

- **Where Women Have No Doctor A Health Guide for Women** (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)
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Thanks

It is impossible to adequately thank all the people who made Where Women Have No Doctor a reality. This book started as a good idea shared by a small group of women and ended up as a remarkable international collaboration spanning 5 continents. Now we find ourselves wanting to thank everyone who helped, but simply listing their names does not do justice to the tremendous and generous contributions so many have made: from the groups of women who met early on to discuss topics related to women's health care, and who later reviewed chapters we wrote based on what they told us; to others who sent us original materials or reviewed (often several times) different sections of the book; to others who wrote drafts of chapters; to the specialists in women's health care who reviewed parts of or the entire manuscript; and to the artists - women from 23 countries - whose illustrations reflect just how diverse a project this was. We thank you all, for through your combined efforts, this book now rightfully belongs to any woman who reads or uses it.

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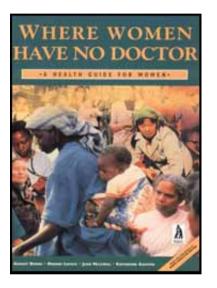
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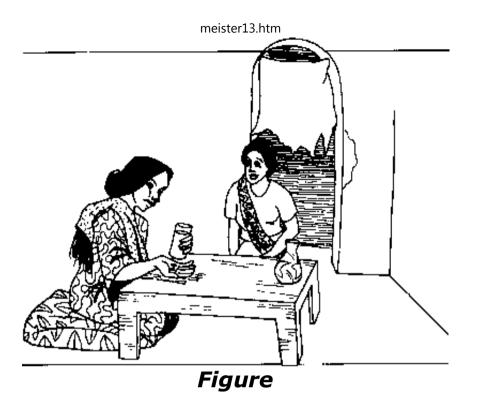


Where Women Have No Doctor - A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)

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 - How TB Is Spread
 - How to Know if a Person Has TB
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Where Women Have No Doctor - A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)

Chapter 25: Tuberculosis



With proper treatment, TB can almost always be cured.

Tuberculosis (TB) is a serious disease that usually affects the lungs. Every year TB causes more deaths than any other *infectious* disease - more deaths than tropical diseases, *malaria*, and *AIDS* combined. About 2 billion people (1/3 of the world's population) carry the TB *germ* in their bodies. Of these, 10 million people are actually sick with TB right now.

As living and work conditions become more crowded, even more people are becoming infected or sick with TB. This is because TB spreads easily in crowded conditions - for example, in cities, slums, refugee camps, factories, and office buildings - especially in indoor areas where the air does not move much. Also, people who are infected with *HIV* and TB can easily get sick with TB because their *immune systems* are weak and unable to fight disease.

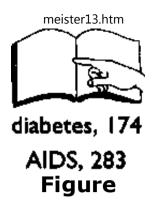
WOMEN AND TB

TB affects both men and women, but fewer women than men get treatment. Nearly 3000 women die every day from TB, and at least 1/3 die because they never knew they had the disease or because they did not receive proper treatment. It is often more difficult for a woman to get health care to cure TB because she may not be able to leave her family and work, or does not have the money to travel to a clinic. In some places a woman may not seek treatment for TB because she fears her husband will reject her as 'sickly' or too weak to do her work. A woman who works outside the home is often afraid she will be dismissed because her employer may think she will infect others.

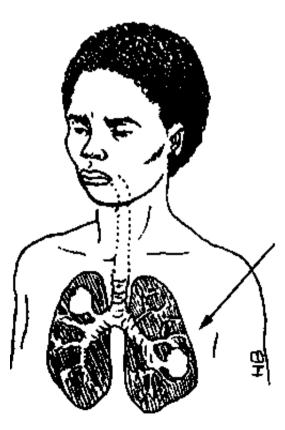
♦ Caring for sick family members may also put a woman at greater risk of becoming infected with TB.

What Is TB?

TB is caused by a small germ, or bacteria. Once this germ enters a woman's body, she is infected with TB and will remain so for many years, probably for life. Healthy people can usually fight off the sickness, and only a small number of people who are infected actually get sick with TB. About I out of 10 persons infected becomes sick with TB in his or her lifetime.



But if a person is weak, malnourished, *diabetic,* very young or very old, or infected with HIV, the TB germs may start to attack her body. Usually this happens in the lungs, where germs eat holes in the *tissue* and destroy blood vessels. As the body tries to fight the disease, the holes fill with pus and small amounts of blood.



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This is what lungs look like inside the body.

Without treatment, the body starts to waste away, and the person usually dies within 5 years. If a person is infected with HIV and TB, she or he may die in a few months without treatment.

◆ Sometimes TB germs attack other body organs, the lymph nodes, or the bones and joints. This is called extrapulmonary TB. When TB germs attack the spine and brain, it is called TB meningitis.

How TB Is Spread

TB spreads from one person to another when someone who is sick with TB coughs germs into the air The TB germs can live in the air for hours.

People who are sick with TB in their lungs can spread the germs to others. People who are infected with TB but not sick with signs of TB, and those who are sick with TB in other parts of the body, are not *contagious*.

If not treated correctly, a person sick with TB will infect about 10 more people with TB each year. But once a person has been taking medicines for about a month, he or she is probably no longer contagious.

♦ Women who are sick with TB often infect their children and others they take care of every day.



This year, about 10 people will be infected by each person who is sick with TB today.

How to Know if a Person Has TB

A person with these signs is likely to have TB in the lungs:

- cough for more than 3 weeks, especially if the cough brings up mucus (sputum) from the lungs
- blood in the sputum
- weight loss

But the only way to know for sure that a person has TB is to have the sputum tested. To get a sample of sputum - and not just saliva (spit) - a person must cough hard to bring up material from deep in her lungs. The sputum is then examined in a *laboratory* to see if it contains TB germs (is positive).

A person should take at least 2 sputum tests, ideally 2 mornings in a row. If both of her sputum tests are positive, the woman should begin treatment. If only one of

the 2 tests is positive, she should have her sputum tested again and, if it is positive, begin treatment. If the third test is negative, she should get a chest *x*-*ray*, if possible, to be certain that she does not need treatment.

♦ If someone with signs of TB in the lungs has negative sputum tests, she should see a health worker trained in treating problems of the lung. She may have pneumonia, asthma, or cancer of the lungs.

How to Treat TB

TB can almost always be cured if a woman has TB for the first time, and if she takes the right kinds of medicines in the right amounts for the full length of the treatment.

The treatment has 2 parts. In the first, a woman takes 3 to 4 medicines for 2 months, and then her sputum is tested. If it is negative, she begins part 2, in which she takes 2 drugs for another 4 to 6 months (a total of 6 to 8 months of treatment). When the treatment is finished, her sputum should be checked again to make sure that she has been cured.

The medicines usually given to treat TB include ethambutol, isoniazid, pyrazinamide, rifampicin, streptomycin, and thiacetazone. For information about these medicines see the "Green Pages." But the treatments used to cure TB vary from country to country. A health worker should always follow the recommendations of the TB program in her or his country.

If a woman's sputum is still positive after 2 months of treatment, she should see a health worker for more tests. These can show if her TB germs are *resistant* to the

medicines.

◆ TB medicines can make hormonal methods of family planning (like birth control pills) less effective. Women being treated for TB should use a different family planning method.

TB treatment during pregnancy

A pregnant woman should never take streptomycin, because it may cause deafness in her unborn baby. She should also avoid taking pyrazinamide whenever possible, because its effect on the baby is not known. TB medicines may cause pain and numbness in the hands and feet, especially during pregnancy. Taking 50 mg of pyridoxine (vitamin B6) daily will help.

IMPORTANT

Persons infected with HIV must not take thiacetazone, because it can cause their skin to peel off. If there is any possibility that a person is infected with HIV, other medicines should be used instead.

Anyone who is being treated for TB should follow these rules:

• Take all the medicine. Never stop treatment when you feel better. If you do stop, the illness will come back and you can infect others.

• Learn which side effects are normal and which are serious for the medicines you are taking. If you have serious side effects, you should stop taking the medicines and see a health worker immediately. The health

worker may have you start them again one at a time or give you a new medicine.

• Get plenty of rest and eat as well as possible. If you can, stop working until you begin to feel better.

• Keep from spreading TB germs to others. If possible, sleep separately from those who are not sick with TB for one month after starting medicines. Cover your mouth when coughing and spit sputum into a piece of paper. Throw it into a *latrine* or toilet, or burn it.



• If you give birth during treatment, your sputum should be tested. If it is negative, your baby should be given a BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guerin) *vaccine,* but no medicines. If your sputum is positive, your baby will need medicines. You do not need to be separated from your baby or to stop breastfeeding.

♦ After the first 2 months of treatment, it is sometimes possible to take medicines
 2 or 3 times a week, instead of every day. Talk to a health worker to see if you can get this kind of treatment.

Resistance to TB medicines

If a person does not take enough of the right kinds of medicine, or stops taking medicines before the treatment is finished, not all the TB germs will be killed. The strongest germs will survive and multiply, and then the medicine will be unable to kill them. This is called 'resistance'. Anyone whose sputum is still positive after 2 months of treatment may have TB germs that are resistant to the medicines she is taking. She should see a health worker trained in treating TB to get other medicines to take.

♦ If a woman is infected by someone with drug resistant TB, the germs causing her sickness will also be resistant.

Germs that have become resistant to both isoniazid and rifampicin can cause drugresistant TB, which is very difficult to treat. The treatment takes between 12 to 18 months, and is much less successful and more expensive than treatment for ordinary TB. A person with drug-resistant TB can still spread the disease to others for several months after beginning treatment.

Because the treatment for TB is so long and the effects of stopping treatment are so

serious, extra care should be taken to make sure that a person takes all her medicine. A health worker or community volunteer should watch the sick person take every dose and record that it is taken. This is called 'directly observed treatment, short-course', or DOTS. Health workers should use DOTS whenever possible, but it is most important for the first 2 months of treatment.

Preventing TB

IMPORTANT

The best way to prevent the spread of TB is to cure people who are sick with TB.



These things can also help:

• Encourage people to get tested for TB if they live with a person who is sick with TB and have any signs, or if they have a cough for 3 weeks or more.

• Try to keep the air moving in enclosed areas. This reduces the number of TB germs in that area.

• Let sunlight in whenever possible. Sunlight helps kill TB germs.

• Immunize healthy babies and children with BCG vaccine to prevent the most deadly forms of TB. But children sick with *AIDS* should not get BCG vaccine.

Working for Change

Creating effective TB control in your community requires:

• community and family education about the signs of TB and how it is spread. Encourage women to seek treatment for the signs of TB.

 trained health workers or community volunteers to participate in the DOTS program, and to find and work with persons sick with TB if they stop treatment early. DOTS programs must be flexible to be able to meet each person's needs.

• a continual supply of medicines so that treatment does not get

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interrupted, and laboratory equipment and trained workers for testing sputum.

• a good system for keeping track of who has TB, how the treatment is going, and when a person is cured.

A good TB program must give care to all people sick with TB, including women. TB services can help more women by:

 providing care and treatment in women's homes or as near to the home as possible.

 including midwives and traditional birth attendants in TB screening and DOTS programs.

• combining TB screening and treatment with other health services women are more likely to use.

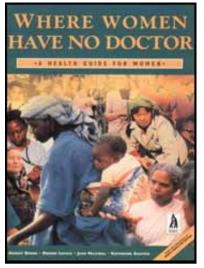
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Where Women Have No Doctor - A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)

- ➡ □ Chapter 26: Work
 - (introduction...)
 - Cooking Fires and Smoke

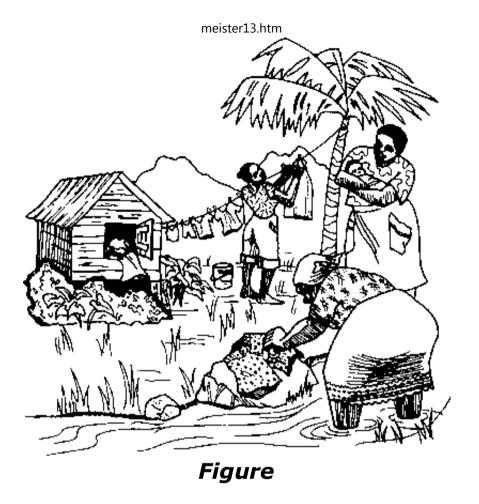


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- Lifting and Carrying Heavy Loads
- Work with Water
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- Sitting or Standing for a Long Time
- **Repeating the Same Movement Over and Over**
- Crafts
- Unsafe Working Conditions
- Sexual Harassment
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- Forgotten Workers
- Working for Change

Where Women Have No Doctor - A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)

Chapter 26: Work



Nearly every woman spends most of her life working. Women farm, prepare food, carry firewood and water, clean, and care for children and other family members. Many women also work to earn money to help support their families. Yet much of women's work goes without notice, because it is not considered as important as men's work.

♦ When a woman works to keep her family dean and fed, and to earn income to support her family, she is actually working two jobs. The work women do, and the conditions in which they work, can create health problems - which often go without notice as well. This chapter describes some of these problems, their causes, and ways to treat them. But unless women's working conditions are changed, these problems cannot really be solved. Women must work together to make these changes happen.

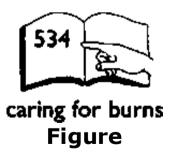
One type of work that some women do - getting paid for sex - involves some specific and serious health risks, so we have devoted a whole chapter to it.

Health workers, and others who care for sick people, are at risk for getting illnesses from the people they treat.

Cooking Fires and Smoke

Most women spend many hours a day preparing food. This puts them at risk for health problems caused by cooking fires and smoke.

FIRES



Kerosene and other liquid and gas fuels can cause explosions, fires, and burns. To use these fuels more safely:

• do not let the fuel touch your skin or drip anywhere. If it does, wash it off right away.

 keep anything that can burn away from the stove. This will prevent fires from spreading and causing great damage. Store extra fuel in a safe place away from where you cook (and do not use matches or cigarettes nearby).

- put the stove where air can move freely around it.
- always be careful when lighting the stove.

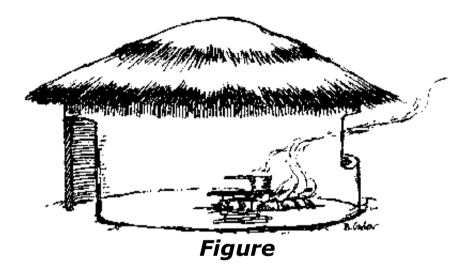
SMOKE

Women who cook with fuels that produce a lot of smoke - such as wood, coal, animal dung, or crop remains - often have health problems. These fuels cause more problems when they are burned indoors where the smoke does not move out quickly. And if the fuel has *chemicals* in it - such as pesticides or fertilizers in the crop remains - the smoke is even more harmful.

Breathing smoke from cooking fires can cause *chronic* coughs, colds, *pneumonia, bronchitis, lung infections,* and lung disease. Breathing coal smoke can also cause cancer in the lungs, mouth, and throat.

♦ Women are at greater risk for these health problems than men, because women spend more time breathing smoky air. Pregnant women who breathe cooking smoke can suffer from *dizziness,* weakness, *nausea,* and headaches. And because a woman's body is less able to fight infection when she is pregnant, she is even more likely to get the lung problems mentioned above. Smoke can also make her baby grow more slowly, weigh less at birth, or be born too early.

Preventing health problems from smoke

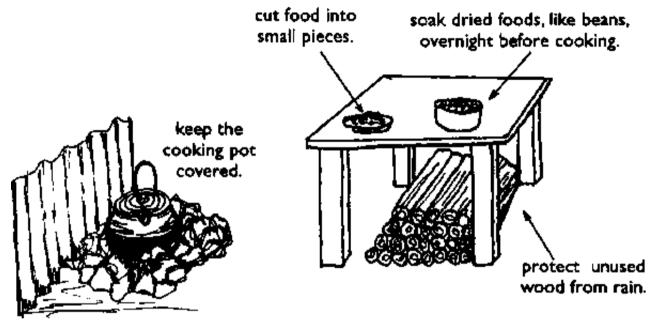


To reduce the amount of smoky air you breathe:

Cook where air can move freely. If you cannot cook outdoors, then make sure there are at least 2 openings for air in the room. This creates a draft, so the smoke will leave the room.

Cook in turns with other women. This way each woman will breathe less smoke.

Find ways to prepare food that require less cooking time (but still cook foods completely). This way you will breathe in less smoke, and you will also use less fuel. Food cooks more quickly and completely if you:



protect the fire from wind. A nest of rock, clay, or iron sheets can help keep heat around the pot.

Use stoves that produce less smoke. This is the best way to prevent health problems caused by cooking smoke. Stoves that burn less fuel and produce very little smoke may be available in your area, but they can also be made easily with local materials.

♦ Smoke is a sign that fuel is being wasted, since it is caused by fuel that does not burn completely. Finding ways to cook with less smoke can save money as well. protective lining (insulation) between the fire and the outside of the stove.
Materials that trap a lot of air - like ash, pumice rock, dead coral, or aluminum foil
keep heat inside, instead of escaping out of the sides of the stove. This keeps
the fuel burning hotly, which reduces smoke. Avoid using clay, heavy rock, sand, cement, and brick to prevent heat escaping from your stove because they do not
trap enough air.

• chimneys inside the stove that help the air move around the fire. A longer chimney outside can also help cut down the smoke in the cooking area.

• 'skirts' (material around the cooking pot) to reflect the heat coming out of the chimney and direct it back to the pot. The pot then absorbs heat from all sides.

• a small burning chamber that allows you to burn one end of a piece of fuel in the chamber while the rest of the fuel stays outside. As the part inside burns, you can push the fuel further in.

How to make a stove and cooker that reduce smoke

The rocket stove

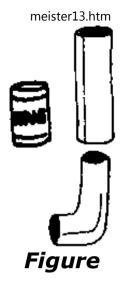
This is one example of a stove that is easy to make. You may need to adapt it for the fuel you use and the materials available in your area.

You will need:

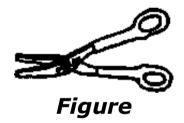
 a large (5 gallon) can, such as a cooking oil can, soy sauce can, large paint can (wellcleaned), or a can that medical supplies were packed in. This will be the body of the stove. Cinderblocks or bricks may also be used, but a large can is better because it is thin and does not absorb as much heat.



 a 4-inch wide metal stove pipe with a 90-degree bend (elbow) in it. The pipe on one side of the elbow should be longer than the pipe on the other side. You will also need a straight stove pipe to attach to the short end of the elbow. These pipes will be used to create the burning chamber and chimney for your stove. (4 or 5 tin cans with their tops and bottoms cut out can be used instead of stove pipes.) 21/10/2011



• insulation such as wood ash, pumice rock, vermiculite, dead coral, or aluminum foil.



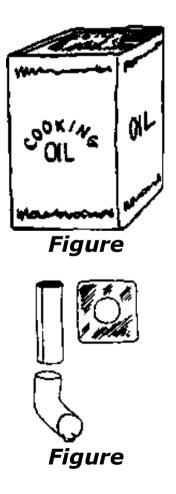
- tin snips and a can opener for cutting the metal.
- extra metal for creating a 'skirt' around the pot.



• grating or thick fencing for the top of the stove, where the pot rests for cooking.

How to make the stove:

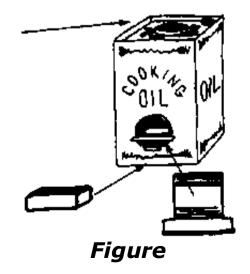
1. Use the can opener or tin snips to take the lid off the big can. Cut a 4-inch round hole in the middle of the lid for the chimney. Cut another 4-inch round hole in the lower front side of the can, about I inch up from the bottom of the can, for the burning chamber. The holes you cut should fit around your stove pipe or tin cans.



2. Place the stove pipe with the elbow inside the can so that one end sticks out of the front of the can. Make 2 parallel cuts 1/2 inch apart at the long end of the pipe and bend the section back to create a lip. This way the pipe will not slip back into the can. The long section of this pipe will be the burning chamber (where the fuel burns). Attach a straight section of pipe to the short end of the elbow to make a chimney that ends 1 inch below the top of the can. Make a lip on this pipe, too, so the top of the pipe will not fall into the can.

Note: A chimney made from tin cans will only last 1 to 3 months, and then you will need to replace it. To prevent this, try making a fired clay chimney with a mixture of 3 parts sand and 2 pans day. Put this clay around the chimney of tin cans. When the cans burn through, you will have a day chimney supported by all the insulation packed around it.

- **3.** Fill the body of the stove, around the chimney, with insulation such as wood ash.
- **4.** Replace the can lid over the insulation and around the chimney.



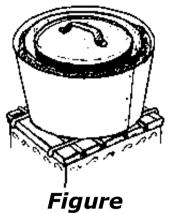
5. Use a tin can to make a shelf inside the burning chamber. Remove the ends of the can and flatten it. Then cut it into a T shape that will fit inside the pipe. The top of the T will stick out and keep the shelf from slipping inside. Place a brick or rock under the outside part of the shelf to support the twigs while they are burning.

6. Use your grating or fencing for resting the pot on the top of the stove.



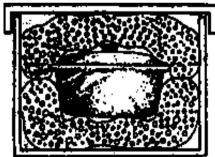
If you need to cook inside, place the stove near a wall with an opening in it. The smoke can climb along the wall and leave the building

7. Make a skirt with extra metal. It should surround the pot, leaving a 1/4- inch gap between the skirt and the pot at its base. For an even better skirt, make a double skirt and put insulation between the 2 sheets of metal.



The haybox cooker

To save even more fuel, use a haybox cooker to keep food warm or to simmer it after it has come to a boil on your stove. This cooker can cut fuel use by more than half when cooking beans, meat, rice, or grains. Rice and grains will use 1/3 less water, because not as much water will evaporate.



Keep the hay cooker away from an open flame.

Make a haybox by lining a cardboard box with 4 inches of hay (or use straw, sawdust, old clothing, feathers, chaff, cotton, wool, styrofoam, or corrugated cardboard). Leave space inside the box for your cooking pot and for more insulation on top of the pot. The lid of the box should fit tightly.

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When using the haybox cooker, remember:

• food cooked in the haybox takes 1° to 3 times longer to cook than over a fire.

beans and meat should be simmered on your stove for 15 to 30 minutes before
 For more information on stove and over designs, including teasy to pull solar
 stoves, contact Aprovecho Research Center.

• keep the pot closed and **boil meat dishes again before** eating. This prevents **Lifting** cand **Garrying Heavy Loads**.

HEALTH PROBLEMS



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Women everywhere suffer from back and neck problems, usually from heavy lifting during their daily work. Carrying water, wood, and older children for long distances can cause serious strain.

Young girls who carry many heavy loads - especially water - have problems with the back and spine (backbone). Their pelvic bones also develop poorly, which can lead to dangerous pregnancies later on.

Carrying heavy loads can cause young women to suffer more *miscarriages*, and can make older women and those who have recently given birth more likely to have fallen womb (*prolapse*).

Prevention:

How to lift safely:

• Use leg muscles - not back muscles - when lifting. When you lift objects or children from the ground, kneel or squat to pick them up rather than bending over.

• Keep your back, shoulders, and neck as straight as possible.



- Do not lift or carry heavy objects during pregnancy or right after childbirth.
- Get someone to help you lift heavy objects. It may seem quicker to lift something by yourself. But later on you may lose time because of a back injury.
- ♦ It is easier to prevent back problems than to cure them. Whenever possible, let your legs do the work - not your back.

How to carry safely:

• Carry objects close to your body.

• If possible, carry objects on your back rather than on the side of your body. This way the muscles on one side of your back do not need to do all the work. Carrying loads on your side also makes your spine twist too much. This can cause back strain.

• If you must carry objects on one side, try to switch sides often. This way the muscles on both sides of your back are working the same amount, and your spine twists both ways. Or split the load and carry it on both sides.

• Try to avoid using head straps. They can strain your neck muscles.

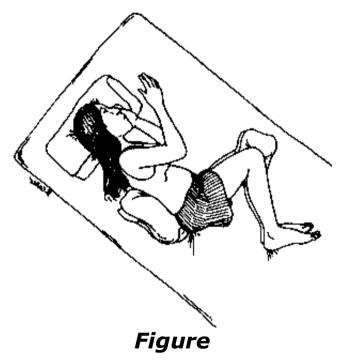


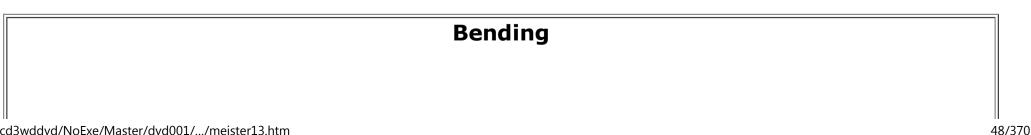
If you already have back problems:

• Sleep on your back with a rolled cloth or pillow under your knees. Or sleep on your side with some rolled cloth behind your back and another between your knees to keep your body straight and support the spine.

• Do the exercises on the next page every day to strengthen the muscles in your back and lower belly. Stop if any of these exercises cause pain.

• Try to keep your back as straight as possible during the day. Do not slump forward.







Do not bend over at the waist to reach things on the ground.

Bending forward for long periods of time - which women often do when washing, farming, or with other chores - can cause back strain. If you must work this way, try to stretch often. If you start to feel pain in your back, it can help to try some different positions, like squatting or kneeling. Change positions often.



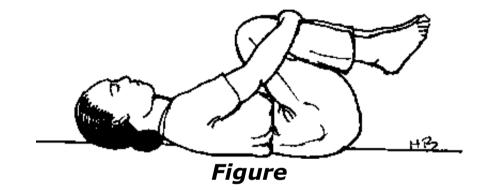
Instead, squat down by bending your knees and keeping your back straight.

