



# MODULE 5:

# Teaching Improved Food and Hygiene Customs

Overview of key messages and how to share them

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Child Survival Programs for Sahel region and Haiti are in collaboration with University of Maryland Dental School.

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# Combating Malnutrition in the community requires:

Not Just:

- Detection of cases
- Classification of severity
- Systematic recording of findings
- Sharing results with family and community leaders
- Organizing for improved nutritional rehabilitation in the community

But also

- Teaching improved food, feeding, and hygiene customs

**This module focuses on teaching the community customs that will prevent illness in children and make for healthier families!**

The community needs to understand the link between changing their food and hygiene habits and preventing serious diseases such as noma and nutritional blindness.

# The steps to learning:

People learn best by:

- Thinking through a problem
- Becoming emotionally involved
- Practicing the skill

# **When teaching in the community, make everyone feel comfortable and welcome!**

- Even the most humble person can contribute to the discussion.
- Include everyone in the learning process.
- Treat everyone with respect, and acknowledge their contribution and perspective.
- Affirm and thank everyone who participates in the gathering, large or small.

# Dialogue!

- This means that the teacher is also a listener and a learner.
- Every time you interact in the community, everyone should come away enlightened.



Since food customs are passed from generation to generation, it will be important to include all of the generations in the discussion of improving child feeding customs. Old habits are not quickly changed until people understand the problems, and help to discover solutions.

# **Present and repeat basic concepts, then build on them.**

- Ask for repetition of key facts.
- Ask for repetitive demonstration of basic skills. Example: How to spoon-feed a baby, how to keep water clean

# **Adults need facts**

## **to have the power to prevent serious diseases.**

- Do they know that the main reason that children die is because of contaminated food and water?
- Do they know that the nutrients that children need can be obtained from locally available foods?
- Do they know that food is more important than medicine for children's health?

# Teaching for change:

- Present the problem.
- Give accurate facts.
- Engage in discussion with the goal to finding solutions with the community members.

# There is so much to learn!

- Be systematic.
- Keep records of what you have discussed in each community.

Remember that people learn:

- 20% of what they hear –Speak Clearly!
- 40% of what they hear and see- Use visuals aids!
- 80% of what they hear, see, and do- Practice the skills you talk about!

# Speak with Authority!

- Learn the basic information.
- Teach the RULES that must be followed to protect life and health.
- Support the RULES with convincing information.

# Rule #1 - Girls and women need nutritious food:

- before pregnancy
- during pregnancy
- while breast feeding



*Photo Courtesy of Peter Clark  
ARCA Associates*

# Healthy girls make healthy mothers!

- Improving the health of families starts with improving the health of mothers.
- Healthy girls make healthier mothers.
- Healthier mothers make healthier babies.
- Healthier babies make healthier children.
- Healthier children make healthier, happier and more fulfilled, productive adults.



- Girls who are not well-nourished in their childhood and adolescence have a risk of complications of delivery due to inadequate growth.
- Women who are not well-nourished have a much higher risk of dying during pregnancy, delivery and in the weeks after giving birth.

**Malnourished mothers  
give birth to children  
with poor immunity to  
infections, including  
noma.**

**Combating noma  
requires improving  
mothers' nutrition.**

# Rule #2 Exclusive Breast feeding for 6 months!

- Give no other food except BREAST MILK for the first 6 months of life! Breaking this rule puts your child at risk.
- Record child's birthdates so that you can know how long to breastfeed exclusively (and also that you know how they should be growing).



# Breast milk is perfect food!

- It is clean, convenient, and free!
- If mother offers breast often, milk supply will increase.
- If baby takes other food or drink (e.g., sugar water) before 6 months, risk of sickness and death is high.
- The first milk (Colostrum) protects baby from infections, so baby should nurse immediately at birth.
- Well-fed mothers make better breast milk.

Infants are the safest when they are exclusively breastfed.

Your baby is a great risk the moment any food or drink besides mother's milk enters his or her mouth.



After 6 months, when it is time to start giving food in addition to breast milk, be very careful that everything you feed to your baby is clean!

Prepare the food, then feed it to your child immediately.





Spoon-feed infants and young children.

Hold your child on your lap, talk to him or her, and patiently, lovingly coax him or her to eat all of the food in one sitting.



Wash and dry dish and spoon before and after use and cover utensils with a clean cloth.





Wash your hands and child's hands and face before and after each feeding.





Feed your child at least  
4-6 times per day, and  
breastfeed on demand.

