The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes humanitarian activities in the National Societies in favour of the most vulnerable.

Through the coordination of international relief in times of disaster and the promotion of development assistance, the Federation aims to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together make up the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

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Introduction

The “Better be Prepared” series is made up of 14 modules which have been drawn up in the Regional Centre of Reference in Community-Based Education for the Prevention of Disasters with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies through the Regional Representation for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean and its Regional Risk Reduction Programme, together with the National Societies in the region.

These guides in community work arise from the need to implement risk reduction programmes of improved quality which facilitate sustainable development processes in the most vulnerable communities in the region. A methodology with simple, practical, standardized tools was required which could be used by each National Society without losing its socio-cultural identity, enabling its application and adaptation to different contexts.

The modules are aimed at the permanent and voluntary staff of the Red Cross, members of other organizations which work in disaster risk reduction and the community in general.

The modules are revised and updated versions of material originally drawn up by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 1994; from that time to the present date, there has been support from international organizations which include: the Prevention Consortium; UNICEF, PAHO/WHO, UDSMA/OAS and universities.

Some modules have a note-book for field work called a “Work Book”, in these cases, the module can be used as material for consultation for the facilitator and for the participant, and the work book is exclusively for the participant to carry out assignments and field work.

Each module can be used independently in accordance with its objectives, or be used as part of the series, in this case module 1 “Education, Organization and Community Preparedness for Risk Reduction” provides the basis for work with the VCA tools, and the others go into more detail on specific subjects such as: school plans, family plans, floods and so forth.

Psychological First Aid and the Community Manual for the Mitigation of Disasters in Rural Water systems are materials which deal with subjects which require the direct assistance of technical experts in the area.

Health education in the home is the cornerstone of well-being and development in our countries; the initiative of the Healthy Home Module aims to reduce morbidity and mortality which are the result of the most common preventable illnesses, through training, information and education.
Approximately 70% of all children's deaths in developing countries are associated with one or more of the following five conditions: chronic diarrhoea; serious respiratory infections; measles; dengue, malaria and malnutrition. At least three out of every four outbreaks of childhood illnesses are caused by one of these five conditions.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, with the support of the National Societies on the Continent, drew up the first version of Healthy Home in 1995 as part of the Community Education programme.

The Disaster and Health Networks together with the Red Cross Societies of the sub region, the Regional Centre of Reference in Community Education for the Prevention of Disasters with the support of REDCAMP-SALUD, in the framework of the XVII Red Cross Inter American Conference, Santiago de Chile, have reviewed and designed the fourth edition of the "HEALTHY HOMES" Module, to be understood as follows: a family which lives in harmony with each of its members and with its surroundings, enjoying physical, emotional and social well-being.

Community education focuses on participative, live processes of habits and/or practices which prevent illnesses and promotes health care on the part of families themselves from their own homes, as well as active participation in collective community health through civic participation.

Let's recall that maintaining our family's good health status is dependent to a large extent on ourselves, and for this reason we emphasize that "it is better to be safe than sorry". We know that the large majority of illnesses from which we suffer arise from a lack of education and for this reason we must learn to prevent illness and accidents in our homes, promoting in this way healthy surroundings and the protection of our environment.

This module seeks to motivate readers to adopt simple practices, healthy life-styles and behaviours which boost the harmonious, integral development of the body, mind and environment, of children, adults and the elderly in their homes and communities, preventing illnesses and accidents in the home, and in this way improving the quality of life.
UNIT 1

Personal Hygiene and Hygiene in the Home

Hygiene is the source of family well-being and of good health. Amongst hygienic practices are the following:

- **Daily shower or bath:** with clean water, soap and shampoo
- **Hair care:** Comb it and keep it clean
- **Care of Nails:** Cleanliness and regular cutting
- **Eyes:** You should not touch them with dirty hands, or a handkerchief or other objects.
- **Hygiene for your nose:** Do not stick objects into your nose and try to keep it clean
- **Hygiene for hands:** Constantly wash hands with soap and water, after going to the toilet or the latrine and before touching food and drink.
• **Basic care of your mouth:** Clean your mouth three times a day, brushing your teeth in a “sweeping” motion with a fluoride paste after each meal and before going to bed.