Exercises to relax and strengthen your back and belly muscles:

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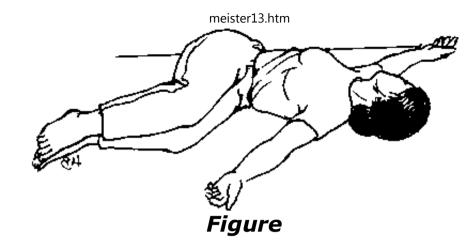
Try to do these exercises every day, in the order that they are listed:

1. Stretching your lower back. Lie on your back and hug your knees. Hold this position for 10-15 seconds as you breathe deeply. As you breathe out, gently rock your knees even closer to your chest to increase the stretch. Repeat 2 times, or until you feel some release in your lower back.

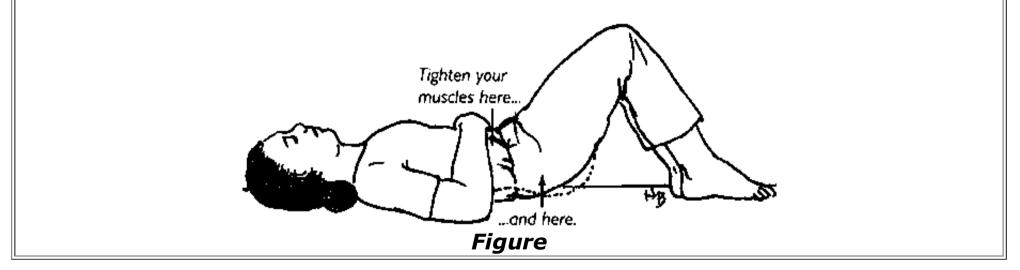


2. The twist. Lie on your back with your arms straight out from your sides. Bend your knees, and then move them slowly to one side. At the same time, turn your head to the opposite side, trying to keep your shoulders flat on the ground. Stay in this position as you breathe in and out a few more times. Then raise your knees to the center, and slowly bring them over to the other side. Turn your head the other way. Repeat this exercise 2 times on both sides, or until you feel some release in your lower back.

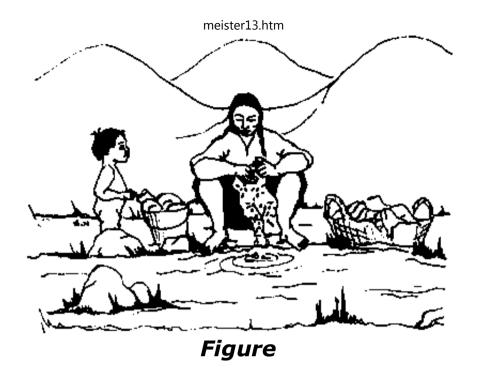




3. The pelvic tilt. Lie on your back with your knees bent. Flatten your lower back onto the floor Slowly tighten your lower abdominal and buttock muscles and hold as you count to 3. Keep breathing as you hold. Then relax. As you do, your back will curve up the way it normally does. Repeat.



Work with Water



Women must often find and carry all the water for their families. Women also do most of the washing and cleaning, and are usually the ones who bathe children. All of these tasks are important for a woman's health and the health of her family.

However, these same tasks can cause health problems.

Health problems from work with water:

• Women who spend long hours in contact with contaminated water are exposed to *parasites* and germs that live in and near water. These women are more likely to get infected with *bilharzia*, guinea worm, the germs that cause river blindness and *cholera*, and other parasitic diseases.

• Women who live downstream from a factory or large farms may be

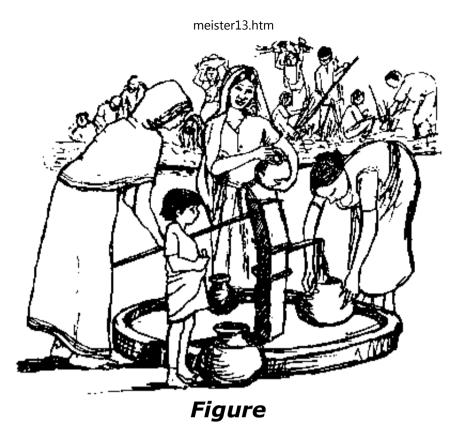
exposed to chemicals in the water. Chemicals can cause many health problems.

• Water is one of the heaviest things women must carry, so collecting and carrying it can cause back and neck problems, as well as other health problems.

♦ For information about how to treat these infections, see Where There Is No Doctor.

Prevention:

Clean water helps keep everyone healthy. All over the world, people are working together to improve health by organizing community water projects. But women are often left out of the meetings and decisions about these projects, such as where to put community taps, where to dig wells, and what kind of system to use.



If your community does not have easy access to clean water work with others to plan and organize a water project. If your community already has a water system, ask for women to be trained in how to fix and take care of the system used for the water supply.



Women should help take care of the system used for the water supply.

♦ If you live downstream from a factory that dumps chemicals into the water, try to organize your community to work for better conditions.

Work with Chemicals



Many women have contact with dangerous chemicals, often without knowing it. This is because many modern products used in daily life and at work contain hidden chemicals. Some of them can be very harmful, such as:

- pesticides, fertilizers, weed killers, and animal dips.
- paints, paint thinners, paint remover and solvents.
- fuels and pottery glazes with lead in them.
- cleaning products containing bleach and lye.
- hair dressing products.

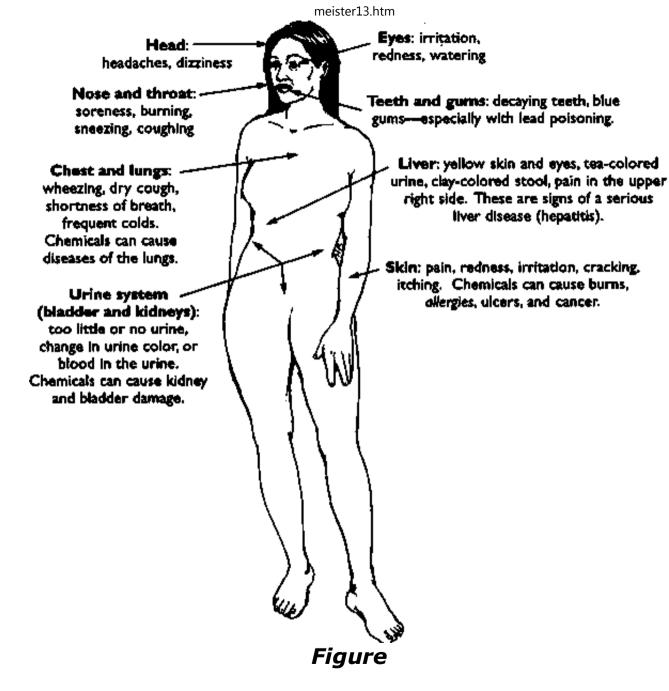
HEALTH PROBLEMS

Some chemicals cause harm to your body right away. Others cause harm that shows up later on, even after you have stopped using the chemicals. Some damage lasts only a short time. Other damage is permanent.

Avoid all unnecessary contact with chemicals.

Signs of health problems caused by chemicals:

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IMPORTANT:

Be especially careful about contact with chemicals if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Chemicals can harm your baby.

Other general warning signs:

- You feel nervous or irritable.
- Your body shakes, or your heart beats fast.
- You feel tired, drunk, or cannot think clearly.

If you cannot explain why any of these problems are happening to you, they may be caused by chemicals, especially if you are using solvents or cleaning fluids, pesticides, or materials containing lead.

Prevention:

To reduce the health risks from working with harmful chemicals, try to:

• avoid getting chemicals on your skin. When using chemicals at home, use rubber kitchen gloves (or plastic bags). When farming with pesticides and other chemicals, use thicker gloves and wear shoes. Otherwise, chemicals in the soil can get into your body.

 wash your hands after touching chemicals. If you have been using strong chemicals, like pesticides, change your clothes and wash yourself before eating or coming into the house. Use rubber gloves when you wash these clothes.

• avoid breathing in fumes (vapors) from chemicals. Work where fresh air

flows freely. Wear a mask or a cloth over your nose and mouth.

• keep chemicals away from food. Never use chemical storage containers for food or water, even after they have been washed. A container that looks very clean can still have enough chemical to poison the food or water. Do not use sprays near food or on a windy day.



Keep chemicals away from children. Always look for poison warnings, or this picture, on the label.

If a chemical gets in your eye, flush it immediately with water. Keep flushing 30 times. Do not let the water get into the other eye. If your eye is burned, see a health worker.



Lead poisoning

Lead is a poisonous part of some common materials - like pottery, paint, fuel, and batteries. Lead poisoning happens when people eat from pots with glazes containing lead or when they eat even a tiny amount of lead dust. It can also happen from breathing in lead dust or from breathing fumes from fuel containing lead.

Lead is especially harmful for babies and children. It can cause low birth weight, poor development, damage to the brain (which can be permanent), and death. So it is important to avoid working with lead during pregnancy.

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If you work with lead, try to protect yourself and your family by:

- not getting powdered glaze on your hands or in your mouth.
- keeping children away from your work area.
- cleaning up with damp cloths rather than sweeping, so that less lead dust gets into the air.
- washing your hands well after working.

• eating foods that contain a lot of *calcium* and *iron*. These foods help keep lead from getting into your blood.

Sitting or Standing for a Long Time

If you must sit or stand for many hours at work, you may suffer health problems. Sometimes they only show up after months or years. Most of these problems can be prevented.

HEALTH PROBLEMS

Back and neck problems. These come from sitting a long time with your back bent or from standing in one place.

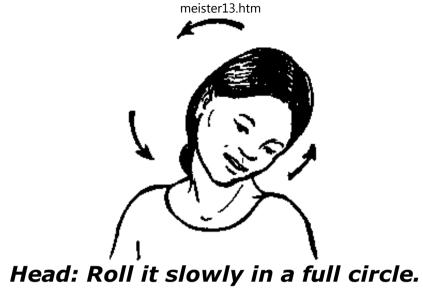
Varicose veins, swollen feet, and blood clots in the legs. When you sit or stand for a long time, it is hard for blood to flow easily through your legs, especially with

your legs crossed.



Prevention:

- Take short, fast walks during your break. Also try to walk around the room or at least stretch every hour.
- If possible, wear socks or hose with support. They should go above the knee.
- Do each of the exercises described below whenever you feel stiffness or pain, or slump forward. Repeat them 2 or 3 times, taking slow, deep breaths.





Shoulders: Move them up and down, roll them forward and backward, and pull your shoulder blades together behind your back.



Waist and upper body: With your back straight, turn from the hip to face the side. You should feel relief in the upper and lower back.

If you sit at work:

• Use a chair with a straight back - with your head, neck, and shoulders straight. If it feels better, put some rolled cloth or pillows behind you to support your lower back.

• If necessary, adjust the height of your chair or table to allow you to work in a better position. You can try sitting on a pillow, or putting a desk or table up on blocks.

- Do not cross your legs at the knees.
- Avoid wearing tight clothing.

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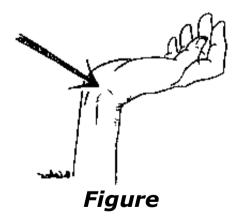
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Repeating the Same Movement Over and Over

Joints are places in the body where bones come together. At these joints tendons connect the bones to muscle. If you repeat the same movement over and over while working, the tendon can be damaged. Injuries to the wrists and elbows are common with farming and factory work. Injuries to the knees are common among domestic workers ('house-maid's knee'), miners, and other workers who kneel for a long time.

Signs:

- Pain and tingling in the part of your body that repeats the movement.
- For wrists, you will feel pain in your hand or here when your wrist is gently tapped.

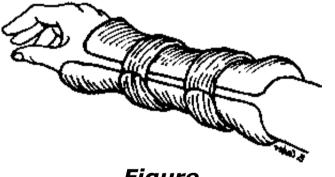


• A grating feeling when you place your hand over the joint and move it.

Treatment

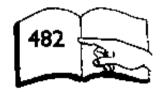
• Rest the joint in a comfortable position as much as possible. If you must continue to use that joint as you work, wear a splint to keep it as still as possible. Try some of the ideas below in the prevention section.

• Make a soft splint by wrapping the joint with cloths so it does not move. Wrapping the cloth around a thin piece of wood first can help keep the joint straight. The cloths should be wrapped tightly enough to keep the joint from moving, but not so tightly that the blood flow is blocked or the area gets numb. Wear the splint while you work, and also while you rest or sleep.



Figure

• If the joint is painful or swollen, take aspirin or use one of the pain medicines that reduce inflammation. Hot, moist cloth compresses can also help decrease pain and swelling.



medicines for pain

Figure

• If the joint does not get better after 6 months, get medical help. You may need to have medicine carefully injected into the joint, or you may need an operation.

Prevention:

- If it is safe, switch hands or body positions as you work. Try to work in a way that bends the joint less and puts less pressure on it.
- Try to exercise the joint every hour, by moving it through all of the motions it can make. This will stretch and strengthen the tendons and muscles. If exercise causes pain, move the joint slowly and gently.
- ✤ If a joint is red or hot, it might be infected. See a health worker right away.

Crafts

Many types of crafts are done in the home, where women work alone. This makes them less likely to know of common health problems caused by work and how to prevent them.

COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS FROM WORK WITH CRAFTS		
Craft or skill	Problem	What to do
Pottery making	Lung diseases similar to those	Open windows and doors for better air flow. Blow air out with a fan if there is electricity. Wear a

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	miners get (fibrosis, silicosis)	protective mask that keeps dust out.
Pottery painting	Lead poisoning	See 'Lead poisoning'.
Sewing, embroidery, knitting, lace making, weaving	Eye strain, headaches, low back and neck pain, joint pain	If possible, increase the amount of light on your work and rest often. See 'Sitting or Standing for a Long Time' and 'Repeating the Same Movement'.
Work with wool and cotton	Asthma and lung problems from dust and fibers	Improve air flow (see above), and wear a mask that will not let fibers through.
Use of paints and dyes	See 'Work with Chemicals'	See the prevention information in 'Work with Chemicals'.
Soap making	Skin irritation and burns	Use protective gloves and avoid contact with lye.

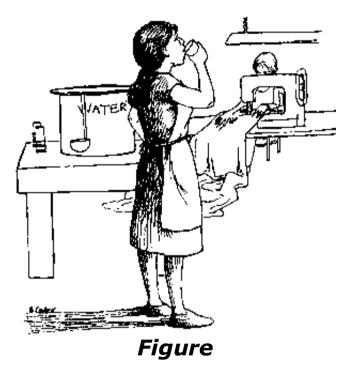
Unsafe Working Conditions

Many factories have unsafe working conditions, such as:

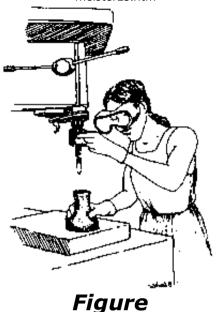
• closed and locked doors and windows, which make it impossible for workers to get out during emergencies, and which keep air from flowing freely.

• exposure to toxins, such as chemicals and *radiation*, without protective barriers or clothing.

- unsafe equipment.
- fire hazards, like loose electrical wires, or chemicals or vapors that burn easily.
- no safe water, toilets or *latrines*, or rest breaks.



If your workplace is hot, drink plenty of liquids and eat salted foods - especially if you are pregnant. Women are more likely to get heat stroke than men.



Many of these conditions cannot be changed unless workers get together and demand change. But here are some things you can do yourself to prevent problems:

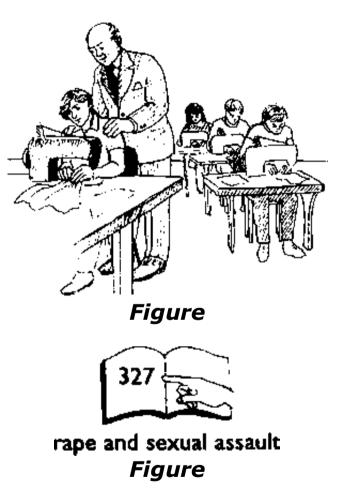
• When you begin a new task, get instructions about how to safely use all equipment and chemicals. Always ask for advice from women with experience using the same equipment or the same chemicals.

• Whenever possible, wear protective clothing - like hats, masks, gloves, or earplugs for loud noises. When working with machines, avoid wearing loose clothing. Keep long hair tied up and covered.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual attention from an employer, manager, or

any man with power over a woman. This includes saying something sexual that makes a woman uncomfortable, touching her in a sexual way, or making her have sex. Every woman is in danger of sexual harassment. It does not matter if she works for her family in the country or in a factory in the city.



There are many reasons why it is hard for a woman to say 'no' to sexual harassment:

• She may be afraid she will lose her job, which she needs to support

herself and her family.

• She may have been raised to obey and respect the wishes of older men and men in power.

• The man may be a relative, and she may be afraid if she says no or complains he will be made to look bad.

But no matter what situation a woman is in, sexual harassment is wrong. It is also against the law in many countries. If you have been sexually harassed, try to find someone to confide in and to give you support. You can also share your experience with other women. Although you may not be able to end the harassment, sharing your story with others can help them avoid being harassed.

♦ In some countries sexual harassment is called the "lay down or lay off" policy. This is because women are often fired if they do not have sex with the man who is harassing them.

What you can do to avoid and stop sexual harassment:

- Try to avoid the men who have harassed other women where you work.
- Do not go anywhere alone with male employers.
- Find out if there are laws to protect you from harassment.

Migration

Many women work away from their homes. Some women travel daily from home to work, while others have moved many miles to live near work. This is called `migration'.

Most often women move from rural areas to cities where big factories offer jobs, or where they can get jobs as domestic workers. Some women choose to move, but others are forced to move because there is no food or work at home, or because factories offer more money. Often the money these women make is very important for supporting their families back home.

When women migrate, they may be alone for the first time. This can be very frightening because they are away from the family and friends who gave them support.



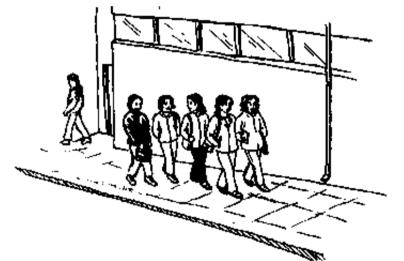
Remember that everyone feels alone at first. This is natural.

Here ore a few things you can do to make yourself feel more comfortable in a new

home:

• Make friends with other women at work. These women can become a new source of support.

• Find a safe place to live. Many companies run their own hostels. Some are safe, but many are not. Sometimes they are places where women live in poor conditions and pay too much money for rent. The company may also take advantage of these women because they do not have control over where they live.



Avoid dangerous situations like walking home alone at night

Sometimes the only way to get safe housing is to find it yourself. Here is an example of a woman's group that organized for safe housing:

Women who work making clothes in factories in Dhaka, Bangladesh, became tired of their poor, unhealthy living conditions, where they were often sexually harassed and *abused*.

With help from; a woman with management experience, they set up 2 hostels. Now the workers pay part of their wages to the hostel. In return, the staff, who are all women, provide food, cooking utensils, blankets, clothing, and other help. The workers are safe and close to work, and are able to save more of their wages.

- Bangladesh

Forgotten Workers

Many women earn money working at tasks - like selling in the marketplace, making home crafts, and domestic work - that are not considered formal jobs. These jobs have very few protections, so women who do them are at risk for being exploited and abused.

Domestic workers

A domestic worker faces many of the same health problems already described in this chapter. Because she works in someone else's home, she has few rights and little protection. She faces:

• exhaustion and poor nutrition from long hours and poor pay. Even though she may cook for her employer, she is often given little to eat.

constant fear of losing her job and of being mistrusted by her employer.
 She may lose her job if she becomes pregnant. These fears, and the separation from her family, can cause mental health problems.

• sexual harassment, especially if she lives in her employer's house.

Because he has power over her job, she may be forced to have sex.

 painful bone and muscle problems from working on her knees for long periods ('house-maid's knee').

 skin and nail problems ('washer-woman's hands') from working with chemical cleaners without using gloves.



Washer-woman's hands

Washer-woman's hands

When a woman uses a lot of cleaning chemicals without using gloves, her skin may become red, cracked, and painful, and develop open sores. The nails often get thick and damaged, and separate from the skin underneath.

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What to do:

• If possible, use rubber or plastic gloves to protect your hands

• Keep your hands as dry as you can. Use lotion or the thick juice from an aloe plant after you finish working. If your nails begin to look thick or damaged, try painting them right away with Gentian Violet.

• Try keeping a bowl of cool black tea or vinegar water (one capful of vinegar in one quart of water) next to the sink. Each time you use soapy water, soak your hands in the tea or vinegar for one minute.

• Use the juices of fresh plants that are known in your area for helping skin problems like rashes, burns, or itching. Gather and wash fresh plants, and grind

them into a watery paste. Put your hands in this mixture as often as you can.

Working for Change

In South Africa, domestic workers have a Domestic Workers' Union to help them demand laws to protect themselves. They began by knocking on doors, and by educating people through pamphlets and radio announcements. Now they are a national union. They work with domestic workers' unions in other countries to help workers get fair working hours, fair pay, social security benefits, and other basic protections.

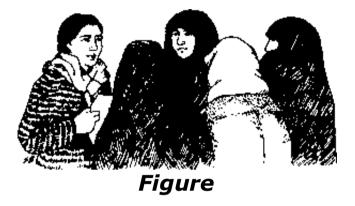
Unions like the South African Domestic Workers' Union are a very good way to organize and protect workers' rights. But it is often difficult to start a local union because there are no larger unions for support or because the company does not allow them. In this case there are other ways women can work together to help themselves.

When women start to work together for better conditions, they sometimes fear that they may lose their jobs or that they will be treated badly if their employers find out. In these cases it is important that women trust those they are organizing with. If it is not possible to talk at work, it may be best to meet in secret in private homes or in the community.

To begin organizing your workplace:

Talk with the women you work with to identify common problems and possible ways to solve them.

• Meet together regularly as a group to build trust and help support one another. Be sure to include women who are new at work and make them feel welcome. Remember, there is strength in numbers.



Once you are organized as a group or a workers' association, you may feel strong enough to join a union or start your own. The company may be less likely to challenge you if you are already organized.

WHAT YOUR ORGANIZATION CAN DO

When your group has identified common problems and possible solutions, decide which problems can be changed and what you need to do to make change happen. Even if the company is not willing to change anything, you can do a lot for yourselves. The next page gives some examples.

Teach each other about safety. Women who have been doing the job for a long time will have learned the safest way to do things. Ask them to share ideas about how to make the job easier and safer.

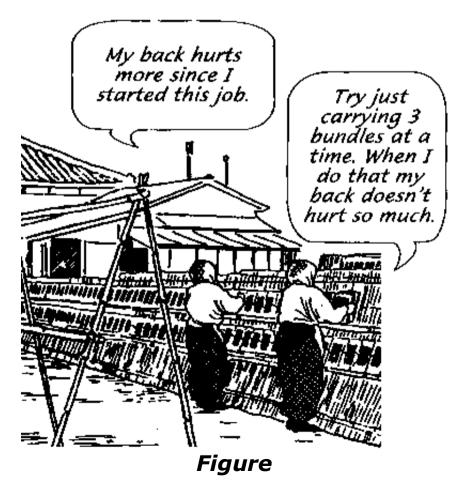
Help new women. New women may be afraid to join your group, especially if the D:/cd3wddvd/NoExe/Master/dvd001/.../meister13.htm

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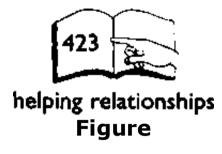
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employers do not support you. But it is still important to share your knowledge about safety, because the safer every women is, the safer you are.

Support each other. Many women experience conflict at home when they start working, because their role in the family changes. Share advice on solving family problems, and on balancing housework and child care with paid work. Some women even help take care of each other's children. They may organize a child care center, where one woman is paid to care for young children so that others can work. Or the women may take turns minding the children.



You might also try meeting together with men to discuss women's workload. For example:





In workshops at the Center for Health Education, Training, and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA) in India, men and women are asked to list their daily tasks. Many are surprised to learn that a woman's work day starts before a man's does and ends long after his, and that she rarely gets a chance to rest. This helped men to see how work is distributed unfairly between men and women. Then they were able to talk about dividing work fairly, based on the needs of the family and not only by gender roles.

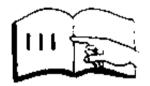
If you can, negotiate with your employer for better working conditions, such as:

child care at work.

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- bathroom breaks.
- a private place to remove breast milk by hand (for mothers with babies).
- higher wages.

 maternity leave (time off when a woman has a baby, with the right to return to the same job).

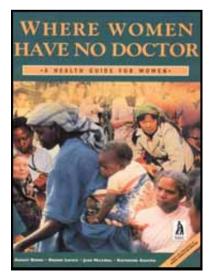


when the mother works ouside the home Figure





<u>Home</u>"" """"> <u>ar.cn.de.en.es.fr.id.it.ph.po.ru.sw</u>



- Where Women Have No Doctor A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)
 - Chapter 27: Mental Health
 - (introduction...)
 - Self-esteem

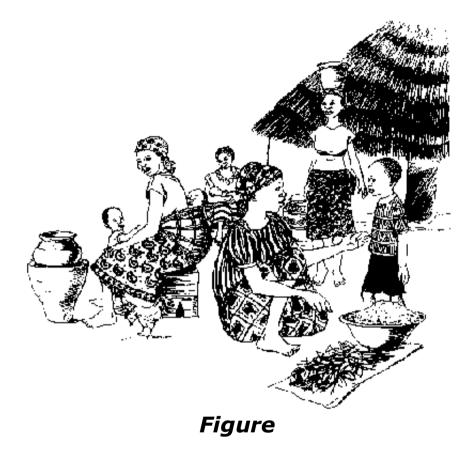
- □ Common causes of mental health problems in women
 - (introduction...)