Give infants over 6 months and children sips of cooled boiled water from a cup between mouthfuls, or breastfeed.



Use fortified foods when possible for extra zinc, iron, selenium, and vitamins and use iodized salt.





Sun exposure (20 minutes per day) allows baby's skin to make vitamin D for healthy bones and a stronger immune system!



When mothers wean children to starchy weaning foods, they often become malnourished and sick. Rather than try to suddenly wean a child and go to starchy weaning foods, it would be better to wean slowly. And for many mothers it would be good to skip weaning foods entirely, and go directly to feeding the child mashed foods from the family meals.

Start with the easily digested foods, but every few days add something new-such as mashed fruits, vegetables, greens, eggs, meats, and fats.



Growing babies' brains are mostly fat, so if you want a smart child, add at least a teaspoon of red palm oil to each feeding.





**Don't sell food such as eggs and vegetables until everyone, especially children, in the family are well fed!**

**At least one egg per day after 6 months will help children to grow and heal from illnesses.**

# Eggs are excellent weaning food, and therapeutic for malnourished women and children.



- Eggs are rich in protein, energy vitamins and minerals
- They are readily available in the villages and often sold, when the children should be eating them
- One boiled egg, mashed and mixed with one teaspoon of red palm oil, should be spoon-fed to child one to three times daily, in addition to the other food that the child is consuming .
- If powdered vitamin/mineral is available for home fortification, sprinkle on egg or whatever is the child's first meal of the day, according to level of malnutrition and directions.
- Educate families that eggs are to be given most liberally to pregnant women, weaning infants and young children. Eating eggs will not cause a child to become a thief! This piece of folklore is an example of a food taboo that contributes to malnutrition in the community.

Rule #3-  
Continue breast  
feeding *until your*  
*child is 2 years*  
*old!*



Rule #4-Give the best food in the household to young children, since they are growing.  
Protein (eggs, soy, meat and milk) fruits, vegetables, greens, fats, oils, and grains are all necessary for children to grow healthy.





Rule#5-Monitor weight and height to detect children with growth failure.

The sickest children need the most attention. They need loving encouragement to consume more food more often.



# Rule #6- Food for infants and children must be clean!

Germs grow quickly in food that is not consumed immediately, so store after no more than 2 hours.



- Invisible bacteria and parasite eggs from human or animal feces contaminates the home.
- People's hands carry this bacteria to food unless they wash their hands.
- Bacteria grows in food and causes diseases like noma and diarrhea.

# Rule #7-Treat vomiting, diarrhea and dehydration early with Oral Rehydration Therapy and Zinc.

- To one liter of cool water that has been boiled, add either a packet of salts and sugar with zinc, or 8 teaspoons of sugar and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt.
- Give sips constantly until the child is better.
- Zinc tablets or Zinc-Enriched MAMA Dentifrice can save lives.



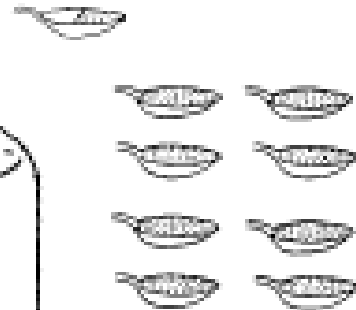
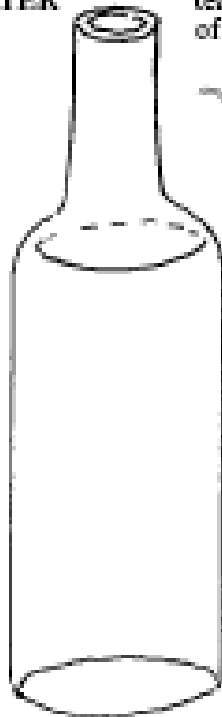


## 2 WAYS TO MAKE 'HOME MIX' REHYDRATION DRINK

### 1. WITH SUGAR AND SALT (Raw sugar or molasses can be used instead of sugar)

In 1 liter of clean WATER

put half of a level teaspoon of SALT and 8 level teaspoons of SUGAR.