• **Balanced diet and avoid excess tobacco and alcohol**

• **Daily rest:** Sleep is the best way to regain your strength. Children need to sleep for at least 10 hours. This will help their state of mind and performance at school.

• **Games and sports are essential for health:** It is a vital need for their physical and psychological development.

• **Affection, respect and an attitude of solidarity contribute to mental hygiene.**

**Importance of Potable Water:**

Water is a fundamental element for life, but it must have the necessary conditions to be potable.

Consumption of poor quality or contaminated water brings about gastro-intestinal illnesses such as: parasites, acute diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid fever and hepatitis A.

Stagnant water, including water standing in cooking pots, buckets and uncovered containers lead to the breeding of mosquitoes which cause malaria, yellow fever and dengue. Some of these illnesses can cause death.

All these illnesses can be prevented, avoiding contamination of rivers and ensuring appropriate treatment of water for human consumption and domestic use.
How can you prevent illnesses from drinking contaminated water?

1) Avoid polluting rivers and accumulating garbage.
2) Filter the water coming from rivers, lakes, wells and other water sources.
3) Boil water for drinking
4) Chlorinate water. Table #1 shows the quantities of bleach that you should add to water for human consumption.

**Table 1) Chlorination of Water**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For a litre</th>
<th>1 drop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For a gallon</td>
<td>3 drops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a bucket
- 15 drops or 1 small capful

For a barrel (54 gallons)
- 2 soup spoons

5) Maintain appropriate hygiene practices.
LET’S GET TO WORK

Exercise #1

Put your answers in the boxes, according to your choice.

1) At home there is a special place for throwing garbage away
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

2) Outside of the house, there is a place allocated for throwing garbage away
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3) The garbage bin is near to a water source
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

4) The garbage bin is
   ☐ Uncovered ☐ Covered

5) There is a local system for garbage collection
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Management of Garbage and Waste:

The breeding of insects which transmit illnesses such as dengue and malaria usually takes place in places with high concentrations of garbage.
LET'S GET TO WORK
Exercise #2

Put your answers in the boxes, according to your choice.

1) My community has a recycling centre
   ◯ Yes ◯ No

2) People in the community are interested in having one
   ◯ Yes ◯ No

3) The local authorities have a plan to improve garbage collection.
   ◯ Yes ◯ No

4) Do people in the community know how to contribute to appropriate recycling?
   ◯ Yes ◯ No

5) Are there factories or industries which dispose of toxic waste in rivers, drainage systems, sewerage systems or areas with water?
   ◯ Yes ◯ No

Sorting of garbage:
Garbage can be divided into:

- Organic
- Glass Cans Plastic
- Paper
1) Organic waste can be buried for an approximate period of two months when it yields organic fertilizer which is very useful for plants, orchards and crops.

2) Paper and glass can be sorted and packed to give to centres and institutions for recycling.

3) Plastic can also be given to institutions responsible for its treatment and recycling, as long as it carries a stamp showing it can be recycled.

Recycling of garbage is one of the best ways of dealing with it since in this way we are helping ourselves to stay healthy and are protecting the environment.

4) Toxic and pollutant products should never be thrown in: water sources; house drainage systems, waste land or green areas, or the environs of places which are inhabited since they can cause illness and pollute the environment.

In the event of an emergency or a disaster, a way of disposing of garbage is to bury it in holes of one and a half metres wide by two metres in depth, away from wells or water sources, covering it with thirty centimeters of earth every day.

We can also burn it in places away from houses in holes built for this purpose.
Poor hygiene conditions have repercussions on our health and well-being. The solution is in our hands.
UNIT 2

Care of Illnesses for health in the home.

In this chapter we will look at the following issues:

- **DENGUE**
  - *Aedes aegypti*

- **MALARIA**
  - *Anopheles*

- **DIARRHOEA**
  - *Viruses — bacteria*

- **CHOLERA**
  - *Vibrio Cholerae*

- **RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS**
  - *RTI*
LETS PREVENT DENGUE

What is Dengue?
It is an acute infectious disease, which produces fever; it is brought about by a virus which is transmitted to people through the bite of a mosquito called Aedes aegypti.