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- Etressing dailynlife
- Changes in a woman's life and community
- 🖹 Trauma
- Physical problems
- □ Common mental health problems for women
 - (introduction...)
 - Depression (extreme sadness or feeling nothing at all)
 - Anxiety (feeling nervous or worried)
 - Reactions to trauma
 - Physical changes and disease caused by stress
- Helping yourself and helping others
 - (introduction...)
 - Personal coping skills
 - Helping relationships
 - Exercises for learning how to help
 - Exercises for healing mental health problems
 - Helping women with reactions to trauma
 - Helping someone who wants to kill herself
- Mental illness (psychosis)
- Ways to improve your community's mental health

Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)

Chapter 27: Mental Health



Good mental health is just as important as good physical health.

Just as a woman's body can be healthy or unhealthy, so can her mind and spirit. When her mind and spirit are healthy, she has the emotional strength to take care of her physical needs and those of her family, to identify her problems and attempt to solve them, to plan for the future, and to form satisfying relationships with

others.

Almost everyone has difficulty doing these things at times. But if the difficulty continues and keeps a woman from carrying out her daily activities - for example, if she becomes so tense and nervous that she cannot care for her family - she may have a mental health problem. These problems are harder to identify than problems in the body, which we can often see or touch. Yet mental health problems need attention and treatment, just as physical problems do.

This chapter describes the most common mental health problems and their causes. It also offers suggestions for how a woman can help herself or others with these problems.

Self-esteem

When a woman feels she makes a valuable contribution to her family and community, she is said to have good self-esteem. A woman with good self-esteem knows that she is worthy of being treated with respect.

Self-esteem begins to develop in childhood. The amount of self-esteem a woman develops depends on how she is treated by the important people in her life - like her parents, brothers and sisters, neighbors, teachers, and spiritual guides. If these people treat her as someone who deserves their attention, if they praise her when she does something well, and if they encourage her to try things that are difficult, she will begin to feel she is valued.

In some cases, girls have a hard time developing good self-esteem. For example, if their brothers are given more education or more food, girls may feel less valued simply because they are girls. If they are criticized a lot or their hard work goes unnoticed, they are more likely to grow up feeling unworthy. Then, as women, they may not believe they deserve to be treated well by their husbands, to eat as much good food as others, to have health care when they are sick, or to develop their skills. When women feel this way, they may even think that their lack of importance in the family and community is natural and right - when, in fact, it is unfair and unjust.



As a child, Malika felt less valued than her brothers. The family thought the boys were important enough to be given an education, but that she was not.

Self-esteem is an important part of good mental health. A woman with good selfesteem will feel more able to cope with (manage) daily problems and better able to work for changes that can improve her life and her community. 21/10/2011

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Building self-esteem

A woman's self-esteem will influence the choices she makes about her health.

Building self-esteem is not an easy task. This is because a woman cannot just decide to value herself more. Rather, she must change deeply held beliefs that she may not know she has.

Often these changes must happen indirectly, through experiences that allow a woman to see herself in a new way. Change can come through building on strengths a woman already has, like her ability to form close, supportive relationships with others, or from learning new skills. For example:

As a child Malika was expected to be quiet and follow orders. When she was 18, her mother forced her to marry a military man. Malika was in love with someone else, but her mother did not care. The military man was an important man.

After they had been married for a number of years and Malika had given birth to 4 children, her husband stopped coming home at night. Friends would report that he had been with other women. Malika complained to her mother, and her mother told her to just live with it - this was how her life would be. Eventually Malika's husband moved out to live with his girlfriend. Malika felt very sad and worthless.

One day Malika was given the opportunity to enter a program where she would learn to take care of children at the community school. She decided to try, even though she had never worked away from home before. Learning new skills and being with the children and other women in training changed Malika. She began to see she had some worth outside meister13.htm

her marriage and that she could be a productive worker. Malika then began to think about what she could do for her family and what she hoped to accomplish in her lifetime.



As an adult, Malika learned new skills and began to value herself more.

Common causes of mental health problems in women

Not everyone who has to cope with the problems listed below will develop a mental health problem. Rather, a woman usually develops a mental health problem when these pressures are stronger than her ability to cope. Also, not all mental health problems have causes that can be identified. Sometimes we just do 21/10/2011

not know why someone develops a mental health problem.

◆ To have better mental health, women need to have more control and power over their lives.

Stress in daily life

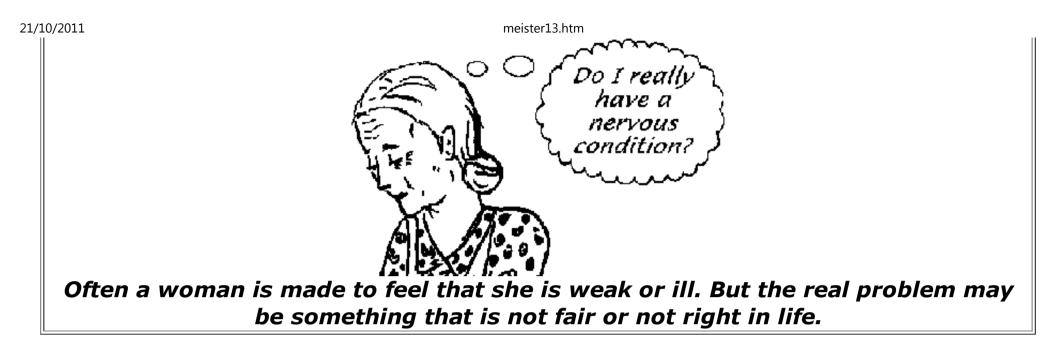
Daily activities and events often put pressure on a woman, causing tension in her body and mind (stress). Stress can come from physical problems, like illness or overwork. Or it can come from emotional events, like conflict in the family or being blamed for problems that a woman has no control over. Even events that often bring pleasure - like a new baby or getting a job - can be stressful because they create changes in a woman's life.

♦ It is easy not to notice the stress in daily life because it is always there. But it takes a lot of a woman's energy to cope with this kind of stress.



Most women hove many kinds of stress pressuring them from all sides.

When a woman faces a lot of stress every day and for a long time, she may begin to feel overwhelmed and unable to cope. The problem may be made worse if she has been taught to take care of others first and neglects her own needs. With little time to rest or to enjoy things that could help reduce her stress, she may ignore signs of illness or overwork. And as a woman, she may have little power to change her situation.



Other kinds of stress happen less often, but can also contribute to mental health problems:

Loss and death

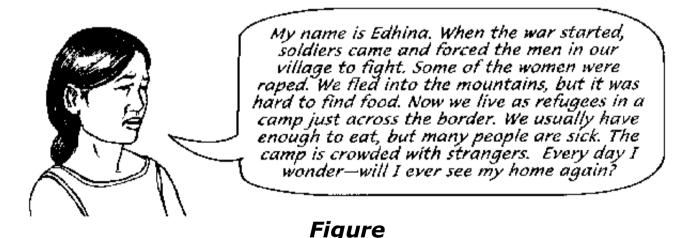
When a woman loses someone or something important - a loved one, her work, her home, or a close friendship - she may feel overwhelmed with grief. This can also happen if she becomes ill or develops a disability.

Grieving is a natural response that helps a person adjust to loss and death. But if a woman faces many losses at once, or if she already has a lot of daily stress, she may begin to develop mental health problems. This can also happen if a woman is unable to grieve in traditional ways - for example, if she has been forced to move to a new community where her traditions are not practiced.

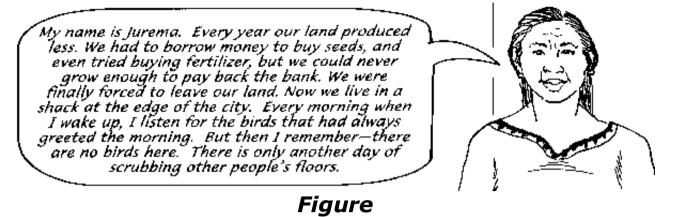


Changes in a woman's life and community

In many parts of the world, communities are being forced to change rapidly because of changes in the economy or because of political conflict. Many of these changes require families and communities to alter their entire way of life. For example:



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When families and communities break apart, or when life changes so much that old ways of coping do not work any more, people may begin to have mental health problems.

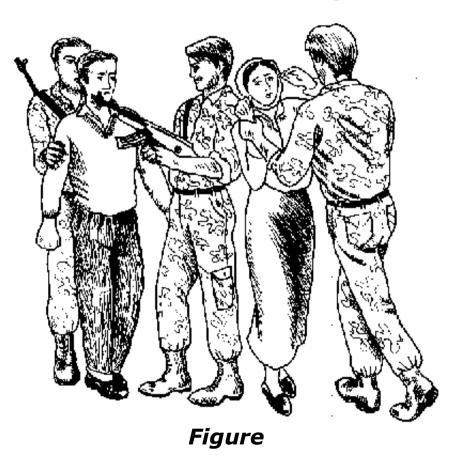
Trauma

When something horrible has happened to a woman or to someone close to her, she has suffered a *trauma*. Some of the most common kinds of trauma are violence in the home, rape, war, torture, and natural disasters.



violence against women, 313 rape and sexual

assault, 327 Figure Trauma threatens a person's physical or mental well-being. As a result, a person feels unsafe, insecure, helpless, and unable to trust the world or the people around her. It usually takes a long time for a woman to recover from trauma, especially if it was caused by another person, not by nature. Trauma suffered as a child, before she could understand what was happening or talk about it, can affect a woman for many years without her even knowing it.



Physical problems

Some mental health problems are caused by physical problems, such as:

- hormones and other changes in the body.
- malnutrition.
- *infections,* such as *HIV*.
- pesticides, herbicides, and industrial solvents.
- liver or kidney disease.
- too much medicine in the body, or the side effects of some medicines.
- drug and alcohol misuse.
- strokes, dementia, and head injuries.



HIV infection, 284

taking too much medicine, 479

side effects of medicine, 478

drug and alcohol

misuse, 436

dementia, 135 Figure

Always consider the possibility of a physical cause when treating mental health problems. Remember, too, that physical problems can be the sign of a mental health problem.

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Common mental health problems for women

Although there are many kinds of mental health problems, the most common ones are anxiety, depression, and misuse of alcohol or drugs. In most communities, women suffer from these problems more than men do. But men are more likely than women to have a problem misusing alcohol or drugs.

To decide whether someone has a mental health problem, keep the following things in mind:

• There is no clear line between normal responses to life's events and mental health problems.

 Most people have some of the signs below at different times in their lives, because everyone faces problems at one time or another.

 Signs of mental health problems can vary from community to community. Behavior that looks strange to an outsider may be a normal part of a community's traditions or values.

♦ For information about treating mental health problems, see "Helping Yourself and Helping Others".

Depression (extreme sadness or feeling nothing at all)

It is natural for a person to feel depressed when she experiences a loss or death. But she may have a mental health problem if the signs below last for a long time. meister13.htm

Some people call depression 'heaviness of heart' or 'loss of spirit or soul'.



Signs:

- feeling sad most of the time
- difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- difficulty thinking clearly
- loss of interest in pleasurable activities, eating, or sex
- physical problems, such as headaches or intestinal problems, that are not

caused by illness

- slow speech and movement
- lack of energy for daily activities
- thinking about death or suicide



Suicide

Serious depression can lead to suicide (killing oneself). Almost everyone has thoughts of suicide once in a while. But if these thoughts come more and more often or get very strong, a woman needs help right away. See "helping someone who wants to kill herself" for how to identify people who are most at risk for suicide and how to help them.

Anxiety (feeling nervous or worried)

♦ Other common names for anxiety are 'nerves', 'nervous attacks', and 'heart distress'.

Everyone feels nervous or worried from time to time. When these feelings are

caused by a specific situation, they usually go away soon afterwards. But if the anxiety continues or becomes more severe, or if it comes without any reason, then it may be a mental health problem.

Signs:

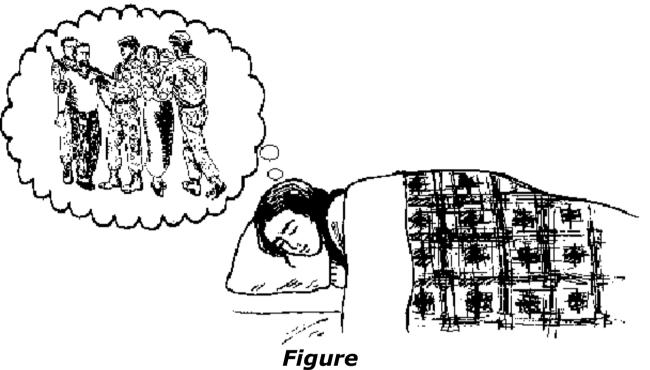
- feeling tense and nervous without reason
- shaking hands
- sweating
- feeling the heart pound (when there is no heart disease)
- difficulty thinking clearly
- frequent physical complaints that are not caused by physical illness and that increase when a woman is upset

♦ When a woman has severe chest pain or difficulty breathing, she should get medical help. These may be a sign of serious physical illness.



Panic attacks are a severe kind of anxiety. They happen suddenly and can last from several minutes to several hours. In addition to the signs above, a person feels terror or dread, and fears that she may lose consciousness (faint) or die. She may also have chest pain, difficulty breathing, and feel that something terrible is about to happen.

Reactions to trauma



After a person has experienced trauma, she may have many different reactions, such as:

• Going over the trauma again and again in her mind. While she is awake, she may keep remembering the terrible things that happened. At night she may dream about them or be unable to fall asleep because she is thinking about them.

- Feeling numb or feeling emotions less strongly than before. She may avoid people or places that remind her of the trauma.
- Becoming very watchful. If she is constantly looking out for danger, she

may have difficulty relaxing and sleeping. She may overreact when startled.

• Feeling very angry or full of shame about what happened. If a person has survived a trauma where others died or were seriously injured, she may feel guilty that others suffered more than she did.

- Feeling separate and distant from other people.
- Having outbursts of strange or violent behavior, in which she is confused about where she is.



 People suffering from reactions to trauma may also feel anxious or depressed, or misuse alcohol or drugs. Many of these signs are normal responses to a difficult situation. For example, it is normal to feel angry that a trauma has happened, or to be watchful if the situation is still dangerous. But if the signs are so severe that a person cannot carry out daily activities, or if the signs start months after the trauma has happened, the person may have a mental health problem.

Physical changes and disease caused by stress

When a person experiences stress, the body gets ready to react quickly and fight off the stress. Some of the changes that occur are:

- The heart starts beating faster.
- The *blood* pressure goes up.
- A person breathes faster.
- *Digestion* slows down.

If the stress is sudden and severe, a woman may feel these changes in her body. Then, once the stress is gone, her body returns to normal. But if the stress is less severe or happens slowly, she may not notice how the stress is affecting her body, even though the signs are still there.

Stress that goes on for a long time can lead to the physical signs common in anxiety and depression, like headache, intestinal problems, and lack of energy. Overtime, stress can also cause illness, like high blood pressure.

In many places, emotional problems are not considered as important as physical problems. When this happens, people may be more likely to have physical signs of anxiety and depression than other signs. While it is important not to ignore physical signs, it is important to also be sensitive to the emotional causes of illness.

Helping yourself and helping others

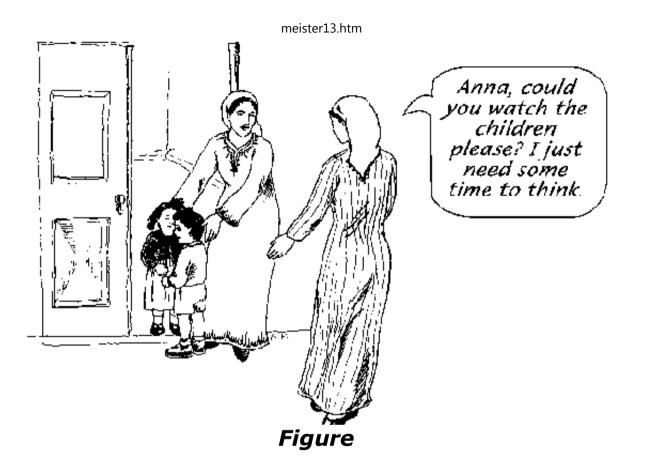
A person suffering from mental health problems can begin to feel better with treatment. Although most communities lack mental health services, there are things a woman can do on her own, with very few resources (personal coping skills). Or she can form a 'helping relationship' with another person or group.

The suggestions that follow are just a few of the many ways a person can work toward better mental health. These suggestions will be most effective if they are adapted to a community's needs and traditions.

Personal coping skills

♦ For severe problems, medicines may be necessary. Try to talk to a health worker who knows about medicines for mental health problems.

Women do not often take time out of their busy day to do something for themselves. But every woman needs to put her problems aside sometimes and do what she likes. Simple things that you may not do very often - like spending time alone, or shopping, gardening, or cooking with a friend - can all be helpful.



Activities to let your feelings out. Making up poems, songs, and stories can be helpful when you have trouble saying things to others. Or you can draw your feelings without using words - you do not have to be an artist.



Creating pleasing surroundings. Try to fix your living space so that it feels right to you. No matter how small it is, you will feel more order and control when it is arranged the way you like. Try to have as much light and fresh air as possible.

Try to have some beauty around you. This could mean putting some flowers in the room, playing music, or going where there is a nice view.

Practice traditions that build inner strength. Many communities have developed beliefs and traditions that help calm the body and mind, as well as build inner

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strength. For example:



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Practicing these traditions regularly can help a person cope better with stress and other difficulties in her life.

Helping relationships

In a helping relationship, two or more people make a commitment to get to know and understand each other. This can happen in any relationship - between friends, family members, or women who work together, or in a group that already meets for another purpose. Or a new group may form because the people share a common problem. These are often called 'support groups'. ◆ It is often easier to turn an existing group into a support group than to create a new one. But be careful when choosing helping relationships. Form relationships only with people who will respect your feelings and your privacy.



These women agreed to listen to each other's problems as they worked.

Building a helping relationship

♦ No two people have exactly the same life experiences. There is always more to understand about another person.

Even when two people know each other well, helping relationships develop slowly, because people usually hesitate to share their problems. It takes time to get over these worries and begin to trust one another. Here are some ways to build trust between people or members of a group:

• Try to be open to hearing everything another person says, without judging it.

• Try to understand how the other person feels. If you have had a similar experience, think about how you felt. But avoid seeing someone else's experience as exactly like your own. If you do not understand her, do not pretend that you do.

• Do not tell another person what to do. You can help her understand how the pressures of her family, community, and work responsibilities affect her feelings, but she must make her own decisions.

- Never think of a woman as beyond help.
- Respect the woman's privacy. Never tell others what she has told you unless it is necessary to protect her life. Always tell her if you plan to speak with someone else for her protection.

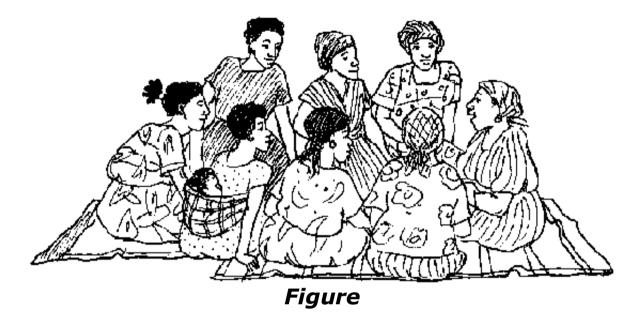
Starting a support group

1. Find 2 or more women who want to start a group.

2. Plan when and where to meet It helps to find a quiet place, such as a school, health

post, cooperative, or place of worship. Or you can plan to talk while doing your daily work.

3. At the first meeting, discuss what you hope t accomplish. If you are in a group, decide how the group will be led and whether new members can join later.



Although the person who began the group will probably need to take the lead at the first meetings, she should not make decisions for the group. Her job is to make sure everyone has a chance to talk and to bring the discussion back to the main point if it wanders off. After the first few meetings members may want to take turns leading the group. Having more than 1 leader can also help shy women lead.

Meeting together with others can help a woman:

• get support. Mental health problems often drain a woman's energy and make her discouraged. Meeting together can give a woman more energy, which then helps her cope

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with daily problems.

Sometimes we would arrive at the meeting in a bad way. We didn't have any wish to speak. We felt without energy. Then a hug from someone or the spirits of others would be catching. And all of us would feel more strength. **Figure**

• recognize feelings. Sometimes women hide their feelings (or do not even realize they have them) because they think the feelings are bad, dangerous, or shameful. Hearing others talk about feelings can help a woman notice her own.

Some of us had been sexually abused in the past, but we had never been able to share it with others. It was only in the group that we could talk about these terrible things. Figure

control impulsive reactions.

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Group members can help a woman think through a problem, so that she will not act on her first impulse, without thinking.



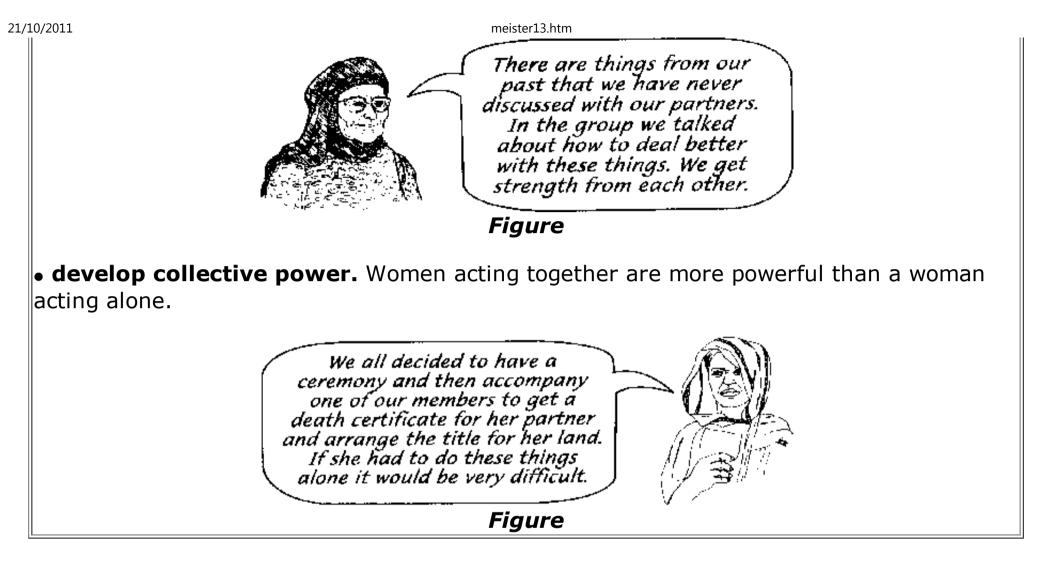
The group helped me to see others' points of view and not to get carried away by my feelings. This has helped me understand why other people react the way they do.

Figure

• **understand underlying causes.** By talking together, women begin to realize that many of them suffer from the same kinds of problems. This helps them identify root causes of the problem.

I often think poorly of myself and feel as if I am to blame for my family's situation. But it is not our fault that we are poor. Talking about this with others has helped me to understand why we women suffer the way we do. Figure

• **put forth solutions.** Solutions that are discussed in a group are often more easily accepted and used than those that a woman thinks of by herself.



Exercises for learning how to help

Most members of a group need to understand what a helping relationship is and what makes it work before they can really help one another with a mental health problem. These exercises can help:

These exercises are most often done in groups, but they can also be used by just

2 people.

1. Sharing experiences of support. To become more aware of what support is, the leader can ask members to tell a personal story in which they have received or given support. Then the leader asks questions like: What kind of help was it? How did it help? What are the similarities and differences between the stories? This can help the group come up with general ideas about what it means to support and help another person.

Or the leader can pose a story of someone with a problem - for example, a woman whose husband drinks too much and beats her. She becomes withdrawn and pretends nothing is wrong, but no longer participates in the community. Then the group can discuss: How could we as a group help her? How can she help herself?

Some women may feel more comfortable listening as they work with their hands
 for example, as they weave or sew.

2. Practicing active listening. In this exercise the group divides into pairs. One partner talks about a topic for about 5 to 10 minutes. The other partner listens, without interrupting or saying anything, except to encourage the speaker to say more. The listener shows that she is listening by her attitude and by the way she moves her body. Then the partners switch roles.



When the partners are finished, they think about how well it worked. They ask each other questions like: Did you feel listened to? What difficulties did you have? Then the leader begins a general discussion among everyone about the attitudes that best show listening and concern. The leader can also emphasize that listening sometimes means talking: asking questions, sharing experiences, or saying something that makes the other person feel understood. It may also mean admitting that you have tried but still do not understand.

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Exercises for healing mental health problems

Once the group has learned how to help and support one another they are ready to begin working on their mental health problems. Here are some ways for the group to help healing begin:

1. Share experiences and feelings in the group. People who have mental health problems often feel very alone. Just being able to talk about a problem can be helpful. After one person has told her story the leader can ask for other similar experiences. When everyone has listened to these, the group can discuss what the stories have in common, whether the problem was partly caused by social conditions, and if so, what the group might do to change these conditions.

2. Learn to relax. This exercise is particularly helpful for people who are suffering from stress. In a quiet place where everyone can sit down, the leader asks the group to follow these instructions:

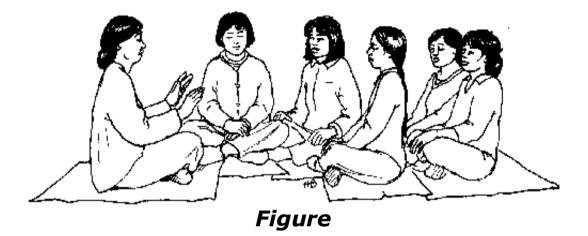
• Close your eyes and imagine a safe, peaceful place where you would like to be. This might be on a mountain, by a lake or ocean, or in a field.

• Keep thinking about this place as you breathe deeply in through your nose and then out through your mouth.

• If it helps, think of a positive thought, such as "I am at peace," or "I am safe."