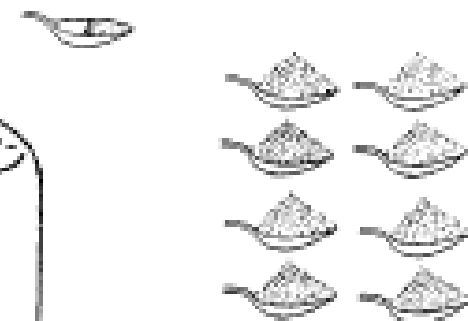
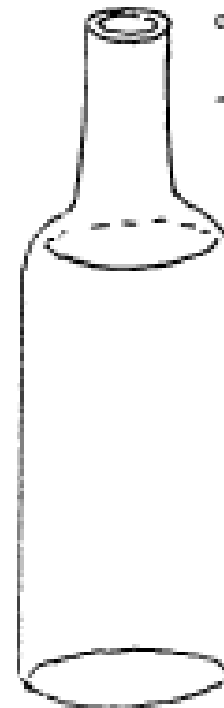
**CAUTION:** Before adding the sugar, taste the drink and be sure it is less salty than tears.

To either Drink add half a cup of fruit juice, coconut water, or mashed ripe banana, if available. This provides potassium which may help the child accept more food and drink.

### 2. WITH POWDERED CEREAL AND SALT (Powdered rice is best. Or use finely ground maize, wheat flour, sorghum, or cooked and mashed potatoes.)

In 1 liter of WATER

put half a teaspoon of SALT and 8 heaping teaspoons (or 2 handfuls) of powdered CEREAL.



Boil for 5 to 7 minutes to form a liquid gruel or watery porridge. Cool the Drink quickly and start giving it to the child.

**CAUTION:** Taste the Drink each time before you give it to be sure it is not spoiled. Cereal drinks can spoil in a few hours in hot weather.

**IMPORTANT:** Adapt the Drink to your area. If liter containers or teaspoons are not in most homes, adjust quantities to local forms of measurement. Where people traditionally give cereal gruels to young children, add enough water to make it liquid, and use that. Look for an easy and simple way.

Reduce Salt.

## Rule#8-Keep children's mouths clean

- Use Zinc-enriched MAMA Dentifrice or a homemade mixture of iodized salt and baking soda or toothpaste. (Fluorinated if water lacks fluoride)
- Teach children to clean teeth with a chewing stick or toothbrush.





**Rule #9-Water must be boiled and stored covered to prevent contamination in the home.**

- MAMA has a water purification system designed for home use.



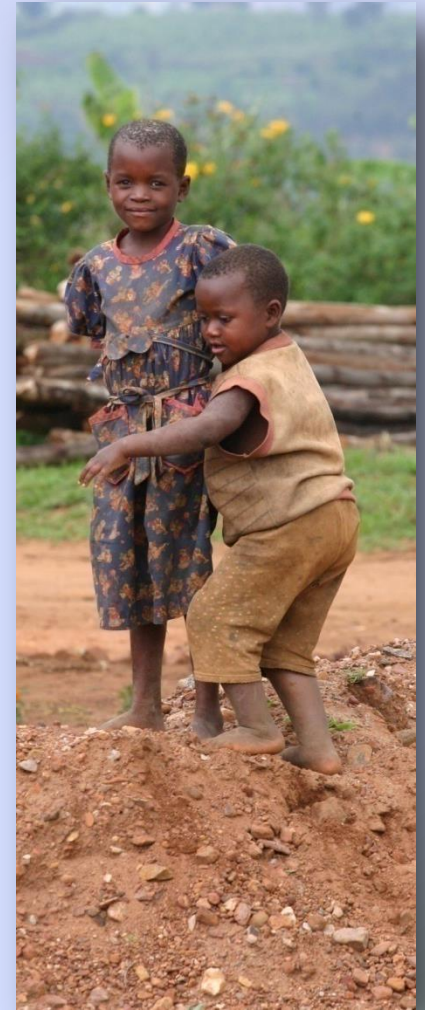
Rule #10-Keep community water sources free of contamination.



Rule#11--Do not allow animals in areas where children sit, play or sleep.



**Build  
Fences!**



Rule #12-Dispose  
properly of all  
human waste to  
stop the spread of  
diseases.



*Photo Courtesy of Peter Clark  
ARCA Associates*

Rule#13-Participate in community wide campaigns of immunization, Vitamin A distribution, deworming and growth monitoring.



- Only if the community unites to combat malnutrition will the women and children be saved.
- If everyone does their part, from the leaders, the elders, the heads of households, grandparents, parents, teachers, village health workers, and even the children-the community will be able to save those who are suffering the most.



Be vigilant to prevent malnutrition, nutritional blindness and noma. Good nutrition and hygiene will prevent these diseases. When a child begins to show signs of mouth or eye infection or inflammation, begin immediate appropriate therapy including mega-dose capsule of vitamin A and oral antibiotics in the village while seeking medical consultation as soon as possible.



**Thank you!**