There are two kinds of dengue:

**Common or Classic Dengue:**
Sudden outbreak 2-7 days after being bitten by the mosquito; it is characterized by a high fever (39-40 °C), a headache, discomfort in bones and muscles, an aching neck and back, lack of appetite, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain, diarrhoea (most common in children), coughing, rhinitis and pharyngitis are common. There may be redness of the skin or a rash which appears with the occurrence of fever or at the same time as a second bout of fever peaks.

**Haemorrhagic Dengue:**
The initial symptoms are the same as those with classic dengue, but haemorrhagic factors evolve rapidly.

In benign or moderate cases, people who are ill recover spontaneously or following hydroelectrolytic replacement therapy.

In serious cases, either suddenly or following a drop in fever between the 3rd and 7th day, the state of the person with dengue worsens, with the skin going blue, a slower breathing rate, reduction in arterial pressure, an increase in the normal size of the liver, multiple haemorrhages and circulatory failure. The situation is of short duration, and could lead to death in 12 to 24 hours or to rapid recovery following anti-shock treatment.
The mosquito which carries the virus lives in dark places such as under or behind furniture or in wardrobes. Occasionally it can be found outside or in vegetation. It usually bites during the day, particularly at nightfall.

The mosquito needs water which has accumulated in items such as: bottles, tires, flower pots, tins, caps from bottles, holes in trees, guttering on roofs. The eggs can remain in dry areas stuck to the sides of objects, for a long time, even years. Once the recipient becomes full of water again, the eggs develop into mosquitoes. The insect can fly between 100 and 500 metres.

Dengue is not transmitted from person to person; whilst feeding on the blood of a person who is ill the mosquitoes become infected and then transmit the virus to other people during the insect’s life-cycle.
The illness can be divided into three stages:

Stage One: (3 to 6 days):
Is characterized by high fever, shivering, acute pain in the entire body, particularly the muscles and back, and a headache. In some cases, there may be the outbreak of a reddish rash over the body, and this may be itchy.

Stage Two (5 to 7 days):
This only occurs in people who have previously had dengue and have recovered. Haemorrhagic dengue:
There are signs and symptoms which suggest the possible apparition of haemorrhagic dengue such as: dizziness, vomiting, abdominal pain, restlessness and anxiety.

Stage Three (after 7 or 8 days):
This takes place during the patient’s recovery. From this time on, the arterial pressure returns to normal and some patients may experience discomfort, weakness and muscular pain which can last for up to six weeks. In elderly patients, these symptoms can be more intense and last for longer.
How to treat dengue:

- Rest
- Drink plenty of liquids
- If you have acute pain, consult a doctor
- Do not take medicines which contain aspirin
- If symptoms are acute or there is bleeding, consult a doctor quickly or go to the nearest Health Centre.
- If you suspect haemorrhagic dengue, go to the nearest Clinic or Hospital.

Prevention of Dengue

Unusable containers

- Dispose of tins, tires, pots, bottles, metal junk, abandoned toys, construction material which can become breeding grounds and throw garbage away.

Usable containers

- Change the water in flower vases every two days, or replace it with damp sand.
- Use disinfectant to clean water tanks, cisterns, sinks or troughs. Clean sinks with a brush or cloth soaked in bleach. Change standing water every 5 days.
- Protect water tanks and cisterns with tight-fitting lids.
- Constantly check the systems in the house to channel rain water, to ensure appropriate drainage and thereby avoid a breeding-site for mosquitoes.

Natural sites.

- Fill in natural sites where water accumulates in trees, on the ground and in rocks. Check on plants that gather water.
General Measures

- If mosquitoes persist, apply repellent for personal protection.
- Fumigate or spray with insecticide.
- Use blinds, wire screens and meshes in the doors and windows to avoid insects entering homes.
- Clean the house and its surroundings (waste land or unused areas).
- Breed fish in pools, troughs and water fountains so that they eat the larvae both of the Aedes Aegypti and of the anopheles which causes malaria.
- If a person is ill in the home, s/he should be protected with a mosquito net; mosquito bites will therefore be avoided as well as the transmission of the illness to other people.

Social Participation

- Take an active part in anti-dengue campaigns. Educate your neighbours and work with your Health Centre.
- If you know of a case of dengue, you should inform the hospital, or nearest health post or health centre.