• Keep breathing, focusing either on the safe place or the thought. Do this for about 20 minutes (as long as it takes to boil rice).

♦ If you start to feel uncomfortable or frightened at any time during this relaxation exercise, open your eyes and breathe deeply.



A woman can also practice this exercise at home whenever she has difficulty sleeping, or feels tense and afraid. Breathing deeply helps calm nervous feelings.

3. Creating a story, drama, or painting. The group can make up a story about a situation similar to those experienced by members of the group. The leader starts the story, and then another member continues to tell another part - and so on until everyone has contributed something and the story is complete. (The group can also act out the story as it is told or paint a picture of the story.)

♦ If you tell a story about a problem, it is important to also talk as a group about ways to overcome the problem.

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Then the group analyzes the different ideas that have been developed. These questions can help people begin to talk:

- What feelings or experiences are most important in this story?
- Why did these feelings occur?
- How is the person coping with these feelings?
- What can help her develop a new balance in her life?
- What can the community do to help?



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♦ If a group has lived through a trauma and enough time has passed, they can analyze their own experiences rather than creating a story.

4. Creating a picture of your community. This exercise works best after the group has been meeting together for a while. The leader first asks the group to draw a picture of their community. (It may help for the leader to draw a simple picture to get things started.) Then the group adds to the picture, drawing in those parts of the community that contribute to good mental health, and those that cause mental health problems.



organizing to solve community health problems Figure

Then the group studies the picture and starts to think about ways to improve the community's mental health. The leader can ask questions like these:

• How can we strengthen those parts of the community that now contribute to good mental health?

- What new things need to be done?
- How can the group help bring about these changes?

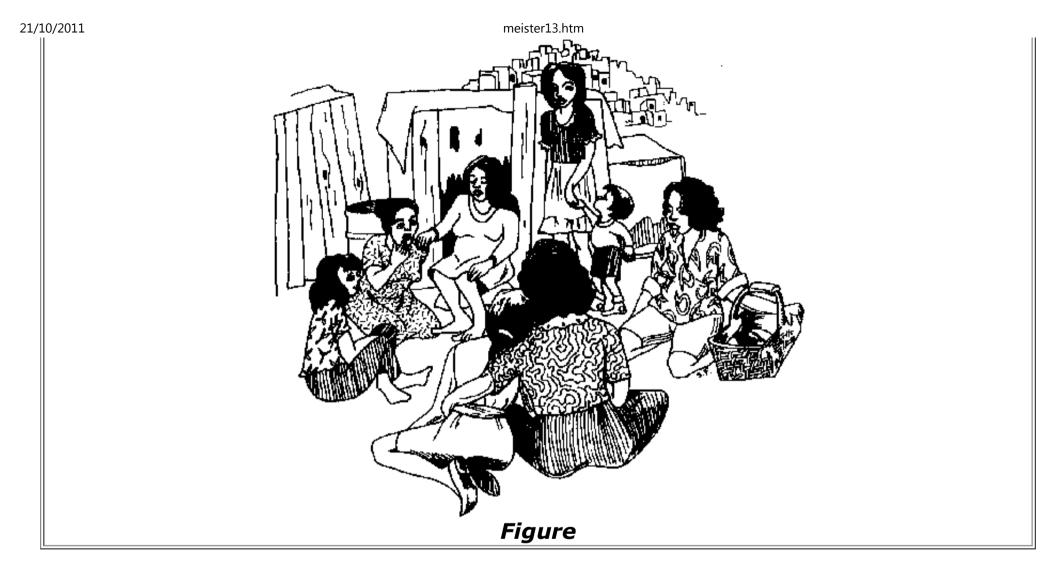
In El Salvador, a group of women from an urban squatters' community decided to form a support group. They had lived through the civil war and now worked with victims of the war through their church. One member tells how the group began and how it has helped her:

"One day, all of us felt sad without knowing why. It wasn't as though anything special had happened that day, but all of us were feeling this way. Then one of us realized that it was the anniversary of the war that all of us had lived through. That was when we decided to form this group. We needed to feel close, to understand the things we had experienced, and to cope with how we felt about losing our sons, daughters, husbands, and neighbors to the war - and for what?

In the group we spoke of many experiences we had never been able to share with anyone else. This way we slowly left behind the silence and the feelings of helplessness each of us had. We learned that fears become smaller when we can give them a name. We discovered that we all had the same fears: the fear that others wouldn't understand, of not finding an answer, and that in speaking of our memories they would become more painful.

We spoke, cried, and laughed, but this time we did it together. The group supported us, helped us to change, and helped us see new directions for our lives. We were able to bring new energy and strength to our work. Now we help victims of the war - not just to rebuild their homes and health, but also to overcome their fears and hopelessness. This way they can create a new future for themselves and for their community.

Even though we all lost so much to the war - and peace has not delivered on its promises we feel as though we have given birth to something new. And like a new baby, this group brings new spirit into the world and gives us the strength to go on."



Helping women with reactions to trauma

• The most important way to help someone suffering from trauma is to help her learn to trust others again. Let her control how fast the relationship between you develops. She needs to know you are willing to listen, but that she can wait until she feels ready to talk. Doing everyday activities together may be best at first.

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 Once a woman understands her reactions, the feelings usually have less control over her.

• It may help a woman to talk about her life before the trauma as well as her current experiences. This may help her realize that although life has changed a lot, in many ways she is the same person as before. If it seems right, encourage her to do some of the same activities she enjoyed before or that were part of her daily routine.

• Some painful things may be too difficult to talk about, or may be 'buried' away where they cannot be remembered. Exercises like drawing or painting, or a physical activity like *massage*, can help a person express or relieve these painful feelings.

• If a woman dreams of the trauma, she can put an object from her new life next to her as she sleeps. This helps her remember, when she wakes from a bad dream, that she is safe now.

• If reminders of the trauma make a woman react in fearful ways, help her make a plan for those reminders that cannot be avoided. For example, a woman might tell herself: "His face is like the man who attacked me, but he is a different person and does not wish to hurt me."

• If a person was tortured or raped, remind her that she is not responsible for what she said or did while being tortured. All responsibility lies with those who tortured her Help her understand that one aim of torture is to make a person feel she can never feel whole again, but that this is not true.



Massage can help relieve painful feelings.

Helping someone who wants to kill herself

Anyone who suffers from serious depression is at risk for suicide. A woman may not readily talk about thoughts of suicide, but she will often admit them if asked. If she does, then try to find out:

- Does she have a plan about how to kill herself?
- Does she have a way to carry out the plan? Is she planning to kill others

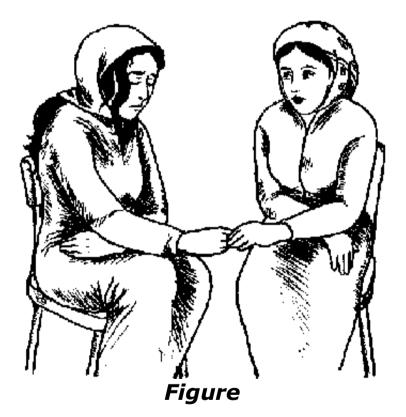
as well (for example, her children)?

- Has she ever tried suicide before?
- Is her judgment affected by alcohol or drugs?
- Is she isolated from family or friends?
- Has she lost the desire to live?
- Does she have a serious health problem?
- Is she young and going through a serious life problem?



If a woman has made a plan for killing herself, she needs help right away.

If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes', she is at a greater risk for attempting suicide than other people. To help, first try talking with her. Some people may begin to feel better simply by telling you about their problems. If so, or if she still feels bad but is more in control of her feelings than before, ask her to promise that she will not hurt herself without talking to you first.



If talking about her problems does not help, or if she cannot promise to talk to you, then she needs to be watched closely. Always tell the person considering suicide that you plan to talk with others to help protect her. Talk to her family and friends, encouraging someone to be with her at all times. Ask them to remove dangerous objects from her surroundings. If there are mental health services in her community, find out if someone can talk with her regularly. Medicine for depression may also be helpful.

Mental illness (psychosis)

A person may be mentally ill if she has any of these signs:

 She hears voices or sees unusual things that others do not hear or see (hallucinations).

• She has strange beliefs that interfere with daily life (delusions) - for example, she thinks that loved ones are trying to rob her.

 She no longer cares for herself - for example, she does not get dressed, clean herself, or eat.

• She behaves in a strange way, like saying things that make no sense.

♦ Similar signs can be caused by illness, poisoning, medicines, drug abuse, or damage to the brain.

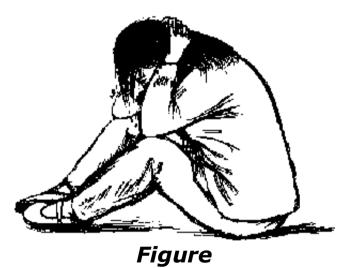
People who are not mentally ill sometimes act this way, particularly if these behaviors are part of their community's beliefs or traditions. For example, if a woman says that she received guidance in a dream, she may be drawing upon traditional sources of knowledge and guidance - not suffering from mental illness. These signs are more likely to be signs of mental illness if they come so often and are so strong that a person has difficulty carrying out daily activities.

♦ No matter what treatment is given, a person with a mental illness should be treated with kindness, respect, and dignity.

Getting care for mental illness

Although in most places family members care for those who are mentally ill, it is best if the person can also be treated by a trained mental health worker In some situations medicines are necessary, but they should never be the only treatment.

Traditional healers can also play an important role in treating mental illness. If they come from the same community as the person with the problem, they may know and understand her. Some healers also have treatments or rituals that can help a woman overcome her problem.



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Ask these questions before deciding on a treatment:

• What is the purpose of each step in the treatment? What should be expected to

happen?

• If the person is not a danger to herself or others, can she get mental health care while living at home, or living together with others in her community?

- Will the family be involved in the treatment?
- Is the person providing treatment respected in the community?
- Do any of the treatments cause physical harm or shame?

If someone must be treated in a hospital, always ask to see it before leaving her there. Make sure that the hospital is clean, that patients are safe and can have visitors, and that they will get regular treatment with trained mental health workers. Patients should be free to move about, unless they are a danger to themselves or others. Also, make sure you find out what must be done to have the person let out of the hospital later

Ways to improve your community's mental health

Identify those who are at risk for mental health problems. Women are at risk if they have:

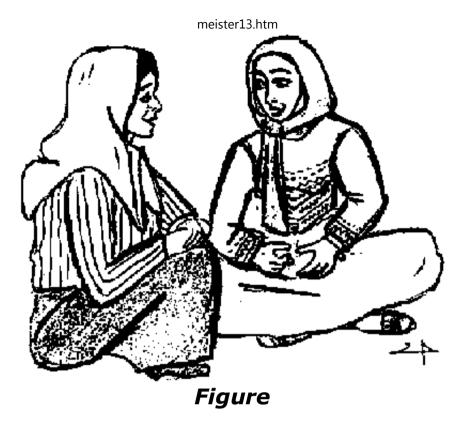
- had mental health problems in the past
- lost family members or are separated from their families.
- witnessed violence or have violent partners.
- little social support.

Look for other behaviors that may indicate mental health problems. If you suspect

that someone has a mental health problem, get to know her better. Listen to what other people are saying about her behavior and the ways she has changed. Since mental health problems often have roots in the family or community, think about how these may contribute to the problem.

Build on a woman's strengths. Every woman has developed ways of coping with everyday problems. Help a woman identify the positive ways she has dealt with problems in the past and how she might use these strengths in her present situation.

Work within a woman's traditions and culture. Every community has traditional ways of dealing with mental health problems, such as prayer and ritual. These practices are not always helpful, but they should always be considered and used as much as possible. Try to learn as much as you can about a woman's traditions and how they may be a source of strength for her. Anything that helps a woman recognize or give meaning to her experience can help her mental health.



◆ The most important pan of any treatment is to make the woman feel supported and cared for. Try to involve her family and friends in the treatment

Remember that there are no quick solutions to mental health problems. Beware of anyone who promises this.

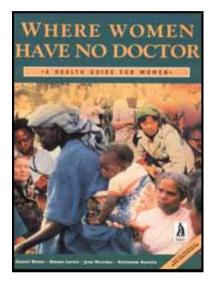
Ask for help when you need it. If you do not have experience with a mental health problem, try to talk to a trained mental health worker who does. Listening to other people's mental health problems can make you feel burdened, especially if you listen to a lot of people. Watch yourself to see if you are feeling pressured, if you are losing interest in helping others, or if you get irritable or angry easily. These are signs that you are making other people's problems your own. Ask for help, and

try to get more rest and relaxation so you can work effectively.

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Where Women Have No Doctor - A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)

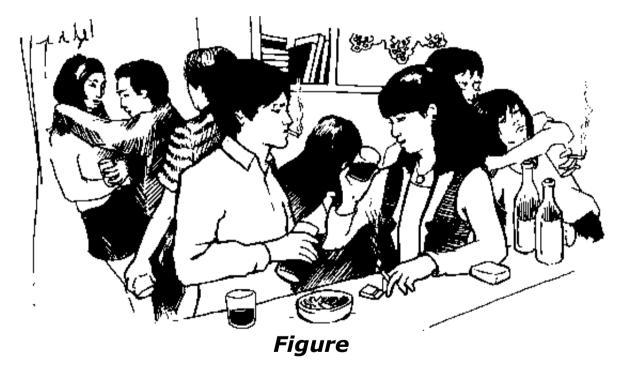
- Chapter 28: Alcohol and Other Drugs
 - (introduction...)
 - \Box Use and misuse of alcohol and drugs
 - Why do people begin to use alcohol or drugs?
 - When does use become misuse?
 - Why people misuse drugs and alcohol
 - Problems from alcohol and other drugs
 - Common health problems
 - Drugs and alcohol can be worse for women
 - Overcoming problems with alcohol and drugs
 - (introduction...)
 - Quitting
 - Learning to stay free of drugs and alcohol
 - Problems from tobacco
 - Health problems from smoking
 - Smoking is worse for women

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- Living with someone who has a drinking or drug problem
- Preventing drug and alcohol misuse

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Chapter 28: Alcohol and Other Drugs



Many people do not realize that alcohol and tobacco are harmful drugs.

Many kinds of drugs are used in everyday life. In some places, drugs or brewed drinks have a sacred role in traditions. In other places, alcoholic drinks like wine

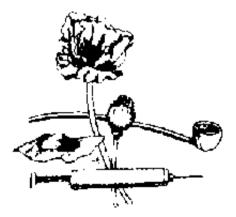
or beer are commonly served with meals. Drugs and alcohol are often part of festive or social events. And some drugs are used as medicines.

Some drugs that are often used in harmful ways are:

• alcohol: drinks such as brew, beer, spirits, liquor, wine.



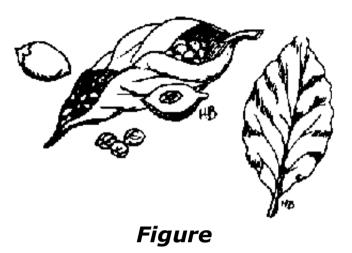
• cocaine, heroin, opium.



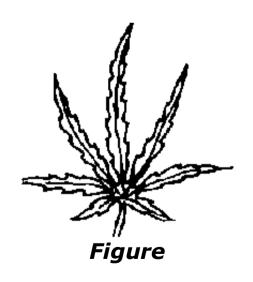
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Figure

• betel, khat, tobacco leaf.

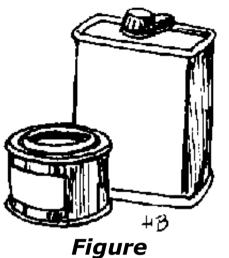


• marijuana and hashish

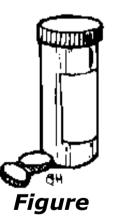


• glue, fuels, and solvents.

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- pills that help a person lose weight or stay awake.
- medicines, especially those for severe pain, or that help a person sleep or relax.



In this chapter we talk about the health problems these drugs can cause, their effects upon women, and ways to stop using drugs, especially alcohol and tobacco, the most commonly misused drugs in many communities.

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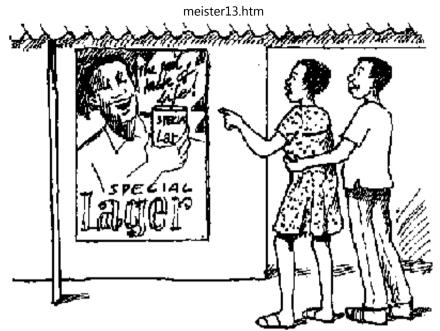
Use and misuse of alcohol and drugs

Why do people begin to use alcohol or drugs?

People often begin to use alcohol or drugs because of social pressure. Boys and men may face pressure to drink or use other common drugs to prove their manhood. A man may believe that the more he drinks, or the more drugs he uses, the more manly he is.

Many girls and women are also beginning to face social pressure to start drinking or using drugs. They may feel that they will appear more grown-up or more modern. Or they may think they will be accepted more easily by others.

Companies that make and sell alcohol and drugs use social pressure, too. Advertisements that make using drugs and alcohol look glamorous, especially to young people, encourage people to buy them. And when companies that make alcohol, or places that sell alcohol, make it seem easy and even fun to buy, people want to buy more. This kind of pressure is especially harmful, because often people are not aware it is affecting them.



Some advertisements, music, and movies encourage young people to drink and use drugs.

When does use become misuse?

Whatever the reason for starting, alcohol and drugs can easily become misused. A person is misusing drugs or alcohol if she loses control over when she uses alcohol or drugs, over the amount she uses, or over the way she acts when using alcohol or drugs.

Here are some common signs that people are misusing drugs or alcohol. They:

 feel they need a drink or a drug to get through the day or night. They may use it at unusual times or places, such as in the morning, or when they are alone. • lie about how much they or others use, or hide it.

• have money problems because of how much they spend on buying drugs or alcohol. Some people commit crimes to get money for drugs or alcohol.

- ruin celebrations because of how much they drink alcohol or use drugs.
- are ashamed of their behavior while using drugs or alcohol.

 are not working as well as before or are not going to work as often because of using alcohol or drugs.

• have problems with violent behavior. A man may become more violent towards his wife, children, or friends.

♦ If using a drug is changing your life, it is time to stop or to use less. It is better to stop before the drug harms you, your family, or your friendships.

Why people misuse drugs and alcohol

Many people end up misusing drugs and alcohol in order to escape from problems in their lives.

All types of people do this. But people whose parents misused alcohol or drugs are much more likely to try and solve their problems in the same way. This is because a 'weakness' to misuse drugs or alcohol may be passed from parents to children. And as children watch their parents use alcohol or drugs to escape problems, they learn this same behavior. meister13.htm



Alcohol and drug misuse is also common among people who do not feel any hope about changing the miserable conditions of their lives. People who are displaced from their homes or facing desperate problems - like losing their jobs or way of earning a living, losing family members, or being abandoned by a partner - are also more at risk for misusing drugs and alcohol.

Women often begin to misuse drugs or alcohol because they do not feel that they have any control over - or power to change - their lives. They may feel dependent upon, or at the mercy of, their partner or male family members. And if women

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have low status in the community, it may be hard for them to value themselves.

Unfortunately, drugs and alcohol usually make all these problems worse, and people feel even less able to improve their lives. Instead of looking for ways to improve their situations, most people who misuse drugs or alcohol spend their time, money, and health on trying to avoid and forget their problems.

Dependence and addiction

When a person misuses drugs or alcohol, both the mind and the body can begin to feel an overpowering need for the drug. When the mind feels this need, it is called **dependence**. When a person's body feels such a strong need for the drug that she gets sick without it, it is called physical **addiction**.

Alcohol and some drugs can cause addiction. Once a person becomes addicted, she will need more and more alcohol or drugs to feel their effects. (For information about overcoming the physical addiction caused by alcohol)

Problems from alcohol and other drugs

Common health problems

People who use alcohol and drugs a lot get sick more often and more severely than others. They are more likely to have:

- poor *nutrition*, which causes more sickness.
- cancer, and problems of the heart, *liver*, stomach, skin, lungs and urine

system - including ones that cause permanent damage.

- brain damage or fits (seizures).
- memory loss waking up not knowing what happened.
- mental health problems, such as seeing strange things or hearing voices (hallucinations), being suspicious of others, having *flashbacks*, or feeling severe *depression* or *anxiety*.
- death from using too much at one time (overdose).



Using drugs and alcohol can permanently damage your health.

In addition, injuries or death from accidents happen more often to these people (and often to their families). This is because they make bad decisions or take unnecessary risks, or because they can lose control of their bodies while using alcohol or drugs. If they have unprotected sex, share needles used to inject drugs, or trade sex for drugs, they are at risk for *hepatitis* and sexually *transmitted diseases*.

♦ People who chew tobacco are at risk for most of the same health problems as those who smoke tobacco.

Drugs that are chewed. Chewing tobacco and betel nut often ruin a person's teeth and gums, and cause sores in the mouth, cancer of the mouth and throat, and other harm throughout the body. Khat can cause stomach problems and *constipation.* Many chewed drugs can cause dependence.

Sniffing glues and solvents. Many poor people, and particularly children who live on the streets, sniff glue and solvents to forget their hunger. This is very addictive and causes serious health problems, such as problems with seeing, trouble thinking and remembering, violent behavior, loss of judgement and body control, severe weight loss, and even heart failure and sudden death.

Any use of drugs and alcohol is dangerous if a person:

- is driving, using a machine, or dangerous tool.
- is pregnant or breastfeeding.
- is caring for small children.
- is taking medicine, especially medicines for pain, sleep, fits (seizures), or mental health problems.

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• has liver or *kidney* disease.



It can be dangerous to use drugs or medicines together with alcohol.

Drugs and alcohol can be worse for women

In addition to the problems that anyone who misuses drugs or alcohol may suffer, women face some special health problems:

• Women who drink large amounts of alcohol or use a lot of drugs are more likely to get liver disease than men.

 Many women and girls are pushed into sex they do not want when they drink alcohol or use drugs. This may result in unwanted pregnancy, STDs, and even HIV/AIDS.

• If used during pregnancy, drugs and alcohol can cause children to be born with *birth defects* and mental disabilities, such as:

- problems of the heart, bones, genitals, and head and face.
- low birth weight.
- slow growth.
- learning difficulties.



When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, smokes, or uses drugs, the baby does too.

A baby can also be born dependent on drugs and suffer the same signs of withdrawal as an adult.

Women feel more shame

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In most communities, women's behavior in public is more strictly controlled than men's behavior. Often it is considered normal for men to use alcohol or drugs, but not for women to do so. If a woman loses control of her behavior because of using too much alcohol or drugs, she is thought to be a 'loose woman', even if she is not having sex with others.

To avoid the shame that comes from making her drug or alcohol misuse public, a woman is more likely to drink steadily over a long period of time, rather than drinking a lot at one time. This kind of drinking makes it easier for her to control her behavior. She is also more likely to keep her misuse a secret and to put off getting treatment. All these behaviors increase the harm that comes from alcohol or drug misuse.

Misuse and violence in the home

Misusing alcohol and drugs makes violent situations worse, especially in the home. Women who have partners who misuse drugs and alcohol often suffer injuries and even death. For more information, see the chapter on "Violence."

Overcoming problems with alcohol and drugs

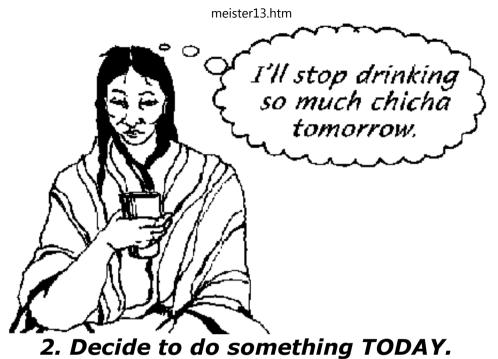
Although it may seem difficult to overcome a dependence or addiction to alcohol and drugs, it can be done. There are 2 stages: quitting and then learning ways to stay free of drugs and alcohol.

Quitting

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If you think you have a drinking or drug problem and want to quit:





Stopping is often easier with the help and support of others.

3. Stop. Or use less and then stop. Many people can stop drinking or using drugs all at once. All it takes for them is the will to stop and the belief they can do it. Others need help from a group or treatment program like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) that helps people with drinking or drug problems. There are AA groups in many countries. There may also be other groups or treatment programs in your area. Most women feel more comfortable in a group with women only. If there are no groups in your area, try starting your own group with someone who has been successful in helping people to stop drinking or using drugs. meister13.htm



4. If you start drinking or using drugs again, do not blame yourself. But try to stop again right away.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

To become a member of AA, a person needs only one thing: a desire to stop drinking. As a member; you will regularly meet with others who have quit drinking, in order to share your experience, strength, and hope. You will also have a sponsor - a person who has stopped drinking for a period of time, and who can give you individual support and guidance.

AA does not charge any money. It does not support or oppose any causes, or have connections to any religious or political groups. Instead, AA tries to stay free of conflict with other groups in order to fulfill its main purpose: to carry its message to the drinking person who still suffers.

Physical addiction and withdrawal

When a person is physically addicted to alcohol or a drug and quits using it, she will go through a period of withdrawal. During this time her body must get used to

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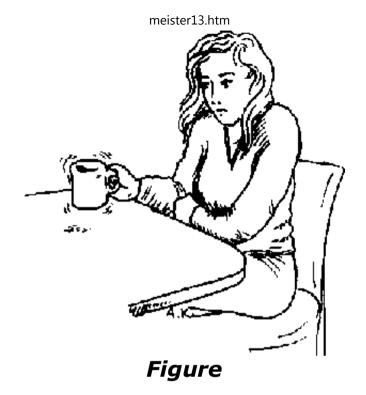
being without the drug.

♦ Some herbal teas can help the liver cleanse the body of poisonous effects of alcohol or drugs. A traditional healer may be able to suggest good local herbs.

