves.

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In the event of an accident or injury, the child should be taken to a health care facility. If you do not have any knowledge of first aid, it is better not to do anything than to give the child anything that might cause more harm.

**LET'S PREVENT DEATH DUE TO ACCIDENTS.
A safe home and precautions outside the home.**

For seeking care outside the home

Practice 14: You must know how to recognize the signs of illness in order to seek care from health care personnel.

- Some illnesses require medical CARE OUTSIDE THE HOME in order to prevent serious injuries or death. These illnesses are manifested by DANGER SIGNS, which you need to be able to recognize to know when to SEEK HELP AT A HEALTH CARE FACILITY.
- DANGER SIGNS OF DEATH: The newborn does not want to nurse, does not want to wake up, suffers from “attacks” or convulsions, exhibits labored and noisy breathing, or has a red navel exuding pus and a foul odor.
- DANGER SIGNS OF DEHYDRATION: The child has diarrhea many times a day, sometimes containing blood and mucus, sometimes accompanied by vomiting. The child cries but has no tears, passes only a small amount of urine, has a dry mouth and sunken eyes. The child does not nurse or want to eat, does not move normally, or does not want to wake up.
- DANGER SIGNS OF PNEUMONIA: The child exhibits rapid and labored breathing, moans and makes noises when she breathes; the child’s stomach draws in and the ribs can be seen when she breathes.
- DANGER SIGNS OF FEBRILE DISEASE: The child feels very hot and becomes reddish; he sweats and his breathing is labored. The child has bleeding of any type -- in the urine or feces -- or has red marks like bruises on the skin.

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When any of these danger signs appear, the child should be taken to a health care facility quickly.

**LET’S PREVENT DEATH DUE TO
LACK OF MEDICAL CARE
Recognize danger signs.**

For seeking care outside the home

Practice 15: The health care worker's advice about treatment, follow-up or referral to another facility must be followed.

- When a sick boy or girl is seen at a health care facility, the parents must FOLLOW ALL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL in order for the child to recover quickly.
- If the health care worker says that the child needs a REFERRAL, take the child to another larger and better-equipped facility without delay.
- When the child returns home after being seen, the parents must follow all treatment instructions given by the health care worker; that is, give the entire TREATMENT INDICATED, even if the child feels better. Do not give remedies that the doctor has not prescribed, and continue to give the child REGULAR FOOD.
- Parents should always be on the ALERT FOR DANGER SIGNS, as explained in Practice 14, so that the child can be taken back to the health care facility if necessary.

* * *

If there are new danger signs, the child should be taken back to the health care facility.

**LET'S PREVENT DEATH DUE TO LACK
OF ADEQUATE TREATMENT
The recommendations of the health
care worker must be followed.**

For seeking care outside the home

Practice 16: A pregnant woman must receive checkups, a tetanus vaccination and nutritional counseling. She should also receive support from her family and the community at delivery, after childbirth and while breastfeeding.

- Every PREGNANT WOMAN needs SUPPORT from her family and the community. She needs medical CARE AND ATTENTION during her pregnancy, during and after childbirth, and while breastfeeding.
- PRENATAL CHECKUPS are important for monitoring the mother's health and the growth and development of the baby from the time of conception. The mother must get a monthly checkup at a health care facility from the beginning of the pregnancy.
- At this checkup the mother receives medical and dental examinations, blood and urine tests, weight and blood pressure determinations, a tetanus vaccination, an iron supplement, and a test for cancer, as well as counseling regarding proper nutrition, preparing for childbirth and breastfeeding, baby care and family planning.
- HIGH-RISK pregnancies require special care and attention. These involve women younger than 19 years of age or older than 35 years of age, women with more than four children or childbirths very close together, and women who drink liquor or take non-prescribed drugs or medications. These childbirths must take place at a health care facility.
- DANGER SIGNS during pregnancy include headaches; fever; persistent vomiting; swelling of the face, hands, feet and legs; loss of fluids or blood from genitals; a burning sensation when urinating; the baby not moving or in a crosswise position in the womb.

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**In the case of a high-risk pregnancy or if there are any danger signs,
the pregnant woman must go to a health care facility.**

**LET'S PREVENT MATERNAL AND INFANT DEATH.
Prenatal checkups and adequate care if
there are danger signs or in the case of
high-risk pregnancies.**



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