Let’s Remember:
Dengue makes you ill the first time, but the second time .... it may kill you.
LET’S PREVENT DENGUE IN OUR HOMES AND COMMUNITY
What is malaria?

It is an infectious illness, produced by a parasite which is transmitted through the bite of the female *Anopheles* mosquito.

The mosquito bites someone who is healthy and leaves parasites (Plasmodiums) in the circulatory system, following which the parasites invade the red corpuscles where they develop and multiply, bringing about severe anaemia. In addition, they affect other organs such as the liver, the brain, the kidney and the spleen.

The life of the mosquito which transmits malaria goes through four phases: egg, larva, pupa and adult (male or female) which reproduce in stagnant and polluted water such as puddles, marshy ground and ponds.


Symptoms of Malaria:

After one or two weeks of having been bitten, the person who is ill begins to observe the signs and symptoms of the different stages of the illness.
**PHASE 1**
Discomfort, deteriorating state of health, muscle pain and headache, shivering followed by fever which reaches 40°C.

**PHASE 2**
Period of abundant sweating for two to four hours.

**PHASE 3**
Period of rest with fatigue, but the previous symptoms of the illness disappear.

Fever is usually accompanied by body pain, nausea or vomiting, rapid pulse and breathing, a feeling of anxiety; usually the discomfort lasts for three to four hours; and the symptoms appear each two to three days, but they can also be continuous; finally, the person has anaemia. If this is not treated on time, particularly in children, there can be numerous complications which can lead to death.

Pregnant women with malaria can transmit it to their children if it is not treated in time. It can also lead to miscarriage.
Prevention of Malaria

Drain away stagnant water from puddles, marshy ground and ponds; to do this is it necessary to dry up the area, fill it in with earth or build drains or drainage systems.

Tidy up the plants around houses.

Fumigate with insecticide to get rid of mosquitoes.

Use screens or mesh on the doors and windows to avoid insects flying into the home.

Use repellent.

Use mosquito nets in the bedrooms.

If you travel to zones or places with a high incidence of malaria, take prophylactic medicines. In pregnant women, if there is a suspicion of malaria, consult the nearest health establishment. In the case of the suspicion of malaria together with bleeding or jaundice (yellow colour of the skin) in children less than six months of age, you must go to the nearest Health Centre.
Treatment at Home

Make sure that the person who is ill is well hydrated.

Give the medicine indicated by the doctor to care for the illness.

Ensure appropriate food which is rich in proteins and carbohydrates; in addition, it is recommended to eat portions of food from each of the food groups in accordance with the pyramid below:

**Level One:**
Cereals.

**Level Two:**
Greens, vegetables and fruits.

**Level Three:**
Milk and milk-based products, meat.

**Level Four:**
Fats, oils, desserts and sweets.
What is Diarrhoea?

This is an infection of the digestive system usually brought about by a virus or bacteria which enter the body as a result of consuming raw food or lack of hygiene in the preparation of food, drinking water which is contaminated with faeces, or using kitchen utensils which have not been properly washed.

A person with diarrhoea has frequent and copious loose bowel movements. Faeces can be soft, watery or liquid, loose with a bad smell, with or without blood.

How do you develop it?

The virus, bacteria or parasites usually reach people’s mouth through:

- Eating contaminated food (milk, cheese, ice, water, cold drinks, fruit, vegetables, greens and badly prepared food), among other causes.

- Not washing hands after using the toilet or latrine, after changing nappies, after caring for people who are sick with diarrhoea or after having put your hands in contaminated water (and then touching food or objects).

- Drinking water from a well, rivers or a polluted water supply.
What are the symptoms?
The symptoms which a person usually suffers from are as follows:

- Deteriorating health or irritability
- Dehydration
- Lack of appetite
- Nausea or desire to vomit
- Abdominal pain
- More frequent bowel movements than usual.

What should a person who has diarrhoea do?