Alcohol addiction and withdrawal. After quitting drinking, it can take about 3 days for most signs of withdrawal to stop. Many people get through these days without problems. But since some people have very serious signs, it is important to have someone watch over the person and give help when needed.

Early signs of withdrawal:

- slight shaking
- nervous and irritable feelings
- sweating
- trouble eating and sleeping
- aches all over the body
- nausea, vomiting, stomach pain



These signs may go away on their own, or they may get stronger. If they do, the woman should go to a health worker immediately. If help is far away, give her 10 to 20 mg of diazepam by mouth to prevent seizures. Give another 10 mg an hour later if the signs are not getting better. If you are still traveling, you can repeat the dose every 4 to 5 hours.



The following signs are an emergency. Any person with these signs must get medical help immediately:

- mental confusion
- seeing strange things or hearing voices
- very fast heartbeat
- seizures

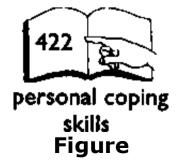
♦ When someone is addicted to alcohol, lack of alcohol in the body can cause seizures.

After you have quit drinking

As soon as possible, start eating foods (or drinks) with a lot of protein, vitamins, and minerals. These foods help the body heal itself: liver, yeast, breads made from whole wheat, other whole grains, beans, and dark green vegetables. If you cannot eat, vitamins may be helpful. Take a multi-vitamin or B-complex vitamin that contains folic acid.

Learning to stay free of drugs and alcohol

Once a person has overcome physical addiction, it is important to learn how to stay free of drugs and alcohol to prevent the problem from developing again. The best way to do this is to learn better skills for coping with life. This is not easy to do and will take time.



A woman who has misused alcohol or drugs often feels powerless and full of shame. She needs to learn that she is able to make changes to improve her life. One way to begin is to make small changes that help prove to herself and to others that she can cope with problems.

♦ If you are trying to stay free of drink or drugs, avoid places where you will feel pressure to use them. Work with others to organize social events where drugs and alcohol are not used.

Here are some ideas that have helped women build coping skills:

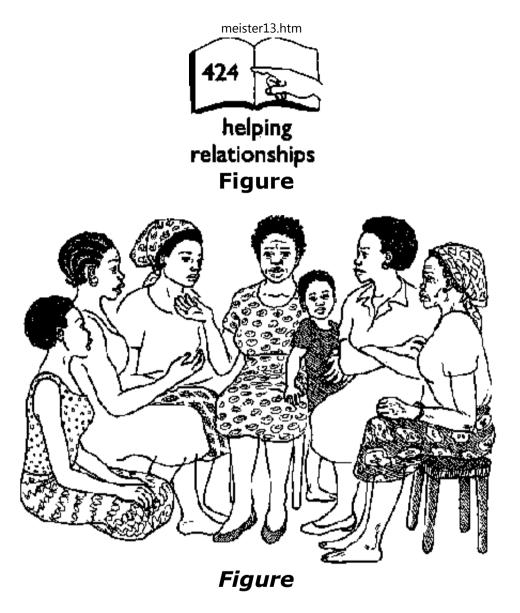
• Develop a network of support among those close to you and ask for help when you need it. It is much easier to think about problems and begin to solve them when you can talk and work with others.

• Try to solve one problem at a time. That way problems will not seem so large that you cannot cope with them.

• Try to tell a friend or someone you trust about things that worry or upset you, or that make you sad or angry. You may begin to understand why you feel the way you do and what you can do to feel better.

• Work with other people on a project to improve your community. This proves to you and to others that you know how to work for change. You may also find that doing this helps you make personal changes, too.

 Meet together regularly with other people who are working to stay free of alcohol or drugs.



Problems from tobacco

Health problems from smoking

Persons who smoke become addicted to a drug in tobacco called nicotine. Without

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a cigarette, they may feel sick or nervous. It is very hard to stop smoking, because nicotine is a very addictive drug.

Since more men than women smoke, smoking has mainly been seen as a men's health problem. But smoking is a growing cause of poor health among women. It is also a growing cause of health problems in poor countries. One reason for this is that tobacco companies are trying harder to sell cigarettes in these countries, as more people in rich countries stop smoking.

In both men and women, smoking can cause:

 serious diseases of the lungs, including chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

- severe colds and coughs.
- cancer of the lung, mouth, throat and neck, and bladder.
- heart attack, stroke, and high blood pressure.

Some of these problems can cause death. In fact, 1 out of 4 people who smoke will die from a health problem connected to smoking.

Smoking can cause disease in those around you who do not smoke.



Children whose parents smoke have more lung infections and other lung and breathing health problems than children whose parents do not smoke.

Smoking is worse for women

In addition to the problems above, women who smoke have a greater risk of:

- difficulty getting pregnant (infertility).
- miscarriage, and babies born too small or too soon.
- problems when using *birth control pills*.
- monthly bleeding that ends earlier in life (menopause,).
- weaker bones that break more easily during mid-life and old age (osteoporosis).
- cancer of the cervix and womb.

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A woman who is pregnant should try to avoid other people who are smoking, so that the smoke will not harm her baby.

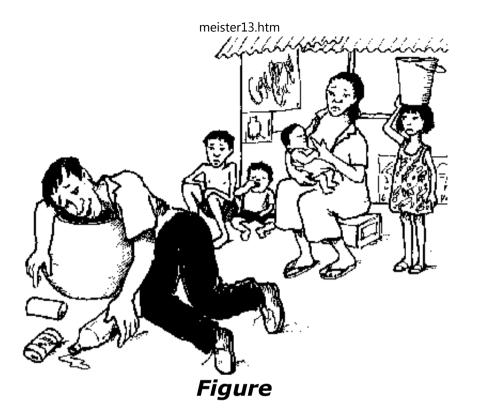
Living with someone who has a drinking or drug problem

Often women must care for someone, like a partner or a male relative, who has a drinking or drug problem. Living with someone with these problems is very difficult, especially if the person does not want to change. You can help yourself and your family if you:

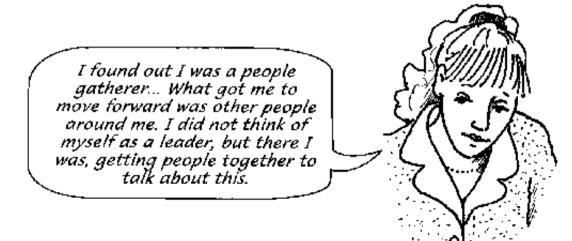
• do not blame yourself. It is not always possible to help another person control his or her drug or alcohol use.

• try not to rely on the person's opinion of you to feel good about yourself.

• try to find a support group for you and your family. Sometimes this is the only way a family can cope with the problem.



♦ AI Anon is an organization like AA, that provides support and help for family members of alcoholics.



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Bonnie, from the USA, talks of her struggle with her husband's drinking. She now works with Al Anon.

How to help someone with a drinking or drug problem:

- Help him admit he has a problem. This may be all that is needed for him to use less or stop, unless he is addicted.
- Talk to him about stopping when he is not drunk or on drugs.
- Try not to blame him.

• Help him to avoid situations where he may feel pressured to drink or take drugs. This means not being with people with the same problem, even if they are friends.

 Help him to find other ways to cope with life's problems and to have better mental health.

• Help him make a plan for stopping and follow that plan.



Preventing drug and alcohol misuse

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To prevent drug and alcohol misuse successfully, you must consider the social forces that contribute to drug use.

Try meeting with others to discuss why alcohol or drugs have become important in community life. How did the problem start? What makes people use more? Are there new pressures on men or women that make it harder for them to control their use of alcohol and drugs? How can the drugs or alcohol be made less important in your community?

Once you understand the reasons for the problem, your group might want to work on ways to reduce social pressures to drink or use drugs.

A group of men and women in Chiapas, Mexico organized against alcoholism as part of their movement for democracy and social justice. They realized that people who drink heavily sometimes impose their will on others, in the same way as the police had used force to control the community. The group gave warnings to individuals whose misuse of alcohol was hurting other people, and intervened in cases where drunk men abused their wives. Alcohol played both negative and positive roles in the community. Shamans often drink rum, a sacred symbol, as part of their healing rituals/The group found ways to combat alcoholism and keep the spirit of their tradition by substituting non-alcoholic drinks in these rituals.

Helping young people resist alcohol and drugs

Many people who have drug and alcohol problems as adults began using them when they were young. Drugs or alcohol can seem like an easy way to have fun or escape from problems, especially if others are using them. Young people often feel confused and powerless about the many changes they must cope with - their growing bodies and new responsibilities. Young people are also influenced by many pressures, especially their friends, older people they admire, and advertising.



Find popular role models who speak out against drugs. Your children may find the message more powerful if it comes from a person they admire.

One way to reduce drug and alcohol misuse is to help young people learn to resist harmful pressures. Here are some ideas that have worked in many communities:

• Encourage the schools in your community to teach young people about the problems of using drugs and alcohol.

• Make it harder for people to sell drugs to young people.

• Organize to remove advertisements that make cigarettes and alcohol look glamorous and modern.

• Become a good role model. If you drink a lot or use drugs, chances are your children will too.

• Teach your own children about the problems drug and alcohol use can cause. They can then influence their friends.

• Help young people have fun without drugs and alcohol.

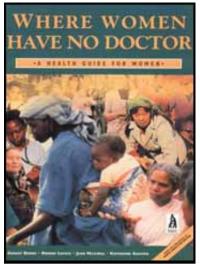
• Help your children develop skills and *self-esteem* to resist the social pressure to use drugs and alcohol.

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- Where Women Have No Doctor A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)
 - Chapter 29: Refugees and Displaced Women
 - (introduction...)
 - Flight and arrival
 - Basic needs



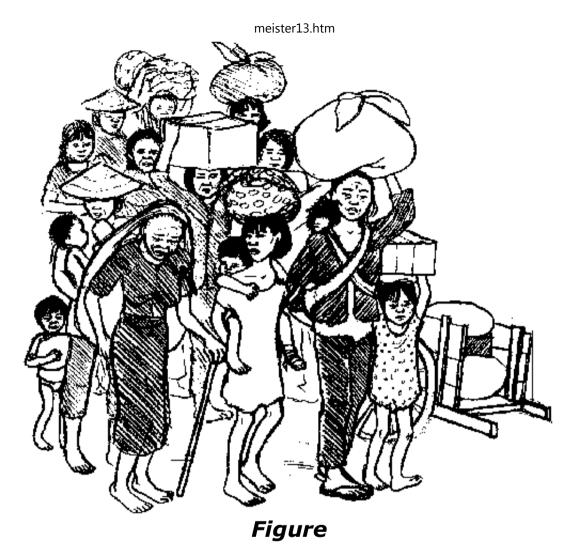
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📄 fintroduction...)

- Water and fuel
- Protection from sexual violence
- Reproductive health
- Mental health
 - (introduction...)
 - Causes of mental health problems
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- □ Women as Leaders
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 - Ways to earn a living

Where Women Have No Doctor - A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)

Chapter 29: Refugees and Displaced Women



♦ Out of every 10 refugees and displaced persons in the world, 8 are women and children.

Refugees are people who cross the border of their country into another country, because they fear for their safety at home. Displaced people are people who are forced to leave their homes but remain in their own country. Many refugees and displaced people are victims of a group that has gained power and is prejudiced

against the ethnic group, religion, nationality, or political views of others. If this group controls basic resources like food and water, people must leave their homes to survive.

Women and children make up more than 80% of refugees and displaced people. This is because men have often died fighting or been forced to leave their families. Like all refugees and displaced people, women need to be protected from forced return to their homes. They also need laws that give them economic and social rights, so they can get basic resources like food, shelter, clothing, and health care. As women, they need special protection from armed attacks, and from sexual and physical abuse.

This chapter will focus on some of the health problems that refugee and displaced women face. Most importantly, this chapter looks at the role these women can play in their new communities.

Flight and arrival

The route to a new place to settle is often very difficult. Families may be separated during their travel (flight). Younger children or older relatives may die of hunger or disease on the way. Women and girls may be attacked by pirates, border guards, army units, and male refugees. All these losses and dangers can make a woman emotionally and physically exhausted even before she arrives at a new home.

Once settled, a woman may face a situation very different from her old home. Often women from small communities find themselves in large, crowded camps that are organized differently from a traditional village or town. Or they may live in cities, often trying to avoid capture by government authorities. Some refugees are thousands of miles away in countries that have allowed refugees to enter and settle there permanently. In addition, a woman often faces some of these difficulties:

- living among people who do not like her being there or do not speak her language.
- not knowing whether she can return home soon or must stay away for years.
- needing papers showing her refugee status.
- adjusting to new family relationships.
- living in danger if a war is nearby.

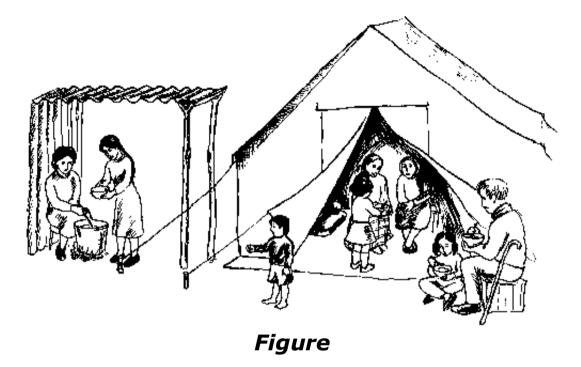
♦ Having identity documents from either the United Nations or the authorities in the country of refuge can give refugees some protection against being forced to leave (deported).

Living in a refugee camp and being recognized as a refugee by a new government or the United Nations may give women some protection. But displaced women do not have these protections and are even more at risk.

Basic needs

In many communities, women are responsible for providing most of their families' basic needs: they grow most of the food, prepare it, collect water, manage the home, keep the living space clean, and try to maintain the family's health. Away

from the home, refugee and displaced women must suddenly depend on outside help to meet basic needs. Often this help is not adequate. Some displaced women may not have any outside help, so meeting basic needs is even more of a problem.



Food

 Malnutrition is one of the leading causes of death for refugee and displaced women.

Many refugees and displaced women do not have enough food to eat before they flee or during their journey. When they arrive at a new settlement, there still may not be enough food. Or there may not be enough different kinds of food to provide a *nutritious* diet.

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You may be able to improve your diet if you:

• get involved in food distribution. Food should be given directly to women, because men may not be as familiar with the family's needs. Also, women are more likely to feed their families with the food they receive than trade it for weapons or alcohol.



Figure

- demand that women get the same amount of food as men and eat at the same time.
- fight for extra food for pregnant women, women who are breastfeeding, and women who are malnourished or sick.
- make sure that women have cooking pots and utensils.

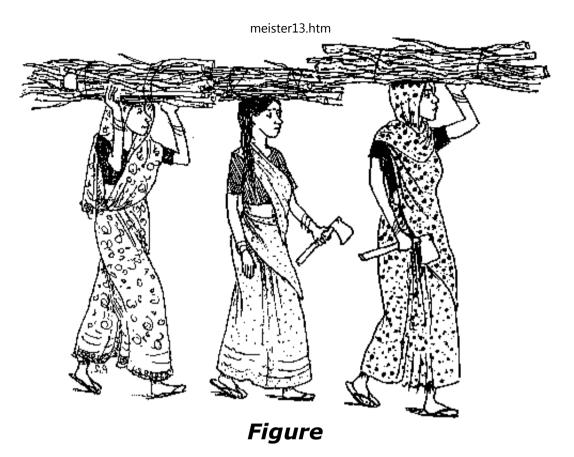
 share cooking tasks with other women. Even if food is prepared in a central place, women can stay involved. This will give them some control over their family's diet.

Emergency Food Distribution

Even in emergency situations, food distribution should involve women. This honors the important role women have had in food management. In Kenya, for example, Oxfam has tried to strengthen traditional social roles by distributing food directly to women. Food is distributed in an open place, overseen by an elected committee of elders. Women are encouraged to give their opinions about what is being done. This kind of food distribution will continue until the local food supply improves.

Water and fuel

Refugee and displaced women often have limited water and cooking fuel. Sometimes water and fuel must be collected away from the camp in an unsafe area. Or the water may be unclean and will make people sick if they drink it. All these problems make women's lives more difficult, because they are responsible for washing and cooking for themselves and their families.



These things can help:

• Learn how to *purify* your water.

 Ask organizations that provide support and aid for containers that are not too heavy to carry water

• Ask those in charge to patrol places where water and fuel are collected, to make sure they remain safe and women can get to them. When you go for water or fuel, go with other people.

Protection from sexual violence

• Sexual violence is a violation of human rights.

Rope and sexual violence are common when people are displaced. This happens because:

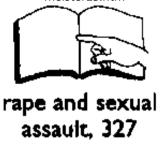
• guards, government authorities, and workers may demand sexual favors in exchange for food, protection, legal papers, and other help.

• if the area is too crowded, women may be forced to stay with strangers, or even with people who have been enemies. Women who are forced to stay among strangers are in greater danger.

 male refugees, who have lost opportunities they had at home, often become angry and bored. These problems are made worse when men see women taking on new responsibilities. Since men may have weapons with them, they may act violently toward women. This is more common if the men use alcohol or drugs.

people in a nearby community may attack.

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violence against women, 313 Figure

There are many ways to prevent attacks:

 Women should try to stay with family and friends. Single women and girls without adults looking after them should stay in a safe place that is separate from men.

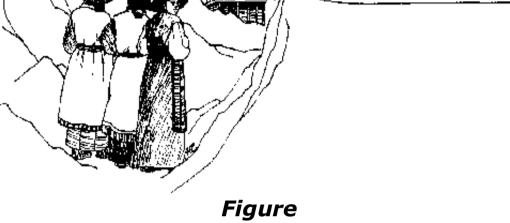
• Men without much to do should be encouraged to begin activities like skills training, sports, or cultural activities.

• Women should be directly in charge of distributing basic resources, like food, water, and fuel, so they do not have to negotiate for their basic needs.

♦ You may risk attack if you have to go a long distance for food, water, fuel, or to use sanitation facilities.

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I wish the latrines were closer to the camp. It isn't safe to go here alone or after dark.



• The camp should be arranged so that *latrines* and other facilities for basic needs are close by and well lit. Women should also demand more protection at night, including women guards.

• Try to arrange meetings for men and women to discuss preventing sexual violence. Make sure everyone understands the dangers. Protection against violence can be included in other programs, such as health and nutrition meetings.

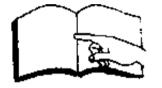
• Ask for education about alcohol and drug misuse.

If you are attacked:

• Request a physical exam right away from a woman health worker. You

may be able to prevent pregnancy and *sexually transmitted diseases* (*STDs*) by taking medicine. If you might be pregnant, be sure to discuss ALL your options - *abortion*, adoption, or keeping the baby - with a health worker.

• If it seems safe to do so, report the attack. Officials will be required to investigate. Remember that you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, especially about your past sexual history.



what to do if you have been raped, 334

emergency family planning, 224

medicine if you are at risk for an STD, 266

mental health, 413 Figure

• Talk over what happened with a trained mental health worker. This will help you realize you are not to blame for the attack and that many other people have overcome such experiences. If no mental health worker is available, see the chapter on "Mental Health." • In some cultures, rape is seen as a woman's failure to guard her virginity or her dignity in marriage. If your family is angry at you or ashamed that this happened, they may need *counseling* also.

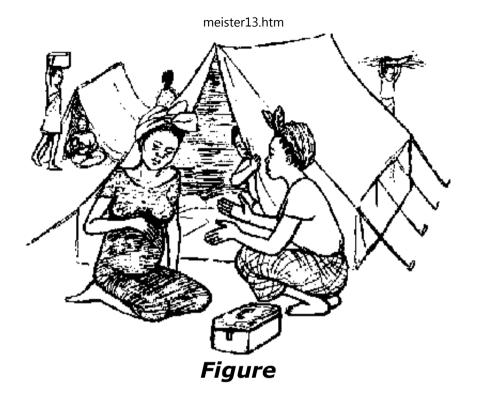
• If you can, you may want to move to a safer place, away from your attacker. Request that your family or friends come also, if you want them with you.

Reproductive health

Refugee and displaced women often find it very difficult to get proper health care. Health workers may have difficulty reaching displaced persons in dangerous or faraway areas. Or, if services are available, health workers may not know the language of the women they help or the cultural beliefs and practices that affect health care.

In addition to these general problems, women's specific health needs are often overlooked. These needs include:

 care during pregnancy and birth. Women need regular care before giving birth (prenatal care) and traditional birth attendants (TBAs) who understand a woman's traditional birthing practices.



• family planning. In many refugee communities, the birth rate is very high. Part of the reason for this is that agencies often do not provide *family planning* information or supplies. Also, crowded refugee camps offer little privacy to use these methods, or secure, personal space to keep things.





pregnancy, 67 family planning, 197 monthly bleeding, 48 STDs, 261 pelvic infection, 272 cervical cancer, 377 abortion, 239 nutrition, 165 Figure

- supplies for monthly bleeding.
- information about and treatment for STDs.

• health workers trained to detect serious health problems of women, like *pelvic infections* and cervical cancer.

 safe abortion. This is often unavailable, especially if the agencies providing health care are against it

• extra *calcium, iron, folk acid,* iodine, and vitamin C in the diet, especially for pregnant or breastfeeding women.

being cared for by women health workers. Some women cannot be examined by men because cultural beliefs forbid it.

Ways to improve women's health

You may be able to improve health services by becoming a link between health services and your refugee community. Help staff understand the traditions and needs of your people. You can also request some of the following changes:

• If the clinic is far away, ask for it to be open more hours at least one day a week. Ask for women health workers to be available on that day, especially if the women in your community cannot be examined by men.

• If the health workers do not speak your language or understand your birthing practices, ask to have a birth attendant or midwife from your community explain these practices to those at the health center.

• Ask for classes for adolescent girls and women on family planning, STDs, prenatal care and birth, and nutrition. Remind health center staff that women need a private area for discussing STDs.

• Request extra feedings for pregnant and breastfeeding women. If there is not enough food available for a healthy diet, these women should receive *vitamin* pills.

 Request that health workers receive training in treating the special health needs of women.

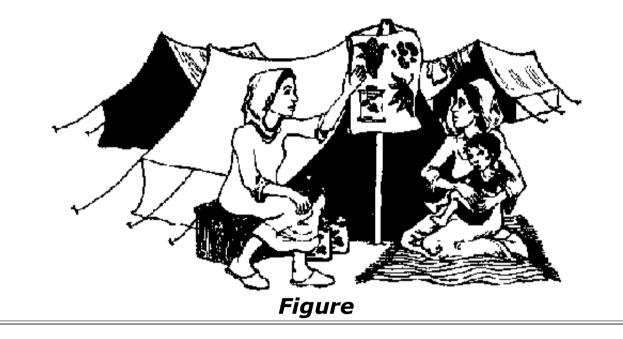


Becoming a health worker

Many camps train refugee women to be health workers, *community health workers* (CHWs). TBAs, and health educators, since they can speak the language of the other women and help improve the health of the whole camp.

In Camp Kakuma in northern Kenya, for example, southern Sudanese refugee women are very involved in health care. Many TBAs have been given more training and birthing kits,

and other women are now CHWs and health educators. They are being trained in a way that will allow them to work in both the southern Sudan and in Kenya when they leave the camp. Sara Elija, a refugee from the Sudan, says that her new role as a TBA trainer has given her hope for work when she is no longer a refugee.



Mental health



♦ A woman must be able to cope with sudden and forced change in order to help her family survive.

Causes of mental health problems

Refugee and displaced women face many of the difficulties listed below, which can cause mental health problems or make them worse. Mental health problems include feeling extreme sadness or not feeling anything at all (depression), feeling nervous or worried (anxiety), or feeling unable to get over horrible things that happened in the past (severe reactions to trauma).

• Loss of home. Because home is the one place where a woman often has some authority, losing her home may be especially painful.

• Loss of support from family and community. As her family's caregiver, a woman must provide security for her children, and support her partner and parents. If her husband and older sons have died in fighting or joined military forces, she must also become head of the family. All these responsibilities can make her feel afraid and alone. This can happen even when other adults in the family are with her, because often they cannot support her as they did before.

• Witnessing or being a victim of violence.

• Loss of independence and useful work. Although a woman still has the important job of caring for her family, in other ways her life may be more limited now. For example, before leaving her home, a woman might have been responsible for growing crops, weaving, sewing, and baking bread. If she can no longer do these things, she may feel useless and sad.

• Crowded living. Without space, it is much harder for a woman to cope with the extra demands of caring for her family.

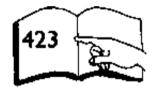
• Difficulty mourning or grieving. Refugee and displaced women may have lost family members before reaching their new home, but have been unable to carry out traditional burial or mourning ceremonies. Once in a place of refuge, it may still be impossible to bury or mourn in traditional ways. In many places, women are responsible for carrying out these ceremonies, which are important in order to grieve and accept the death of a loved one.

Signs of mental health problems

For information about the signs of mental health problems like depression, anxiety, and severe reactions to trauma, see the chapter on "Mental Health."



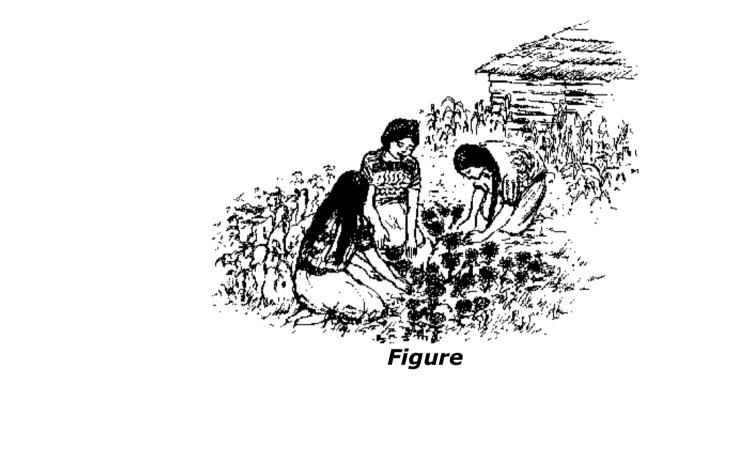
Working for better mental health



helping relationships Figure

The best way to help overcome mental health problems and to prevent them from becoming worse is to talk with other women about feelings, worries, and concerns. Here are some suggestions for encouraging the women you know to listen to and support each other:

 Organize activities that let women spend time together, such as nutrition or *literacy* classes, or child care and religious activities. Make extra efforts to include women who seem afraid or uninterested in getting involved.
 Often these women are the ones who most need to participate and talk with others. A group of Guatemalan refugee women who felt a deep loss when they left their land worked together to plant vegetables and flowers. This helped them feel close to the earth, to begin to feel like a community again, and to provide some food for their families.



• Organize a support group.

• Work with other women to find ways to grieve and mourn. You may be able to adapt some of your traditional rituals to your new situation. If you cannot, at least plan some time to grieve as a group.

• Become a mental health worker. You can organize a group of friends to talk with women who may not ask for help but who are suffering from mental health problems. Find out if your community has trained mental health workers or religious workers trained in counseling who can also help.



starting a support group Figure

The destruction of homes, families, and communities is very traumatic. Sometimes refugees and displaced women become so affected by these terrible experiences that they cannot work, eat, and sleep in a normal way for a long time. Women need special support and understanding to help them recover and to begin to trust other people again. For more information on how to help people recovering from trauma. For more information on help people recovering from trauma.

Women as Leaders

Women should be involved whenever plans or decisions are made that affect refugees and displaced people. Women should also be encouraged to become leaders in their new communities. This builds *self-esteem*, reduces feelings of loneliness and depression, encourages self-sufficiency, promotes safety for

women, and helps those providing services to avoid mistakes.

♦ When programs are developed without consulting the women who will be affected by them, the programs are less effective.

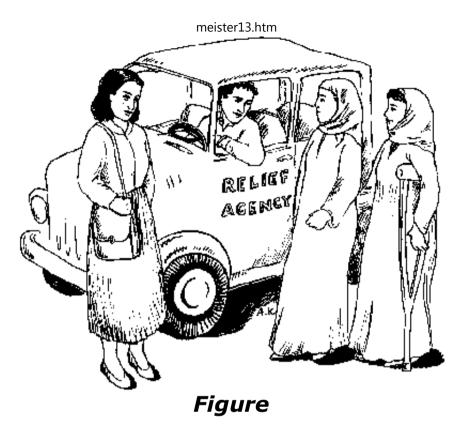


Here are some ways women can take leadership:

- Participate in planning the way your settlement is arranged for example, where the latrines, gardens, and water are located.
- Organize separate meetings for women and men about safety, basic needs, nutrition, and community involvement.



• Encourage women to talk about how they feel about their situation. Elect a leader who can talk to those who run the camp.



- Help with public information campaigns.
- Organize nutrition and health worker training programs.
- Organize child care centers. Child care is an important way to help women participate in activities where they can talk with others.



• Organize schools for children. Women are concerned about their children even in difficult times. The United Nations says that all refugee children have the right to an education, but few programs are available. Classes are sometimes overcrowded or there may be a shortage of teachers.

• Help organize reading classes, skills training, music, and sports for women and men.

When we arrived in Honduras we were weak from hiding in the hills and walking long distances to reach safety. There were many sick and malnourished children and old people with us. There was nothing here for us, so the women all worked together to organize nutrition centers. Then we got the local parish to bring us some extra food for the centers and we began to plant vegetables and raise chickens, goats, and rabbits to add to the food we prepared at the centers. Our projects have grown and now we are also able to give every family in the refugee camp a few eggs, a little bit of meat, and some vegetables at least once a month.

We needed to repair our clothing and shoes, so we organized workshops and convinced the agencies to bring us a few sewing machines and tools. Some of the women had worked as seamstresses and an older man knew how to make shoes and they taught others their skills. We are proud of what we have achieved here - we have shown that women can do more than cook

The agencies trained us to become health and nutrition workers and to raise livestock. We have learned to add, subtract, and plan our expenses so that we can manage these projects ourselves. Because of our experience with these projects, many women are now leaders in the camp and when we return to our country we will be able to run community projects and businesses.

- Aleyda, a Salvadoran refugee in Colomoncagua, Honduras

Ways to earn a living

Refugee and displaced women often find it hard to get enough work to support their families. They may lack skills needed to work in their new home or find it

difficult to get a work permit. But even in these situations there is often some work women can do.



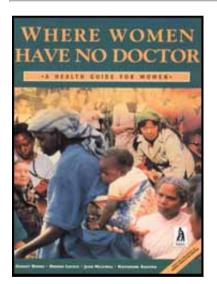
♦ Refugee and displaced women need choices, so they will not be forced to sell sex to survive and support their families.

For example, some refugee women do domestic work in people's homes or work as health workers in organizations that provide aid. Sometimes these organizations also give women money to start projects in traditional women's activities, like handicrafts. But since it can be hard to support a family with these activities, women should also try to find out about larger projects - like planting trees or building shelters - that pay more. Or, if women are given plots of land, they can grow food for their families or to sell. And if a woman has training, she may be able to work in a trade or small business.

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- Where Women Have No Doctor A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)
 - Chapter 30: Female Circumcision
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 - Types of female circumcision
 - Health problems caused by female circumcision
 - $^{\square}$ What to do for health problems
 - Heavy bleeding and shock
 - Infection

- Urine problems
- Problems with monthly bleeding

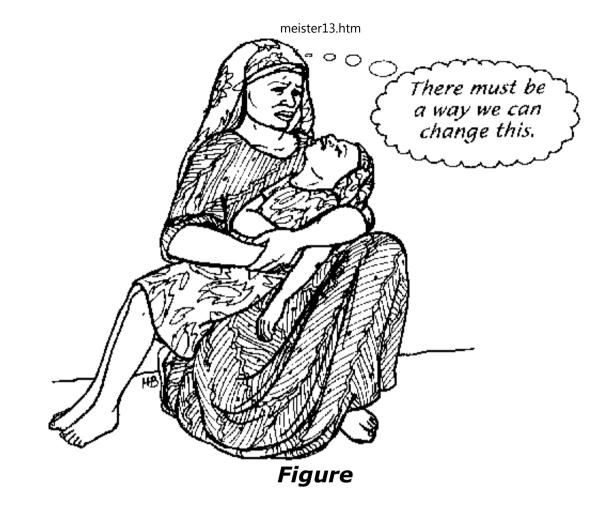
Broblems with sexual relations and sexual health

- Leaking urine and stool
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- Mental health problems
- □ Working for change
 - (introduction...)
 - Female circumcision, human rights, and the law

Where Women Have No Doctor - A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)

Chapter 30: Female Circumcision

This chapter was written by women who are living and working in communities where female circumcision is practiced.



Throughout history, customs harmful to women's health have been practiced in order to make women seem more attractive or likely to marry. For example, in some European communities, a woman was thought to be more beautiful if she had a very small waist. So starting when they were girls, women were forced to wear a band of stiff cloth called a 'corset' tied so tightly around the waist and hips it sometimes broke their rib bones, and kept them from breathing or eating properly. It was very difficult for them to do anything but sit still or walk slowly.

And in parts of China, a woman had higher status if she had very tiny feet. So the

bones of some girls' feet were broken and their feet tightly wrapped in cloth so that when they became women, their feet were deformed and they were unable to do more than walk slowly.

Sometimes this practice is called excision.

These customs have been stopped, but in some parts of the world, other customs continue. Female circumcision is one them. It is practiced in many communities of Africa, in some communities in the Middle East, and in a small number of communities in Southeast Asia. It involves cutting part of a girl's or woman's *genitals.* Female circumcision is practiced for a variety of reasons, most of them based on culture and tradition. It is often a cause for great celebration in the community.

♦ In some communities, a girl must be circumcised before she can become a wife and mother and, in some cases, to own property.

Female circumcision does not stop a woman's need for love and companionship or affect her moral behavior. But it does interfere with her normal body functions, and can harm her relationship with her husband or partner. Circumcision also causes many health problems, and some of these problems can lead to lasting harm or death.

Types of female circumcision

There are 3 types of female circumcision:

1. The *clitoris* is partly or completely removed.

2. The clitoris is removed along with the small skin folds of the outer genitals.

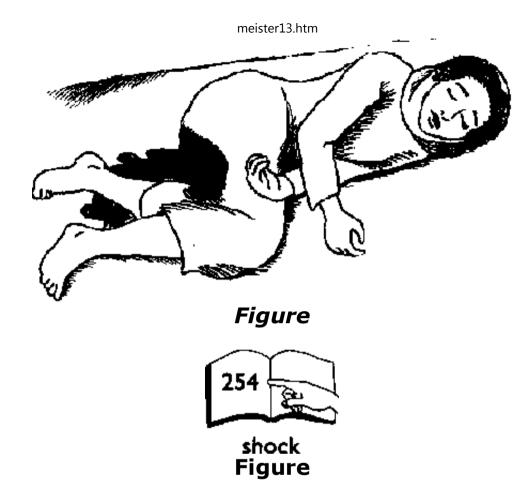
3. The outside genitals are cut away, and the opening to the *vagina* is sewn almost closed. This is called 'infibulation'. A small hole is left for urine and *monthly bleeding* to flow out. This type of circumcision is the most dangerous and causes the most serious health problems. But all types of female circumcision can cause bleeding, infection and death.

The way that a girl is cut is different in different places, but it is almost always done as part of a ceremony in which a girl moves from childhood into adulthood.

Health problems caused by female circumcision

These problems may happen right away, or in the first week:

- heavy bleeding
- infection
- shock from severe pain, bleeding, or infection
- problems with passing urine



All these problems are extremely dangerous. Get help right away.

These problems may happen later, and can last for many years:

- problems with monthly bleeding
- problems with sex
- problems during and after childbirth
- leaking urine and stool
- being unable to get pregnant (infertility)

- lasting pain
- mental health problems

What to do for health problems

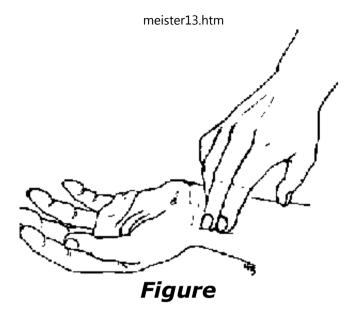
Heavy bleeding and shock

Heavy bleeding from a deep cut or tear can happen quickly and is very dangerous. If a girl loses too much blood, she can go into shock and die.



Warning signs of shock (one or more of the following):

- severe thirst
- pale, cold, and damp skin
- weak and fast *pulse* (more than 110 beats per minute)
- fast breathing (more than 30 breaths per minute)
- confusion or loss of consciousness (fainting)



What to do:

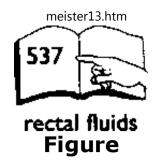
• Get help immediately. Shock is an emergency.

• Press firmly on the bleeding spot right away. Use a clean, small cloth that will not soak up a lot of blood. Keep her lying down while you take her to get medical help.

• Help her drink as much as she can.

• If she is unconscious and you live far from health services, you may need to give her rectal fluids before taking her for help.





Infection

If the cutting tool is not cleaned properly (*disinfected*) before and after each use, germs can cause a wound infection, tetanus, HIV/AIDS, or *hepatitis*.



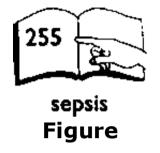
Signs:

• of wound infection: fever, swelling in the genitals, pus or a bad smell from the wound, pain that gets worse.

• of tetanus: tight jaw, stiff neck and body muscles, difficulty swallowing and *convulsions*.

of shock (see the list above).

 of an infection in the blood (sepsis): fever and other signs of infection, confusion and shock.



For signs of HIV/AIDS or hepatitis, see the chapters on "AIDS", and "Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Other Infections of the Genitals".



IMPORTANT

If a girl begins to show signs of tetanus, shock, or sepsis, take her for medical help right away.

What to do for infection:

- Give an *antibiotic,* such as amoxicillin or erythromycin.
- Keep watching for warning signs of tetanus, sepsis, and shock. If she has not yet had a tetanus *vaccination*, she should get one immediately.

• Give modern or plant medicines for pain.

• Keep the genitals very clean. Wash them with water that has been boiled and cooled and has a little salt in it.



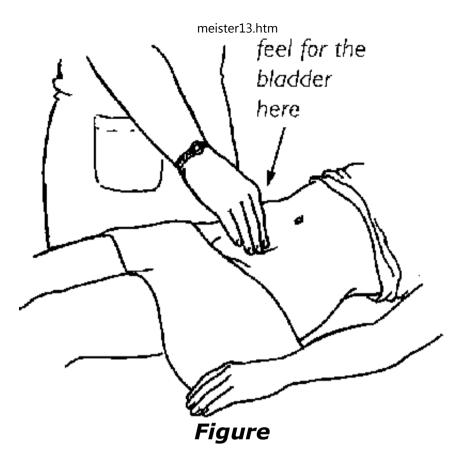
Cutting is even more dangerous for girls who have not had a tetanus vaccination. All girls should be vaccinated. 21/10/2011

Urine problems

Since circumcision often causes severe pain when a girl passes urine, some girls try to hold their urine back. This can cause infection and damage to the urine tubes, *bladder*, and *kidneys*. Holding back urine frequently can cause stones to form in the bladder.

What to do:

- Run clean water over the genitals when passing urine. This makes the urine less acid, so it causes less pain. Drinking more liquids will also help.
- Pour water into a bucket or pan. The sound of the running water sometimes helps the person start to pass urine.
- Apply a damp towel soaked in warm water to the genitals. This may help relieve the pain.
- Watch for signs of bladder and kidney infection.



If a girl has not been able to pass urine for more than a day or night, and her lower belly feels tight and full over the bladder, it is an emergency. She must see a trained health worker immediately who can put a tube in the bladder to drain the urine. Do not give her more liquid to drink, because this will add pressure on her bladder and kidneys.



bladder and kidney infection

Figure



how to put in a catheter Figure



Problems with monthly bleeding

If the vaginal hole that is left after infibulation is too small, or if it is blocked by scarring inside the body, the flow of a girl's monthly bleeding can be blocked. This can cause:

- very painful monthly bleeding.
- long monthly bleeding, lasting 10 to 15 days.

 no monthly bleeding because the vaginal opening is blocked and the blood cannot get out.

• trapped blood that can lead to serious *pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)* and scarring in the womb and tubes. This can cause infertility.

What to do:

• Apply a towel soaked in hot water to the lower abdomen to relieve pain. (Be careful not to burn the skin.)

• It may help to walk around and do light work or exercise.

If the problems are severe, the vaginal opening may need to be made larger. This should be done by a skilled health worker to prevent harm to the *reproductive parts* inside.

Problems with sexual relations and sexual health

If a circumcised woman has none of the health problems described in this chapter, she may be able to enjoy sex. But many women who have been circumcised, especially those who have been infibulated, find sex difficult.

Figure

In some communities, young women are circumcised and married on the same day. Or a woman who was circumcised at a young age may have her vaginal opening made larger just before first sex in marriage. If she is expected to have sex before the wound has healed, sex will be very painful and dangerous, and the wound may take longer to heal. Open wounds also increase her risk of catching HIV/AIDS or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

All wounds must be completely healed before having sex.

During sex, a woman may find it difficult to become aroused, since the clitoris has been cut off.

It was live where infibulation is prostilled belower to understand that the versional D:/cd3wddvd/NoExe/Master/dvd001/.../meister13.htm

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opening should be safely and gently made larger. Opening should be done long before the first time a woman has sex, to allow time for complete healing. Opening should be done done by a health worker who uses properly cleaned cutting tools, and who cares for the wound afterward to prevent infection.

♦ If you can encourage married couples to talk to one another, it will be easier for them to talk about how circumcision affects their sexual relations.

What to do for problems with sex:

A woman can talk with her partner about finding ways to become more sexually aroused, and explain that she may need more time to feel aroused.

She can also talk about ways to make sex less painful. Having enough wetness (*lubrication*) can make sex safer and hurt less.

Getting reproductive health care

If an infibulated woman's vaginal opening is not large enough, she cannot get a *pelvic exam* or a Pop test for *cancer*. This means she has fewer choices for protecting herself against pregnancy, cancer, and STDs.

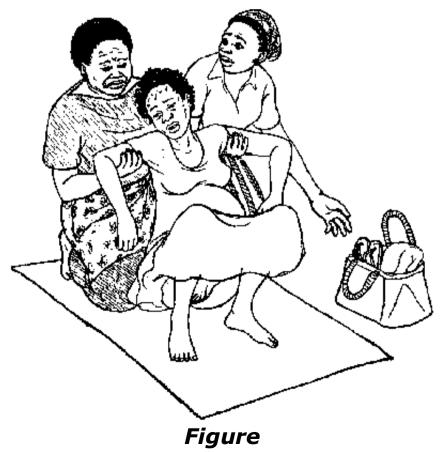


safer sex Figure

Problems with childbirth

♦ Blocked births are more common in young girls whose bodies are not fully grown.

With some types of circumcision, there is a greater risk that the baby will have difficulty getting out of the vagina (blocked birth). If the hole left after infibulation is very small, it must be opened so the baby's head can pass through. This is called 'deinfibulation' (see the box). If the person who does the opening is not skilled, it can cause other complications.



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♦ If a woman lives far from emergency services, having a baby at home may be dangerous - especially if she has been infibulated.

Scarring from circumcision can also cause the genitals to tear more during childbirth, since scarred skin does not stretch easily. Heavy bleeding may result.

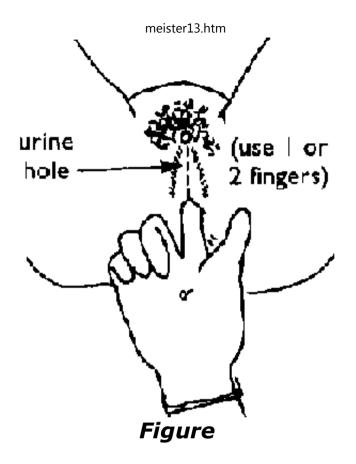
• Some traditional midwives have had special training for helping circumcised women have safe births, and for problems from infibulation.

What to do:

Plan in advance for childbirth. During the second half of pregnancy, a pregnant woman should try to see a trained midwife or other health worker trained in helping circumcised women give birth. The midwife can tell her if there is a risk of complications, or if the vaginal opening should be made larger. If there are risks, a woman can make plans for getting medical care ahead of time.

Emergency: If an infibulated girl or woman is giving birth and the baby will not come out (a blocked birth) the scars must be cut so the baby can be born. If possible, this should be done by a trained health worker. But if there is no health worker nearby, wash your hands well with soap and clean water before you begin, and wear clean rubber or plastic gloves or bags on your hands. The cutting tool must be cleaned and disinfected first. **If you have to cut someone, get her to a health worker who knows how to repair the cut right after the birth.**





To cut the scars open (deinfibulation):

1. Put 1 or 2 fingers under the band of scar tissue.

2. Inject local anesthesia if you know how.

3. Cut the old scar open by snipping the bands of scar tissue until you can see the woman's urine hole. The vagina will probably now stretch enough to let the baby come out.

4. After birth the opening will need repair. This might be a good time to explain to

the woman or girl that it would be safer not to be infibulated again - it will cause more scarring and can block the urine tube and vagina. A trained health worker can repair the genitals without closing the opening.

5. To prevent infection, give antibiotics: amoxicillin, 3 grams all at once, or erythromycin, 500 mg 4 times a day for 7 days.

Leaking urine and stool

During a blocked birth, the lining of the vagina, bladder or *rectum* can tear, causing urine or stool to leak out of the vagina.



If a couple has *and* sex because the woman's vaginal opening is too small, the anus may become stretched or torn. Stool may leak out of the anus.

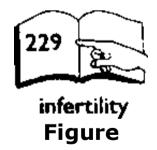
Leaking urine and stool are terrible problems to live with. Many young women have been rejected by their partners because of the smell and because they cannot

control the leaking. Seek medical help as soon as the problem is discovered.



Infertility

Infection can cause scarring of the womb and tubes, which make it difficult for a woman to get pregnant. If you think there may be an infection caused by a sexually transmitted disease, see the chapter on "STDs and Other Infections of the Genitals". If you think there are problems with scarring in the womb or tubes from blocked flow of monthly bleeding, see a trained health worker about making the opening larger.



Mental health problems

A girl who has been circumcised can become overwhelmed with fear, worry (anxiety), or sadness. When circumcision is done in front of women that a girl

knows and trusts to protect her from harm, she may feel that she can no longer trust anyone. It is worse if the girl did not wish to be circumcised.



Chronic pain and suffering can cause other lasting mental health problems, such as deep sadness (depression), and feelings of helplessness and worthlessness. Sexual problems can also cause severe strain between a woman and her partner. A woman may feel she is unable to please him because the pain makes her afraid of sex.

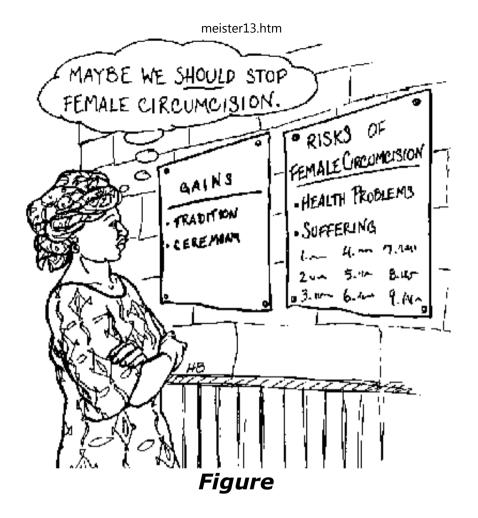
What to do:

- Encourage her to talk about her feelings.
- If she seems withdrawn, distant, and unable to do daily activities.



Working for change

If you are not sure how you feel about female circumcision, weigh the risks to help you decide. Are the benefits of being circumcised worth the health problems? Culture is always changing to meet new community needs. Can this practice also be changed?



What you can do:

If you do not agree with this practice, there are many ways you can help girls in your community:

- If you are a mother, help your daughters feel valued and loved, whether they are circumcised or not.
- Encourage your daughters to continue with their education and to learn

enough to make their own decisions about their lives and their futures. Every child has a right to good health and an education.

• Share the information about the health problems caused by female circumcision with other women and men in your community. Work with them for change.

• Find out what women's organizations in your community or region are doing.

After all the problems my wife and I had with sex and childbirth, I will not let my 2 daughters be circumcised. Figure

• If you are a health worker who does circumcisions, explain the risks to those who ask you.

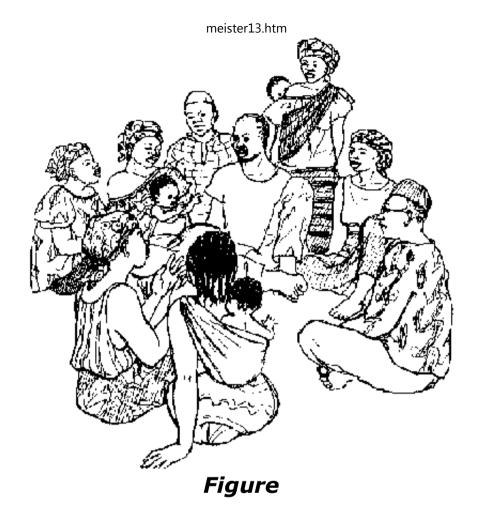
- Get training on what to do for health problems of female circumcision.
- Work for change with traditional and religious leaders. Religion does not

support female circumcision, but this has not been well understood. Try to discuss this with your religious leaders.

♦ For real change to happen in your community, people must work together to end this harmful practice.

• Find ways to discourage circumcision ceremonies in your community. Find other rituals that can mark a girl's passage from childhood to adulthood. These rituals could include prayers to the ancestors, or sacrifices that are not harmful to women. In many places there are comingof-age rituals for girls that do not harm their health.

• Recognize the important role traditional birth attendants (TBAs) play in the health of the community. Since TBAs often perform circumcision, they need to be trained about its harmful effects. Find ways to replace the gifts they are given after circumcision ceremonies, and look for other ways their help is needed in the community. If other rituals are used to replace circumcision, include TBAs as an important part of the giving and receiving of any gifts.



Female circumcision, human rights, and the law

This chapter has mainly described the health problems that female circumcision often causes. But even if no health problems occur, a circumcised girl has still been harmed and her human rights to bodily integrity, safety, and health have been violated in the name of tradition. Many believe that circumcision also violates the right to privacy and choice because it is done mainly to girl children who are not old enough to agree to the practice.

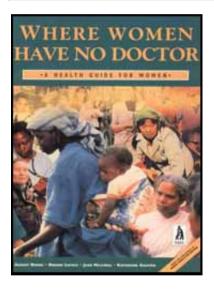
Some groups are calling for new laws to make female circumcision illegal and punish those D:/cd3wddvd/NoExe/Master/dvd001/.../meister13.htm 224/370

who practice it. These laws need to be written carefully so that in communities where circumcision is practiced, it will not continue in secrecy, which would be even more dangerous. Also, girls and women who have been circumcised should not feel afraid to seek medical help if they have problems.