- Drink more liquids than usual, oral rehydration salts, natural drinks, rice-based drinks, or water from boiling rice, barley, maize or other cereals.
- Eat small portions of food more frequently. If you prefer, grind or liquidize foods.
- Do not eat packet soup, drink sugary liquids, fizzy drinks, plain water, or take purgatives; these encourage diarrhoea.
- If a child is breast-feeding, this should NOT be stopped. Remember that children under six months of age should only drink mothers’ milk.
- Children aged between 6 and 12 months should continue being given clean, fresh food (recently prepared). If the child is breast feeding, continue giving the child breast milk.
- Do not use dummies, or avoid these as much as possible.
- Oral rehydration fluid should be taken each half hour or each time there are bowel movements.
- If the sick person vomits, wait for 10 minutes and then continue giving oral rehydration salts at a slower pace.
The danger signs associated with diarrhoea are:

**Dehydration:**
The symptoms of this sign are:

- Small quantities of urine, and dark-coloured urine
- Irritability or somnolence, especially in children.
- Sunken eyes
- Sunken soft spot at the top of the head (fontanel) in small children
- Dry tongue and mouth

- General weakness
- Skin which appears as a fold in the stomach area.
- Dry, wizened skin
- Crying with no tears

**Severe Diarrhoea:**
- More than ten bowel movements per day or diarrhoea which lasts more than 2 days.
- Copious vomiting
- High fever

**Persistent Diarrhoea:**
Diarrhoea which lasts for more than 14 days.

**Dysentery:**
Diarrhoea with visible blood in the stools.
Take special care of children and old people, looking out for signs of dehydration and if this occurs consult a doctor.

**Preparation of oral rehydration salts:**

10 minutes.

- Boil water for ten minutes and leave it to cool in a container with a lid.
- Measure a litre of water once it has boiled and cooled.
- Dissolve the contents of the package of oral rehydration salts in the litre of boiled, cool water.

**Household Rehydration Salts:**

- Boil water for 10 minutes and afterwards let it cool, keeping the container covered.
- Measure a litre of water once it has boiled and cooled.
- Measure four level soup spoons of sugar and one teaspoon of salt.
- Dissolve them in the litre of boiled, cool water.

It is preferable to use the packets of oral rehydration salts.
Prevention of Diarrhoea

We can reduce the number of cases of diarrhoea if we put the following measures into practice:

- Breast feed infants for the longest possible time.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after going to the toilet or latrine or treating someone who is ill with diarrhoea, also before preparing and handling foods and before eating or breast feeding.
- Keep children’s nails short and wash their hands before meals.
- Keep both your body and clothes clean.
- Boil water and milk for drinking for at least 10 minutes.
- Reduce as much as possible the use of a feeding bottle and wash it well after use.
- Do not use fluids left over in the feeding bottle.
- Wash fruit, vegetables and kitchen utensils with clean water.
- Cook meat well and do not eat any kind of raw meat.
- Frozen meat and fish should not be left out of the freezer if it is not going to be prepared and eaten. Never re-freeze meat or fish.
- Keep food well covered to avoid it being contaminated.
- Keep the utensils used for eating clean as well as work surfaces.
- Keep your house clean and collect rubbish in a container with a lid to avoid flies and cockroaches, since these play a part in contamination.
- Do not defecate outdoors; use the toilet or the latrine.
- When using toilet paper avoid as far as possible getting your fingers soiled. Do not tear the paper, wash your hands with water and soap after using the latrine.
Cholera is an acute, transmissible illness. It is caused by a bacterium called Vibrio cholerae.

Food is a major vehicle for transmission, especially those foods eaten raw or which are cooked and then eaten some time afterwards. We should mention amongst these sea food such as oysters, clams, shrimps and crab. Greens, vegetables and fruits are also a risk; all the more so when contaminated water is used; in addition, person to person contamination has been observed in crowded living conditions and as a result of poor hygiene routines. Food can also be contaminated by flies, cockroaches etc.

**Risk Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The absence or poor quality of potable water services and sewerage systems.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Hot temperatures increase the probability of transmission.</strong></th>
<th><strong>The presence of people infected with cholera stimulates the propagation of the illness on a wide scale.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Inappropriate hygiene habits increase faecal contamination which takes place orally.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Water for human consumption is the best vehicle for transmission of cholera when it is contaminated with faecal matter.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Cholera Symptoms

The first signs of the illness caused by Vibrio cholerae take place 2 to 5 days after ingesting the bacteria and occur suddenly with odourless diarrhoea, first of a faecal nature, and afterwards becoming liquid, with the classic appearance of “rice water”, together with vomiting of food and later of a white liquid. There may be stomach cramps as well as cramps in the arms and legs, caused by the loss of liquid and the skin wrinkles, cheeks recede, eyes become sunken and the body temperature drops, the person urinates only small quantities, breathing becomes rapid and superficial and his or her voice becomes weak and high-pitched, the pulse tends to fall from time to time and the sick person may complain weakly of intense thirst and a burning sensation in the thorax. In some cases, death can occur in 2 to 3 hours, when the sick person does not receive appropriate, immediate medical treatment.