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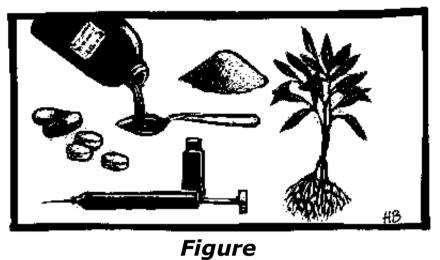
- Where Women Have No Doctor A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)
 - Chapter 31: Use of Medicines in Women's Health
 - (introduction...)
 - Deciding to use medicine
 - (introduction...)
 - Harmful uses of medicines
 - How to use medicine safely
 - Using the medicines in this book
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 - Generic names and brand names
 - Medicine comes in different forms
 - How much medicine to take
 - When to take medicines
 - Who should not take a certain medicine

- **Side effects** (warnings)
- Information you should know
- Taking too much medicine
- \square Kinds of medicines
 - (introduction...)
 - Antibiotics
 - Medicines for pain
 - Medicines for heavy bleeding from the vagina after birth or abortion
 - Medicines for allergic reactions
- Medicines that can save a woman's life

Where Women Have No Doctor - A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)

Chapter 31: Use of Medicines in Women's Health

In this book we recommend many medicines. This chapter explains how to use them safely. For more information on *side* effects, warning signs, medicines that need special instructions, and *antibiotics*, see the "Green Pages".



♦ Medicines can be useful, but they cannot replace healthy living, good food, or good health care.

Medicines are drugs that can be used to help the body fight disease or feel better when sick. Medicines can be either modern or traditional. In this book, we mostly talk about how to use modern medicines. This is because traditional remedies vary greatly from one region to another. A remedy that works in one community may not exist or may not work in another community. Ask *traditional healers* where you live to help you find remedies that may work for your problem. (For more information about using traditional remedies.)

It is important to use medicines safely. Used properly, medicines can save lives. But used improperly, medicines can hurt and even kill you. For example, some medicines can cause health problems for a pregnant or breastfeeding woman and her baby. And some medicines may cause other problems *(side effects)* that can be annoying, worrisome, or even dangerous to a person's health. If you take too 21/10/2011

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much of a medicine at once, or if you take it too often, it may harm you.

This chapter talks about how to use safely the medicines mentioned in this book to treat women's health problems. It also provides information to help you decide when to use medicines to improve women's health.

Deciding to use medicine

Some people think that you always need medicine to get good health care. But medicines can only treat health problems - not solve the conditions that cause them. And not all health problems are best treated with medicine. For some, drinking lots of liquids and resting are most important. A medicine should be used only if you know what the problem is and that the medicine will work for that problem.

♦ See the chapters called "Solving Health Problems" and "The Medical System" for more information to help you decide if you need to take medicine.

To decide whether or not you need a medicine, think about these things:

- How serious is my illness?
- Can I get better without this medicine?
- Can I get better by changing my living or eating habits?
- Is there a traditional remedy that works?
- Are the benefits of using this medicine greater than the risks and costs?



To the health worker:

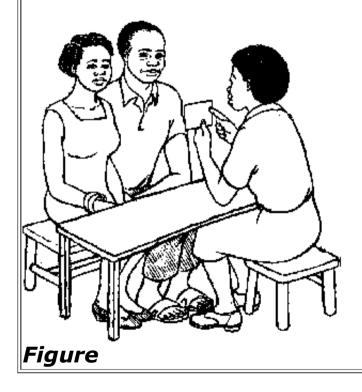
When giving medicine, remember these guidelines:

1. Medicine is not a substitute for good health care. Good health care means explaining why people have a health problem, what they can do to get better; and how they can *prevent* that problem in the future.

2. Medicine is safe and helpful only if you give good instructions about how to take it. Be sure the woman understands your instructions.

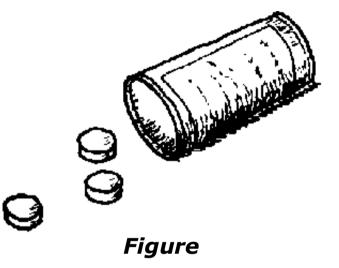
3. Medicine will be used correctly only if you understand a woman's beliefs and fears. If a person believes that taking more medicine will make her heal faster, she may take extra and harm herself. If she is afraid that a medicine will harm her body, she may not take it at all. But if she understands how the medicine works, she will be more eager to take it correctly.

4. Help find the cheapest and best treatment for the people you see. Most people worry about the cost, since buying a medicine can take all the money a family has for a week or month.



Harmful uses of medicines

Medicines are used to fight dangerous illnesses, but medicines have their own dangers. Used improperly, medicines can hurt or even kill you. These are some common examples of ways medicines can be misused in women's health:



 Oxytocin and ergometrine are sometimes misused to hurry the birth of the baby or the afterbirth (placenta). This is dangerous. These medicines can kill the woman and her baby. Unless you are a trained health worker, use these medicines only to stop heavy bleeding AFTER childbirth. Also, do not use them to cause abortion. They may burst (rupture) the womb and kill the woman before they cause an abortion.

 Women and girls sometimes try using dangerous medicines - such as aspirin, malaria medicines, and ergometrine - to cause abortion. These medicines almost never work. Instead of ending the pregnancy, some medicines can cause serious problems, such as poisoning and death from too much medicine. For more information on new medicines that can be used for safe abortion, read the chapter on "Abortion".

• Some women have died from using bromocriptine to stop the flow of breast milk. Never

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take it. Your breast milk will dry up naturally when your baby stops suckling.

 In many places, women are encouraged to take medicines to calm their fears, to improve their mood, or to help them sleep. But these problems are usually caused by life's difficulties. Most of the time, medicines will not make these difficulties go away, and the cost can quickly use up a family's money. If you have difficulty getting through each day, see a trained mental health worker before using a medicine for your nerves or mood.

• DES (diethylstilbestrol), a *hormone,* was used by women in Western Europe and North America from 1941 to 1981 to prevent *miscarriage.* It is no longer used because it can cause cancer of the cervix and *vagina* in girls and of the *testicles* in boys whose mothers used it while pregnant. This medicine may still be used in other places, such as parts of Africa and Latin America, to prevent miscarriage and stop the flow of breast milk. Do not take this medicine.

• Some doctors prescribe hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for problems that can happen when your monthly bleeding stops forever (menopause). Sometimes these medicines are helpful. But most women can have a normal and healthy menopause without taking medicines.

• Buying vitamins and minerals can be a waste of money, unless you have an illness that will be helped by them. Nutritious food is cheaper and healthier for the whole family. If possible, women who have weak blood (anemia) and who are pregnant should take iron pills and folic acid. But injections of vitamin B12 and liver extract do not help anemia - iron pills and good nutrition will do more good.

How to use medicine safely

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Any time you use a medicine, follow these guidelines:

• Be sure it is necessary.

• Get good instructions from the person who told you to take it. You should know:

- how much to take (the dose).
- how often to take it each day and for how many days.

• Take the full amount. If you stop taking the medicine too soon, the problem may come back.

• Know the warning signs for any problems (side effects) the medicine can cause.

• Know if the medicine reacts badly with particular foods and if you should take it on a full or empty stomach.

• Avoid taking many medicines at the same time. Some medicines can stop other medicines from working. Some medicines can combine with other medicines to cause problems that neither would cause by itself.

• Be careful when buying combination medicines (2 or more medicines in 1 tablet). Some combination medicines are necessary, but they usually cost more, and you may be putting medicine in your body that you do not need. For example, some eye drops and eye ointments contain both *antibiotics*

and *steroids.* The steroids can be harmful. Combination medicines can also cause more side effects.

• Make sure the package is labeled. If there is no label, ask the person to show you the bottle or box the medicine came in, and to write down the name and dose for you.



Keep all medicines in a cool, dry place or they may lose their usefulness before the expiration date. Make sure children cannot reach them. They can be deadly to a child.

Avoid medicines that are too old

It is best to use a medicine before its expiration date. This date is written in small print on the package or bottle. For example: If you see 'exp. 10/29/98' or 'exp. 29/10/98' or 'exp. Oct. 29, 1998', this means the medicine should be used before the 29th day of October, 1998. Sometimes expired medicine is better than no medicine. But do not use expired medicines if they are:

- pills that are starting to fall apart or change color.
- capsules that are stuck together or have changed shape.
- clear liquids that are cloudy or have anything floating in them.
- injections.
- eye drops.

• medicines that require mixing. If the powder looks old or caked, or if the medicine does not pour evenly after shaking, do not use it. (These must be used soon after they are mixed.)

IMPORTANT

Do not use doxycycline or tetracycline after the expiration date has passed. They may be harmful.

Using the medicines in this book

Throughout this book, we have given the names and doses of medicines that can be used to treat some common women's health problems. But to be able to buy

and then use a medicine safely you must also know:

- what the medicine is called where you live (see below).
- in what forms the medicine comes.
- how to take the medicine correctly.
- whether the medicine is safe for you to take.
- if the medicine causes side effects.
- what happens if you take too much (or not enough) of the medicine.
- what to do if you cannot find (or afford) the medicine, or if you should take another medicine because you are pregnant or breastfeeding or have an *allergy*.

This information for each medicine is presented at the end of this chapter in the "Green Pages". The rest of this chapter explains more about how to buy and safely use all of the medicines mentioned in this book.





Read the label carefully before you take any medicine.

Generic names and brand names

Most medicines have 2 names - a generic or scientific name, and a brand name. The generic name is the same everywhere in the world. The brand name is given by the company that makes the medicine. When several companies make the same medicine, it will have several brand names but only one generic name. As long as the medicine has the same generic name, it is the same medicine.

In this book, we use the generic or scientific name for medicines. For a few

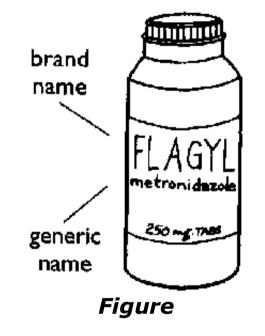
medicines, such as those used in *family planning*, we also use the most widely available brand name. If you cannot find the first medicine we recommend, try to buy one of the others listed in the same treatment box.



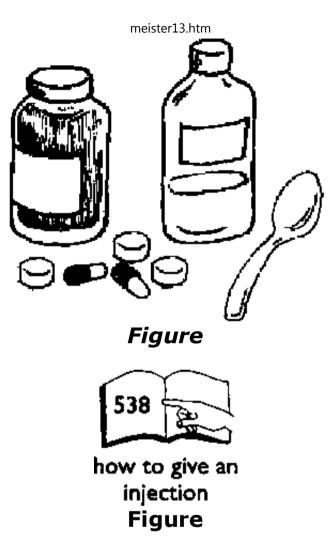
It is OK to substitute one medicine for another if the generic names are the same. Always take the same dose.

For example: Your health worker has told you to take *Flagyl*. But when you go to the pharmacy, they do not have any. Ask the pharmacist or health worker what the generic name is for Flagyl (metronidazole) and ask for another brand that has the same generic name. The generic name is usually printed on the label, box, or

package. If you ask for the medicine by its generic name, you can often buy it more cheaply.



Medicine comes in different forms



Medicines come in many different forms:

• Tablets, capsules and liquids are usually taken by mouth. In some cases (rarely) they may need to be used in the *vagina* or rectum.

• Inserts (suppositories, pessaries) are made so they can be put into the vagina or the rectum.

• Injections are given with a needle directly into a person's muscle, under the skin, or into the blood.

• Creams, ointments, or salves that contain medicine are applied directly to the skin or in the vagina. They can be very useful for mild skin *infections*, sores, rashes, and itching.

Which kind of medicine, and how much of it you take depends on what is available and on the disease you are trying to treat.

How much medicine to take

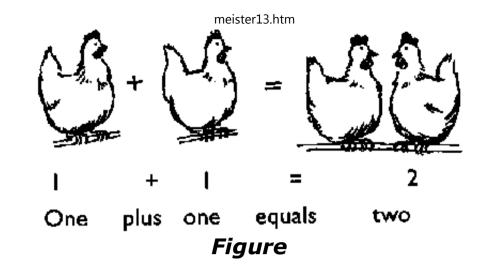
How to measure medicine

Many medicines, especially antibiotics, come in different weights and sizes. To be sure you are taking the right amount, check how many grams, milligrams, micrograms, or Units each pill or capsule contains. If the pharmacy does not have the weight or size you need, you may have to take part of a pill, or more than one.

Here are some helpful symbols to know:

= means equal to or the same as
+ means and or plus





Fractions. Doses that are less than one whole tablet or pill are sometimes written as *fractions:*

1 tablet = one whole tablet =
$$\bigcirc$$

 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablet = half of a tablet =



1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablet = one and one-half tablets =



1/4 tablet = one quarter or one-fourth of a tablet =



If you are not sure you have the right dose, ask someone who is good at numbers to help you.

Kinds of measurements

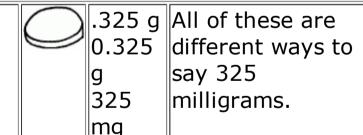
Grams and milligrams. Medicine is usually weighed in grams (g) and milligrams (mg):

1000 mg = 1 g (one thousand milligrams makes one gram)

1 mg =.001 g (one milligram is one-thousandth part of a gram)

For example:

One aspirin tablet has 325 milligrams of aspirin.



Micrograms. Some medicines, such as family planning pills, are weighed in milligrams or even smaller amounts called micrograms (mcg or μ cg):

 $1 \mu cg = 1 m cg = 1/1000 mg (0.001 mg)$

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This means there are 1000 micrograms in a milligram.

Units. Some medicines are measured in units (U) or international units (IU).

For liquid medicine: Sometimes instructions for syrups or suspensions tell you to take a specific amount, for example, 10 ml or 10 milliliters or 10 cc (cubic centimeters). A cubic centimeter is the same as a milliliter. If the medicine does not come with a special spoon or dropper to measure liquid, you can use household measures:

So, for example:

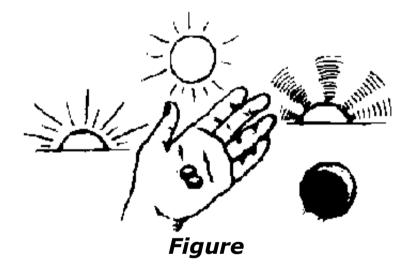
Amoxicillin tablets come in 2 sizes:	🔭 2 and	50 n	ng	500 mg		
If you need to take: 'amoxicillin 500 mg 1 tablet 2 times a day', but you only have 250 mg tablets, you need to take 2 tablets each time.	-	Ĩ	»)		(500
	250 mg	+2	50 m	ng	=	500 mg

Dosing by weight

In this book we have given dosages for adult women. But for some medicines, especially ones that can be dangerous, it is better to figure out the dosage according to a person's weight (if you have a scale). For example, if you need to take gentamicin, and the dosage

says 5 mg/kg/day, this means that each day you would give 5 milligrams (mg) of the medicine for each kilogram (kg) the person weighs. So a 50 kg woman would receive 250 mg of gentamicin during 24 hours. This amount should be divided up depending on how many times it is given each day. Gentamicin is given 3 times a day so you would give 80 mg in the morning, 80 mg in the afternoon, and 80 mg in the evening.

When to take medicines



It is important to take medicines at the right time. Some medicines should be taken only once a day, but others must be taken more often. You do not need a clock. If the directions say' 1 pill every 8 hours', or `3 pills a day', take one at sunrise, one in the afternoon, and one at night. If they say' 1 pill every 6 hours', or `4 pills a day', take one in the morning, one at midday, one in the late afternoon, and one at night. If the directions say `1 every 4 hours', take 6 pills a day, allowing about the same time between pills.

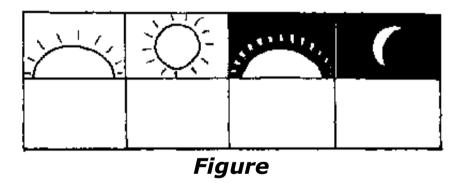
IMPORTANT

• If possible, take medicines while standing or sitting up. Also, try to drink a glass of liquid each time you take a medicine.

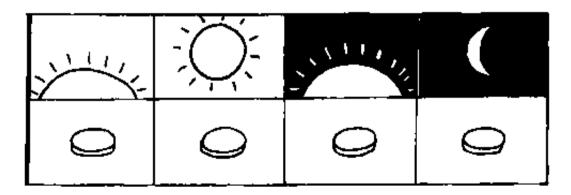
• If you vomit and can see the medicine in the vomit, you will need to take the medicine again.

• If you vomit within 3 hours after taking a birth-control pill, take another one to make sure you will not get pregnant.

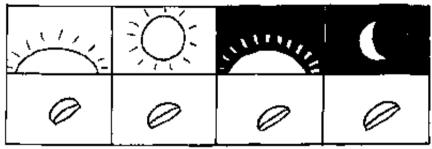
If you are writing a note for someone who does not read well, draw them a note like this:



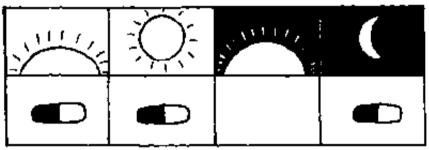
In the blanks at the bottom, draw the amount of medicine to take and carefully explain what it means. For example:



This means they should take 1 tablet 4 times a day: 1 at sunrise, 1 at midday, 1 in the late afternoon, and 1 at night.

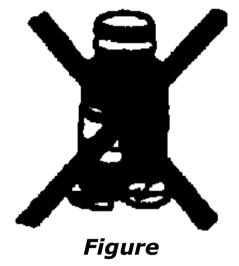


This means 1/2 tablet 4 times a day.



This means 1 capsule 3 times a day.

Who should not take a certain medicine



CAUTION

= read carefully if you are pregnant
 = read carefully if you are breastfeeding
 = do not take if pregnant
 = do not take if breastfeeding

Some medicines can be dangerous for certain people, or during certain times of their lives. You should be especially careful if:

• you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Many of the medicines that you take during pregnancy and breastfeeding will be passed on to your baby. Before

you take any medicine, find out if it will harm your baby. Medicines in this book that are harmful during pregnancy and breastfeeding are marked with a warning.

But if you are sick, it is important that you get treated. Do take medicines to treat serious illnesses and anemia. It is possible to find medicines that will not harm your baby.

• you have long-term *liver* or *kidney* disease. Your liver and kidneys clear the medicine from your body. If they are not working well, the medicine may build up and become poisonous.

♦ In the Green Pages, medicines that may be harmful during pregnancy and breastfeeding will be marked with the above signs.

• you have a stomach *ulcer* or a stomach that upsets easily (*heartburn*). Medicines such as aspirin and ibuprofen can cause bleeding in the stomach and a painful or burning feeling. If you must take a medicine that bothers your stomach, take it with food.

 you are allergic to the medicine. If you have ever had any of these signs after taking a medicine, you are probably allergic to that medicine:

- a skin rash (raised, red and itchy, usually with swelling)
- swelling
- trouble breathing or swallowing

Being allergic means your body fights against the medicine rather than using it to

fight disease. Allergic reactions happen more often with antibiotics from the penicillin and sulfa families. Avoid taking other medicines from the same 'family' of medicines as the one you are allergic to. You may also be allergic to them.

IMPORTANT

If you have an allergic reaction to a medicine, never take the medicine again. The next time it may cause a more serious reaction or even death.



treating allergic reactions and allergic shock Figure

IMPORTANT

If you have taken a medicine and then get a severe skin rash, swelling of the mouth or difficulty breathing or swallowing, get medical help immediately.



Side effects



Medicines fight disease but can also cause other effects to happen in the body. Some are harmless but annoying. Others are harmful. For example, metronidazole makes your mouth taste bad, which is annoying but harmless. Some very strong antibiotics, such as gentamicin and kanamycin, can cause permanent harm to your kidneys and hearing if too much is taken.

Before you take a medicine, find out what the possible side effects are. When using the medicines in this book you can look at the "Green Pages" to learn about possible side effects.

IMPORTANT

If you have unusual signs such as dizziness, ringing in the ears, or fast breathing, and these are not listed as side effects for the drug you are taking, see a health worker trained in giving medicines. These signs can mean that you are taking too much medicine.

Precautions (warnings)



Some medicines have specific warnings you should learn about. But you should check with a health worker before taking the medicine if:

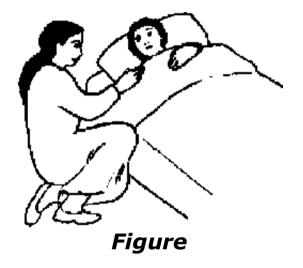
• you are taking other medicines. Medicines that are safe when taken alone can be harmful when taken with another medicine, or they can be made weaker.

• giving medicine to a child. Children have smaller bodies and may need to take less medicine. Check with a pharmacist or health worker for the right dose for a child.

• you are older. Older people sometimes need smaller doses because medicine will stay in their bodies longer.

• you are very small, thin or poorly nourished. You may need a smaller dose of some medicines, such as medicines for *tuberculosis, high blood* pressure, and seizures and other problems.

Information you should know



Food and medicine

With most medicine, you can continue eating the foods you normally eat. Some medicines work better if you take them when your stomach is empty - when it has been more than 2 hours since you last ate.

Medicines that upset the stomach should be taken with food or just after eating.

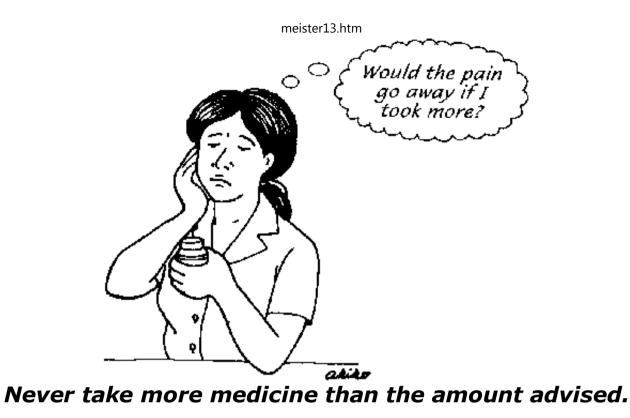
If you have nausea or vomiting, take the medicine with a dry food that calms the stomach - like rice, bread, or a biscuit.

Taking too much medicine

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Some people think that taking more medicine will heal the body faster. This is not true and can be dangerous! If you take too much medicine at one time or too often, or if you take some medicines for too long, the medicine may harm you.



Some common signs of taking too much of a medicine are:

- nausea
- vomiting
- pain in the stomach
- headache
- dizziness
- ringing in the ears
- fast breathing

But these can also be side effects for some medicines. If you have one or more of these signs and they are not common side effects of the medicine you are taking,

meister13.htm

then you should talk to a health worker trained in giving medicines.

Poisoning. Taking too much of a medicine (for example, half a bottle or more) can poison a person, especially children. You should do the following:

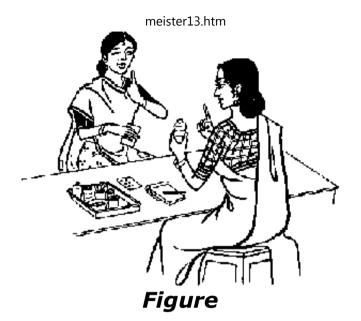
• try to make the person throw up. She may be able to get the extra medicine out of her body before it harms her more.

• give activated charcoal. Activated charcoal can absorb some kinds of drugs and keep them from acting as poison.

• Get medical help immediately.



Kinds of medicines



Different medicines are used to treat different problems. Some cure the problem itself and others relieve only the signs of the problem. Sometimes you cannot take the best medicine for your problem because:

- it is not available where you live.
- it is not safe if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- you are allergic to it.

• it no longer works where you live, because of drug resistance (see box below).

When this happens, you can substitute one medicine for another, but only if you are sure it will work. The treatments we recommend in this book often give you choices if for some reason you cannot use the best medicine. If you are unsure of

what medicines to take, talk to a health worker.

Antibiotics

Antibiotics are important medicines that are used to fight infections caused by *bacteria*. They do not fight viruses or cure the common cold, But not all kinds of antibiotics will fight all kinds of infections. Antibiotics that share the same chemical make-up are said to be from the same family. It is important to know about the families of antibiotics for 2 reasons:

1) antibiotics from the same family can often treat the same problems. This means you can use a different medicine from the same family.

2) if you are allergic to an antibiotic of one family, you will also be allergic to the other members of the same family of antibiotics. This means you will have to take a medicine from another family instead,

The major families of antibiotics used in this book are:

Penicillins: amoxicillin, ampicillin, benzathine penicillin, benzyl penicillin, dicloxacillin, procaine penicillin, and others.

Medicines of the penicillin family are very effective for a variety of infections. They have very few side effects and are safe to take if pregnant or breastfeeding. They are widely available, cheap, and come in oral and injectable forms, but they cause more problems with allergic reactions than many other medicines. They have been overused and some diseases are now resistant to penicillins.

meister13.htm

Macrolides: azithromycin, erythromycin, and others

Erythromycin is an older, commonly used and widely available antibiotic that works for many of the same infections as penicillin and doxycycline. It is often a good substitute for doxycycline when a woman is pregnant or breastfeeding, or if there is penicillin allergy.

Tetracyclines: doxycycline, tetracycline

Tetracycline and doxycycline both treat many different infections and are cheap and widely available. Neither drug should be taken by pregnant or breastfeeding women or by children under 8 years of age.

Sulfas (sulfonamides): sulfamethoxazole (part of co-trimoxazole), sulfisoxazole

These medicines fight many different kinds of infections and they are cheap and widely available. But they are less effective now because some infections are resistant to them. They cause more problems with allergic reactions than other medicines. They can be taken during pregnancy, but it is better to take a different medicine just before you give birth and during the first few weeks of the baby's life. Stop using sulfonamides immediately if you develop signs of allergy.

Aminoglycosides: gentamicin, streptomycin, and others

These are effective and strong medicines, but most of them can cause serious side effects and can only be given by injection. They should only be used when infection is severe and no safer drug is available.

Cephalosporins: cefixime, ceftriaxone, cephalexin, and others

These are a large family of new and powerful drugs that treat many women's infections that have become resistant to the older antibiotics. They are often safer and have fewer side effects than the older antibiotics but can be quite expensive and hard to find. They are safe to use during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Quinolones: ciprofloxacin, norfloxacin, and others

Ciprofloxacin and norfloxacin are new and powerful antibiotics. They are expensive and may be hard to find. They cannot be taken while pregnant and breastfeeding or by children less than 16 years old.