How should a person suffering from cholera be transported?

1) to collect faeces, it is recommended to place the ill person in a large plastic bag from the waist down.

2) to avoid propagation of the bacteria and you need to use a vehicle to transport the ill person, line the seats and floor of the car with large plastic bags or a thick plastic sheet.

3) Collect the ill person’s vomit in plastic bags. These bags and their contents should be handed over to the hospital to be appropriately disposed of.

4) Burn everything which the ill person has soiled.
Prevention of cholera can be achieved if hygiene routines and the management, storage and preparation of food are improved. As a result, it is recommended:

- Buying food where there are the best conditions of hygiene, presentation and handling.

- Wash all foods which are eaten raw, such as vegetables, fruit and greens with plenty of clean or boiled water.

- Eat fish, sea food, shrimps, clams, lobster etc which have been well cooked.

- Ice and juices should be prepared with purified or previously boiled water.

- Milk which is not pasteurized should be boiled for 10 minutes.

- Water for drinking, if not potable, should be boiled for 20 minutes and then stored in clean containers with lids.

- Do not mix cooked products with raw products.

- Rubbish should be disposed of in a sturdy container which is washable, with a lid and if possible, lined with a plastic bag. If there is no programme for garbage collection, burn garbage and do not dump it in water sources in order to avoid contamination.

- If you do not have a sewerage system, the toilet must be connected to a septic tank, or you should build a latrine. You should not defecate in the open or near to water sources.

- Wash your hands before preparing or consuming food and after using the toilet or latrines, handling garbage or left-over food.

- Wash and disinfect all surfaces and utensils which are in contact with food after each use.

- Cloths, mops and dishcloths must be washed and rinsed with disinfectant solutions such as bleach, each time they are used.

- To clean floors and toilets, use bleach solutions.

- Do not use medicines which contain aspirin.
## LET'S GET TO WORK

### Exercise #3

Fill in the box with your answer, as appropriate.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1)</strong> Has there been a case of dengue, malaria or cholera in your community?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Dengue</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2)</strong> Have there been cases of dengue, malaria or cholera over the last three years?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Dengue</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3)</strong> In the last year have there been cases of dengue, malaria or cholera</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Dengue</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4)</strong> In the area surrounding your house is there an area where mosquitoes could breed?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5)</strong> Has your community organized itself to carry out campaigns to drain away water from breeding sites?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LET’S PREVENT RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS

What are infections of the upper respiratory tract?

Infections of the upper respiratory tract (URTIs) are mostly transmitted through daily contact with ill people and last for less than 15 days.

These include: flu or colds, bronchitis, tonsillitis, pharyngitis, laryngitis, and ear infections.

How do you become ill?

The virus or bacteria of upper respiratory tract infections are transmitted from person to person through:

| Dirty hands (for example: an infected person wipes their nose with their hand and then touches a healthy person). | Suspended Secretions (for example: an infected person sneezes or coughs near to a healthy person) without using a handkerchief to cover their nose and mouth. | Contaminated objects (for example, an infected person coughs or sneezes over a toy, then a healthy child plays with the same toy). |
Healthy Home

a) Organs affected by Upper Respiratory Tract Infections:
Ears, Nostrils, Larynx, Mouth, Windpipe

b) Organs affected by Lower Respiratory Tract Infections:
Lungs, Bronchial tubes, Diaphragm

What are the Symptoms?

Coughing and sneezing, blocked nose or nasal discharge, pain or reddening of the throat, hoarseness, pain or discharge from the ear and/or difficulty in breathing. In addition, the patient may have fever, feel tired and suffer from loss of appetite. In the case of children, the most significant complication in respiratory tract infections is pneumonia (infection of the lower respiratory tract), and appropriate care of children at home is therefore essential.

Alarm signals are:

1. Rapid breathing
2. Difficulty in breathing (wheezing)
3. Difficulty in drinking or breast-feeding
4. Somnolence (drowsiness).
In the event of any of these signs, the person should be taken urgently to the nearest health centre.

Other symptoms which indicate the need for medical attention are:

1. Having fever for more than three days.
2. Pus in the area of the tonsils (throat).
3. Pus or pain in the ears.
4. Fever or hypothermia (significant reduction in body temperature) in a child of less than 2 months of age.
What should you do if you have an Upper Respiratory Tract Infection?

Components of Care in the Home

Hydration

- Increase the intake of liquids, fruit and yellow or green fruits and vegetables which contain Vitamins “A” and “C”.
- If the child is breast-feeding, give him or her the opportunity to feed more often.
- Use simple and safe remedies for coughs: honey with lemon, herb teas, and clean water in the day.

Inhaling of Secretions

- Keep nostrils clean using drops of saline solution, water with salt, or camomile water at room temperature or use a suction pump to clean your nose.

Food

- If there is a lack of appetite, provide food in small amounts, more times a day.
- Try to eat a little extra during the recovery period.
- Continue breast-feeding at least during the first six months of age.

Various

- Stay in a cool environment, with no sudden changes of temperature.
- Do not wrap the ill person in too many warm covers or clothes.
- If there is fever, this can be controlled through bathing in tepid water and if there is general discomfort, acetaminophen can be given, but the dosage should be consulted beforehand with a doctor.
• Any other kind of medicine should be given only with a doctor’s authorization.

• Avoid or limit the use of feeding bottles and dummies, it is recommended to use a cup for the first year of the baby’s life.

• Have regular health check-ups and make sure your vaccinations are up to date.

• Avoid contact with people with upper respiratory tract infections and wash your hands frequently, especially if you are in contact with someone who is ill.

• Avoid cigarette smoke, kitchens in which firewood is burned and chimneys.
What makes Animals ill?

Animals, like people, can become ill and make other animals and people ill.

The most common problems in animals are insects or parasites outside or inside the body.

Parasitic worms, fleas, lice, ticks or mange can be found on the outer body and worms and tapeworms inside.
How should you take care of Animals?

Each animal requires different care according to its basic needs; therefore the following should be taken into account:

- Food should be placed in a clean plate, bucket or dish, not on the floor.
- Provide clean water and a clean and safe place to sleep.
- Do not mistreat them and take care of them when they are ill.
- Make sure they are free of worms, ticks and other parasites.
- Make sure their diet includes salt and other minerals.
- Provide medicine to rid them of parasites.
What illnesses do animals pass on to people?

There are many such illnesses, for example, scabies, allergies, rabies, tetanus which can be contracted by people as a result of inappropriate contact or manner of living alongside animals.

LETS GET TO WORK

Exercise #3

Fill in the box with your answer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you live near to</th>
<th>SI</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horses</td>
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<td>Cows</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other animals</td>
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</table>

Did you know that ....
as well as being useful and friendly, these animals can also transmit several illnesses which can affect you and your family?

Pigs: are almost always carriers of parasites given their habits. The parasites which they can transmit to people are called *Tetanus and Cisticercosis*. 
People can pick up these parasites if they wash themselves or use water from rivers where pigs are present or by eating food and drink contaminated by their faeces.

**Dogs and cats:** can transmit various illnesses such as allergies, rabies, scabies and other parasites. In the case of cats, they can convey an illness called Toxoplasmosis.

**Horses:** can transmit parasites, parasitic worms and ticks which can make people ill.

**Cows and goats:** can convey illnesses such as “mad cow disease” through milk and meat.

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**How can we avoid illnesses transmitted by domestic animals?**

The most important thing is that animals do not live in the same place as people; they should be outside the house in another building.

It is necessary:

- To always use the latrine to avoid animals eating or becoming contaminated with human waste.

- If milk is not pasteurized, boil it.

- Eat meat which is well cooked, particularly in the case of pork.

- Wash hands well after touching animals or their waste.
• Vaccinate animals and make sure they are free of parasites.

• Do not let animals soil water which people will use.

• Do not eat meat from animals which have been ill.

What can Communities do?

An organized community can ensure that animals are not roaming freely, thereby avoiding problems with neighbours and illnesses of people and other animals.

In addition, they should:
Inform the Ministry of Agriculture and livestock or the competent body in each country when animals become ill or die and you do not know why. Explain to other people what you have learned about domestic animals. Carry out campaigns on vaccination and keeping animals free of parasites.
UNIT 4

Let's Prevent Accidents in the Home

Illnesses, wounds and even death as a result of accidents in the home are incidents from which no-one is immune and less so during disaster situations.

In these difficult circumstances we do not always have appropriate medical care or are near to a hospital.
Preventive Measures to avoid Accidents in your Home

In the kitchen:

1. Fit cupboards which can be reached easily without having to stand on chairs or steps and which are well fixed.

2. Make sure handles of frying pans and pans are facing towards the wall.

3. Keep poisons, cleaning liquids and disinfectants well marked in their original containers and out of the reach of children.

4. Do not open tins with your hands.

5. Clean up immediately any liquid which has been spilt on the floor.


7. Ensure the safety of plugs and cables of small kitchen appliances and do not overload them.

8. Use a broom and dust pan to clear up broken glass and wrap the broken glass in a newspaper before putting it into the garbage bin.
9. Have a fire extinguisher or a fire blanket to hand and learn to use them.

10. Never throw water on boiling oil.

11. Do not let children play in the kitchen.

**In the bathroom:**

1. Keep medicines out of the reach of children, preferably in a locked place.

2. Place the first aid kit in a high-up place so that children cannot reach it.

3. Throw down the drain any medicines which have expired and those which do not have an expiry date or a label or indications for their use.


5. Keep razors out of the reach of children.
In general

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keep syringes, sewing needles and scissors well out of the reach of children.</th>
<th>Make sure that shelves are well fixed.</th>
<th>Set out electric cables where no-one will trip up over them.</th>
<th>Change a cable which is faulty or in poor condition immediately.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do not leave bottles of alcohol or tobacco within the reach of children. The same applies to bleach, disinfectant and insecticides.</td>
<td>Do not smoke in bed or close to family members, particularly children.</td>
<td>Discourage children from playing on the stairways or on steps.</td>
<td>Do not leave dark corners, good lighting is essential.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do not store junk or inflammable objects under the stairs.</td>
<td>Do not use candles. If you do so, keep a constant eye on them.</td>
<td>Do not leave children in a locked place.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

Electrolytes: these are mineral substances which are present in the water of our body such as sodium, potassium etc. and are important for our metabolism.

Pharyngitis: Inflammation or infection of the pharynx as a result of a virus or bacteria resulting in pain and difficulty in swallowing.

Circulatory failure: This is a failure of the circulatory system which does not allow sufficient oxygen to reach all parts of the body, as a result the person feels cold and sweaty and has a rapid pulse.

Yellow Fever: Infectious illness caused by a virus which is transmitted to man by a mosquito and results in a serious illness because it damages the liver, the kidneys and the heart.

Hepatitis A: Inflammatory illness of the liver caused by the virus. This is characterized by an increase in the size of the liver, abdominal discomfort, lack of appetite, faeces of a white colour and dark urine.

Faeces: Waste matter from the body which is expelled during defecation.

Hygiene: Series of practices such as washing hands, bathing etc. which ensure a significant reduction in infections caused by micro-organisms.

Colourless: which has no colour, for example, water.

Prophylaxis: Preventive treatment for an illness.
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First Aid Kit

1. Medicines should not be within the reach of children. This could be dangerous.

2. Let’s prepare a box or home first aid kit with:
   - Scissors
   - Gauze
   - Bandages
   - Plasters
   - Sticking plaster
   - Tweezers
   - Latex gloves
   - Alcohol
   - Thermometer
   - Soap
   - Acetaminophen
   - Saline solution
   - Torch or candles
   - Matches
   - A first aid manual

3. We need to check the expiry date of the medicines that we have at home to avoid poisoning.

Never treat yourself. Consult a doctor
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Information</th>
<th>Details</th>
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Information or special precautions (if you need medicine on a regular basis or occasionally, please write down the name of the medicine and the dose required).