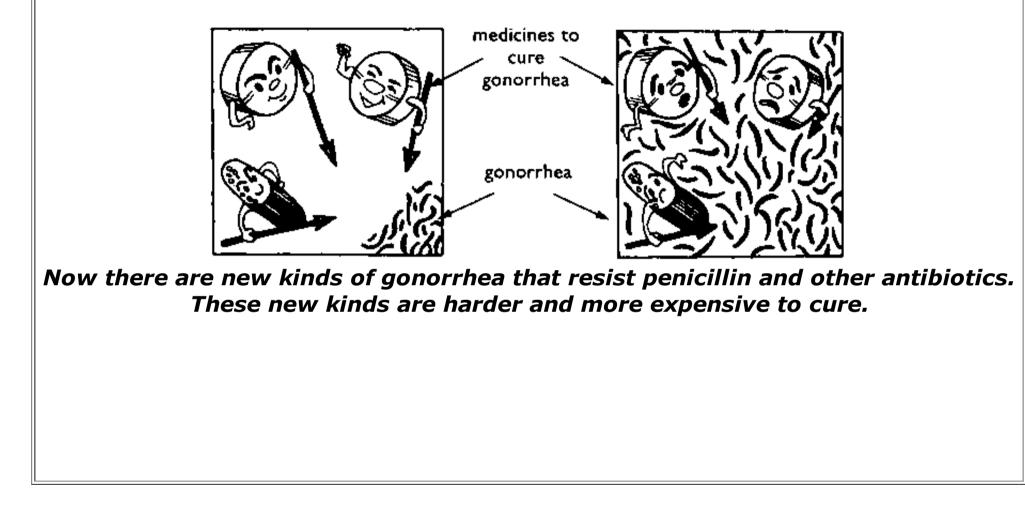
Use antibiotics only when necessary

Many antibiotics, especially penicillin, are used too often. Use antibiotics only when necessary because:

• while they kill some germs, antibiotics allow others - ones that are normally in the body and usually harmless - to grow out of control. This can cause problems like diarrhea and vaginal yeast *infections*.

- some antibiotics can cause serious side effects and allergic reactions.
- using antibiotics when they are not needed or for diseases they cannot cure has made some harmful germs stronger and *resistant* to the medicine. This means the medicine can no longer cure the disease.

For example: In the past it was easy to cure gonorrhea, a sexually transmitted disease, with penicillin. But penicillin has been used incorrectly and too often for many other, less serious problems.



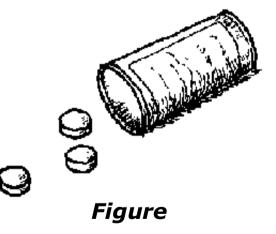
Medicines for pain

Pain is a sign of a problem, such as an injury or infection. So it is very important to treat the problem that is causing the pain, and not just the pain. But during the treatment, the

pain can be eased with pain medicines. With some illnesses that cannot be cured, like AIDS and cancer, pain can be disabling and last a long time.

When treating pain:

- try to find and treat the cause of the pain.
- try the weakest pain medicines first and use stronger ones only if needed.
- treatment for ongoing pain should be given regularly. Don't wait until the pain returns before the next dose.
- think about other ways to relieve pain: relaxation exercises, acupressure, or putting heat or cold where the pain is.



For mild to moderate pain, as with monthly bleeding or a headache:

Paracetamol is widely available and cheap. It is the safest pain medicine for pregnant and breastfeeding women, and it also works to reduce fever. Do not take it with alcohol or

meister13.htm

to treat a hangover, or if you have liver or kidney problems.

Aspirin is also widely available, cheap, and works well to lower fever and to treat pain and inflammation in muscles and joints, and for pain with monthly bleeding. Breastfeeding women can use aspirin one week after the baby is born, but pregnant women should use paracetamol instead. It is safe when taken in the correct amounts, but it can irritate the stomach, so it should not be taken by people with stomach ulcers. Aspirin keeps blood from clotting normally, so it should not be taken if the person is bleeding or before any *surgery*,

Ibuprofen is widely available but more expensive than aspirin or paracetamol. Like aspirin, it is very effective in lower doses for pain with monthly bleeding, and for muscle and joint pain and inflammation. Ibuprofen is a good medicine for the lasting pain of arthritis. It can also cause irritation of the stomach and bleeding problems, so it should not be taken before surgery or by people with stomach ulcers. Breastfeeding women can use ibuprofen but pregnant women should not use it during the last 3 months of pregnancy.

For moderate to severe pain:

Ibuprofen in larger doses can be effective (up to 800 mg 3 to 4 times daily).

Codeine is a drug of the opiate family which is useful for pain after surgery or an injury. Taking codeine for too long can cause *addiction*.

For severe or ongoing pain:

Codeine in higher doses can be used for severe pain.

Morphine is a very strong medicine of the opiate family that is good for pain during the last stages of cancer or *AIDS*. Morphine is usually difficult to get unless you are in a hospital, but it may be available with a doctor's prescription. It is highly addictive. **Medicines for heavy bleeding from the vagina after birth or abortion**

Medicines that contain ergometrine or oxytocin cause contractions of the womb and its blood vessels. They are important medicines to control heavy bleeding after childbirth.



Ergometrine is used to prevent or control severe bleeding after the placenta has come out. Do not inject ergometrine into the vein (IV). It should be injected into a large muscle. Never give this medicine before the baby is born or the placenta has come out! Do not give this medicine to a woman with high blood pressure.

Oxytocin is used to help stop severe bleeding of the mother after the baby is born. It is very rare for oxytocin to be needed before the baby is born. For this purpose, it should only be given in the vein by a doctor or trained birth attendant. Using oxytocin to speed up labor or give strength to the mother in labor can be dangerous to both mother and child.

Medicines for allergic reactions

A person can be allergic to medicines, foods, or things that are breathed in or touched. Reactions may be mild - with itching, hives or rash, or sneezing - or they can be moderate or severe. Some reactions can worsen and bring on allergic shock. Severe reactions and allergic shock can be life-threatening and must be treated.



how to treat allergic reaction and allergic shock Figure

In this book, we talk about how some medicines may cause allergic reactions. Any medicine that causes an allergic reaction should be stopped and never given again - even if the reaction was mild.

Depending on how strong the reaction is, allergic reactions are treated with 1, 2,

or 3 kinds of medicines:

1. Antihistamines, like diphenhydramine, hydroxizine, or promethazine. None of these medicines are good for pregnant or breastfeeding women, but promethazine is the least dangerous of them. Otherwise diphenhydramine is usually the cheapest and most widely available.

2. Steroids, like dexamethasone or hydrocortisone. Dexamethasone is a better choice for pregnant or breastfeeding women.

3. Epinephrine or adrenaline. These medicines are safe for pregnant or breastfeeding women.

Medicines that can save a woman's life

Starting a community emergency medicine kit is one way you can help save the lives of women where you live. The medicines in this chart will help you start treatment until other medical help is available. Make sure these medicines are in your kit or at the nearest health post. If you need to buy them, try meeting with leaders in your community. Explain how these medicines can help, and see if you can find ways together to buy them.

What to include in a medicine kit:



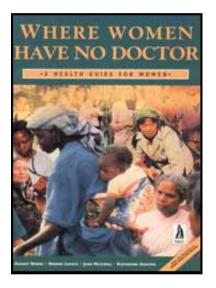
meister	13.htm
Problem	Medicine
pelvic infection (PID)	tablets: doxycycline, tetracycline, norfloxacin, metronidazole
kidney infection	ampicillin, gentamicin, co-trimoxazole
bleeding after birth, abortion, or miscarriage	axytocin or ergometrine
infection after birth, abortion, or miscarriage	ampicillin or penicillin, gentamicin, chloramphenicol
toxemia during or after birth	diazepam or magnesium sulfate
emergency pregnancy prevention (after rape, broken condom, or other emergency)	Lo-Femenal (low dose) or Ovral, Neogynan (high dose) birth control pills See the "Green Pages" for other common brand names.
allergic reaction to antibiotic	epinephrine, diphenhydramine,

Figure

4 🖹



Home"" """"> ar.cn.de.en.es.fr.id.it.ph.po.ru.sw



- Where Women Have No Doctor A Health Guide for Women (Hesperian Foundation, 1997, 600 p.)
 - (introduction...)
 - Women's health is in your hands
 - 🖹 Thanks
 - About this Book
 - How to Use this Book
 - □ Chapter 1: Women's Health Is a Community Issue
 - □ Chapter 2: Solving Health Problems
 - □ Chapter 3: The Medical System
 - □ Chapter 4: Understanding Our Bodies
 - □ Chapter 5: Health Concerns of Girls
 - □ Chapter 6: Pregnancy and Childbirth
 - □ Chapter 7: Breastfeeding
 - □ Chapter 8: Growing Older
 - □ Chapter 9: Women with Disabilities

- □ Ehapter 19: Etaxigedeeltba Health
- □ Chapter 12: Sexual Health
- □ Chapter 13: Family Planning
- Chapter 14: Infertility (When You Are Not Able to Have a Baby)
- □ Chapter 15: Abortion and Complications from Abortion
- Chapter 16: Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Other Infections of the Genitals
- Chapter 17: AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)
- □ Chapter 18: Violence Against Women
- □ Chapter 19: Rape and Sexual Assault
- □ Chapter 20: Sex Workers
- □ Chapter 21: Pain in the Lower Abdomen
- □ Chapter 22: Abnormal Bleeding from the Vagina
- □ Chapter 23: Problems of the Urine System
- □ Chapter 24: Cancer and Growths
- □ Chapter 25: Tuberculosis
- □ Chapter 26: Work
- □ Chapter 27: Mental Health
- □ Chapter 28: Alcohol and Other Drugs
- □ Chapter 29: Refugees and Displaced Women
- Chapter 30: Female Circumcision

- □ Chapter 31: Use of Medicines in Women's Health
- Table of Medicines: Green Pages
 - Health Care Skills
 - Vocabulary: List of difficult words
 - Where to get more information
 - Back cover

 Table of Medicines: Green Pages

HOW TO USE THE GREEN PAGES

This section gives information about the medicines mentioned in this book. For general information about medicines, be sure to read the chapter called "Use of Medicines in Women's Health". For specific information about each medicine, you can look it up in these Green Pages. Medicines are listed by their generic (scientific) names, the same names used in the chapters. The medicines are arranged in the order of the alphabet:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

For example, if you are looking up hydroxyzine, it comes after doxycycline but before metronidazole.

You can also find a medicine in the Green Pages by using:

• the problem index. This index lists the health problems discussed in this book and medicines used to treat them. The index gives the page number

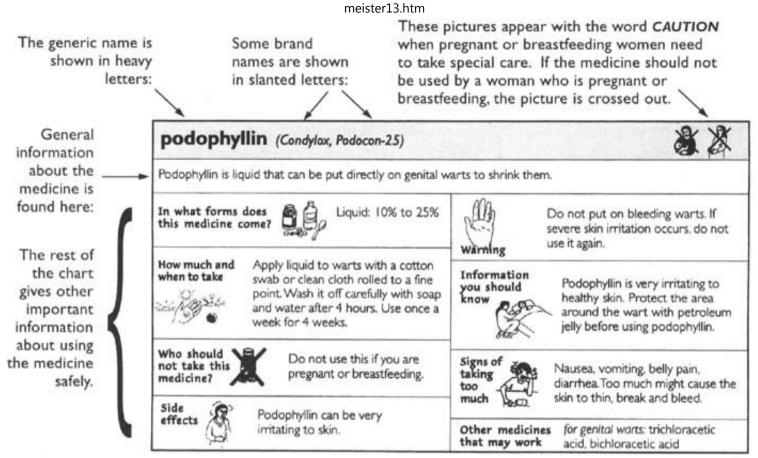
where information about the health problem can be found. Be sure to read about the problem before treating it with medicine. Remember: good health does not depend only on medicines! The most important 'medicine' for good health is good health information.

• the medicine index. This index lists the generic names of medicines and some common brand (commercial) names. If there is a medicine you want to use, you can look it up here to find the number of the page where you can learn more about that medicine.

Both the problem and medicine indexes are arranged in the order of the alphabet.

Information about specific medicines

The information about each medicine appears in a box like this:



Figure

Problem Index

This is a list of the health problems discussed in this book that are sometimes treated with medicines. The problems are listed in order of the alphabet in the column on the left. You should read these pages before taking any medicine. The column on the right has medicines that can be used to treat each problem on the left. To learn more about a medicine, look it up in the medicine tables.

10/2011	meister13.htm
arthritis	aspirin, ibuprofen
bleeding from the	
vagina	
after abortion	ergometrine
after childbirth	ergometrine, oxytocin
around menopause	medroxyprogesterone
chancroid	ceftriaxone, ciprofloxacin, erythromycin, co-trimoxazole
chlamydia	co-trimoxazole, doxycycline, erythromycin, tetracycline
cough	codeine
diarrhea	co-trimoxazole, metronidazole, norfloxacin
emergency birth control	low-dose birth control pills (groups 2 and 3)
fever	aspirin, paracetamol, ibuprofen
after abortion	amoxicillin, doxycycline, metronidazole
after childbirth	amoxicillin, metronidazole, procaine penicillin, chloramphenicol
during labor	ampicillin, procaine penicillin
fits during pregnancy	diazepam, magnesium sulfate
fungal infection	
mouth (thrush)	Gentian Violet, ketoconazole, nystatin
skin	Gentian Violet, ketoconazole, nystatin
vagina	Gentian Violet, clotrimazole, miconazole, nystatin, vinegar, ketoconazole

-	
gonorrhea	cefixime, ceftriaxone, ciprofloxacin, co-trimoxazole, doxycycline, kanamycin, metronidazole, norfloxacin
herpes sores	acyclovir
infection (prevention)	amoxicillin, doxycycline
in deinfibulation	amoxicillin, erythromycin, tetanus vaccine
infection (treatment)	
after abortion	amoxicillin, benzyl penicillin, chloramphenicol, doxycycline, erythromycin, gentamicin, metronidazole, tetanus vaccine
bladder	amoxicillin, co-trimoxazole
breast infection	dicloxacillin, erythromycin
after childbirth	amoxicillin, chloramphenicol, erythromycin, metronidazole, penicillin, procaine penicillin
after circumcision	dicloxacillin, erythromycin, tetanus vaccine
kidney	amoxicillin, co-trimoxazole, ampicillin, gentamicin
itching	
of the genitals (see <i>vaginal discharge)</i>	
of the skin	diphenhydramine, hydrocortisone, hydroxyzine
nausea	promethazine
newborn eye care	erythromycin eye ointment, tetracycline eye ointment, chloramphenicol eye ointment
pain	

/10/2011 Imild to moderate	aspirin, paracetamol, ibuproten
severe	codeine
pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)	doxycycline, metronidazole, norfloxacin
pneumonia for people with AIDS	co-trimoxazole
sores, infected	dicloxacillin, erythromycin, penicillin, potassium permanganate
on the genitals	benzathine penicillin, erythromycin
syphilis	benzathine penicillin, doxycycline, erythromycin, tetracycline
tetanus in newborn	penicillin G
toxemia/fits	magnesium sulfate, diazepam
trichomonas	metronidazole
vaginal discharge (see Chapter 16)	
at risk for STD	co-trimoxazole, doxycycline, metronidazole
not at risk for STD	clotrimazole, Gentian Violet, metronidazole
warts on the genitals	podophyllin, trichloroacetic acid
womb infection	amoxicillin, chloramphenicol, metronidazole, penicillin, procaine penicillin
yeast, thrush	Gentian Violet, clotrimazole, miconazole, nystatin, vinegar, ketoconazole

List of Medicines

This list of medicines has two different kinds of names - brand (commercial) names and generic (scientific) names. You can look up the name of a medicine you want to use here to find the page number in the Green Pages where you can learn more about it. Brand names are shown *in slanted letters like this.* Brand names have the generic name of the medicine next to it.

acetaminophen or paracetamol (APAP, Panadol, Tempra, Tylenol, others)

Acetaminophen and paracetamol are 2 names for the same drug that is used to ease pain and lower fever. It is one of the safest pain killers. It does not cause stomach irritation and can be used instead of aspirin by people with stomach ulcers. It can also be used by pregnant women. **See paracetamol.**

acyclovir *(Zovirax)* CAUTION 🗟 🖉

Acyclovir is a medicine that kills viruses and is used to fight herpes, which can cause painful blisters on the genitals, and anus, and in the mouth. Acyclovir will not stop herpes from coming back, but it makes it less painful and keeps it from spreading.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Tablets: 200, 400 or 800 mg Ointment: 5%

How much and when to take

H AND

meister13.htm

For genital herpes infection: Take 200 mg by mouth 5 times a day for 7 to 10 days. *For cold sores:* Apply ointment on sores 6 times a day for 7 days.

Who should not take this medicine?

Someone with kidney damage.

Information you should know

C.C.

The tablets are much more effective than the ointment. Take with lots of water

Side effects

B

May sometimes cause headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting.

Signs taking too much

Headache, loss of memory, nausea, cannot pass urine.

adrenaline or epinephrine (Adrenalin)

Adrenaline and epinephrine are two names for the same drug. It is used for severe allergic reactions or allergic shock, for example, allergic reaction to penicillin. It is also used for severe asthma attacks. **See epinephrine.**

meister13.htm amoxicillin (Amoxifar, Amoxil, Himox, Megamox, Sumoxil)

Amoxicillin is an antibiotic of the penicillin family used to treat womb infections, urine system infections, pneumonia, and other infections. It is now used instead of ampicillin in many places.

In what forms does this medicine come?

LING L

Tablets: 250 and 500 mg Liguid: 125 or 250 mg per 5 ml

How much and when to take

For chlamydia, PID, or breast infection: 500 mg by mouth 3 times a day for 10 days (for drug combinations to treat vaginal discharge, for PID).

For kidney infection: Take 500 mg by mouth 3 times a day for 14 days.

For infection of the womb after childbirth: Take 1 gram 3 times a day for 10 days *(also use* other drugs).

To prevent infection after abortion: Take 500 mg by mouth 3 times a day for 5 days.

For bladder infection or infection after abortion: 3 grams by mouth one time only (for drug combinations to treat infection after an abortion).

Who should not take this medicine?

Do not use if allergic to medicines of the penicillin family.

Side effects



May cause diarrhea, rash, nausea or vomiting. May cause yeast infection in women or diaper rash in children.

Information you should know

X

If you do not start to get better in 3 days, look for medical help; you may need a different medicine.

Take with food.

Other medicines that may work

for bladder or kidney infection: ampicillin, co-trimoxazole, gentamicin, norfloxacin for breast infection: cephalexin, dicloxacillin, erythromycin to prevent infection after abortion: doxycycline

amoxicillin with clavulanate potassium (Augmentin)

Amoxicillin with clavulanate potassium (Augmentin) is an antibiotic of the penicillin family used to treat gonorrhea and other infections. In some places, however; gonorrhea is now resistent to this drug. It is much more effective for some infections than amoxicillin alone but is expensive and often hard to find outside of rich countries. Unfortunately, clavulanate potassium cannot be purchased by itself and combined with regular amoxicillin.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Sê,

Tablets: 125, 200, 250, 400, 500 and 875 mg Liquid: 125, 200, 250, and 400 mg per 5 ml

How much and when to take



For gonorrhea: Take 3 grams of amoxicillin with clavulanate potassium (Augmentin) plus 1 gram of probenecid, 1 time only.

Who should not take this medicine?



Do not use if allergic to medicines of the penicillin family.

Other medicines that may work

for gonorrhea: see drug combinations.

ampicillin (Amcil, Ampicin, Omnipen, Penbritin, Polycillin)

Ampicillin is an antibiotic of the penicillin family used to treat many kinds of infections.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets and Capsules: 250 or 500 mg Liquid: 125 or 250 mg per 5 ml Powder for mixing injections: 500 mg

How much and when to take

× Corte

For breast infection or PID: Take 250 to 500 mg by mouth 4 times a day for 7 days.

For bladder infection: Take 3 grams all at once unless you are pregnant. If you are pregnant, take 250 mg by mouth 4 times a day for 7 days.

For kidney infection: Take 500 mg by mouth 4 times a day for 14 days. If vomiting, inject 500 mg into muscle 4 times a day and change to tablets when the vomiting stops.

For fever during pregnancy:

Take 500 mg 4 times a day until you can get medical attention.

Who should not take this medicine?

Do not use ampicillin if you are allergic to medicines of the penicillin family.

Side effects



May cause stomach upset and diarrhea. May cause rash.



If you do not start to get better in 3 days, look for medical help; you may need another medicine.

Information you should know



Take this medicine before eating.

Other medicines that may work

for bladder or kidney infection: amoxicillin, co-trimoxazole, norfloxacin for breast infection: amoxicillin, cephalexin, dicloxacillin, erythromycin

aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid, ASA, others) CAUTION 🗟 🖉

Aspirin works against pain, swelling, and fever.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 300, 500 mg and other sizes.

How much and when to take



For pain, swelling or fever: 300 to 600 mg by mouth no more than 6 times a day as needed.

Who should not take this medicine?

Women should not take aspirin during the last 3 months of pregnancy. People with

stomach ulcers or bleeding problems should not take aspirin. Do not use before surgery. Do not use if breastfeeding in the first week of the baby's life. Do not give to children for fever; colds or chicken pox.

Side effects



May cause stomach upset, stomach pain, or bleeding problems.

Information you should know

Aspirin treats some sicknesses like arthritis and heart problems, but is usually used to ease pain and fever. It is important to find the cause of the pain or fever and cure that. If pain lasts more than 10 days or fever more than 3 days, get medical help.

Signs taking too much



Ringing in the ears, headache, dizziness, confusion, fast breathing.

Other medicines that may work

for pain or fever: paracetamol for pain, fever, or swelling: ibuprofen for severe pain: codeine

azithromycin (Zithromax)



Azithromycin is an antibiotic of the macrolide family used to treat many STDs. It is expensive and often hard to find, but it works well against STDs when many other antibiotics do not

In what forms does this medicine come?



Capsules: 250 mg

How much and when to take



For women at risk for STDs: Take 1 gram by mouth 1 time only.

Who should not take this medicine?



People with allergies to erythromycin and other antibiotics of the macrolide family.

Side effects



Diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain.

Information you should know

meister13.htm

Take at least 1 hour before eating or at least 2 hours after eating.

Azithromycin is an excellent treatment for most STDs that cause discharge or genital sores. It is good for treating STDs where there is resistance to other medicines.

Other medicines that may work

for vaginal discharge with an STD. for genital ulcers.

AZT (azidothymidine, Retrovir, zidovudine)

AZT is a medicine used to treat AIDS and to help prevent passing the HIV virus to a baby during pregnancy and birth. It is a difficult drug to use, and should be given in a hospital or under the care of a qualified health worker. Also, it is very expensive and often hard to find in poor countries.

benzathine penicillin (Bicillin L-A, Penadur L-A, Permapen)

Benzathine penicillin is a long-acting antibiotic of the penicillin family used to treat syphilis, genital ulcers, and other infections, including some sore throats. It is always given as an injection into muscle.

In what forms does this medicine come?

S.¢

Powder for mixing for injection: 1.2 or 2.4 million Units in a 5 ml vial.

How much and when to take



For genital ulcers, early syphilis or syphilis prevention after sexual assault or exposure: Inject 2.4 million Units into muscle one time only.

For late syphilis: Inject 2.4 million Units into muscle every week for 3 weeks.

Who should not take this medicine?



People who are allergic to medicines of the penicillin family



Have epinephrine on hand whenever you inject penicillin. Watch for allergic reactions and allergic shock which could start within 30 minutes.

Other medicines that may work

for syphilis: doxycycline, tetracycline, erythromycin also treat for chancroid

benzylpenicillin (Celinex, Hi-Do-Pen, penicillin G potassium or sodium)

Benzylpenicillin is an antibiotic of the penicillin family used to treat many serious infections, including infection after an abortion.

In what forms does this medicine come?



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Powder for mixing for injection: 1 or 5 million Units

How much and when to take



For serious infection after an abortion: Inject 5 million Units into muscle 1 time only *(also give other medicines).*

Who should not take this medicine?



People who are allergic to medicines of the penicillin family.



Watch for allergic reactions and signs of shock.

Other medicines that may work

for serious infection after an abortion: ampicillin, cephalexin, ciprofloxacin, norfloxacin.

cefixime (Suprax)

Cefixime is an antibiotic of the cephalosporin family that is used to treat many infections including gonorrhea, pelvic inflammatory disease, and others.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 200 or 400 mg Liquid: 100 mg in 5 ml

How much and when to take



For gonorrhea or PID: Take 400 mg by mouth one time only

Who should not take this medicine?



Do not use if you are allergic to antibiotics of the cephalosporin family.

Side effects



Nausea, diarrhea, headache.



Watch for allergic reaction. People who have liver problems should be watched carefully when taking cefixime.

Other medicines that may work

for gonorrhea: ceftriaxone, ciprofloxacin, co-trimoxazole kanamicin, norfloxacin for PID: ceftriaxone, norfloxacin

ceftriaxone (Nitrocephin, Rocephin)

Ceftriaxone is a very strong antibiotic of the cephalosporin family that is injected into muscle. It is used for many infections including gonorrhea, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), kidney infections, and serious infections after abortion, childbirth, or miscarriage.

In what forms does this medicine come?



In vials for injection: 250, 500 mg and 1 gram, 2 grams and 10 grams

How much and when to take



For severe infections after abortion or childbirth: Inject 1 gram into muscle once a day for 10 days.

For gonorrhea, chancroid, or PID: Inject 250 mg into muscle one time only.

Who should not take this medicine?



Do not use if you are allergic to antibiotics of the cephalosporin family.

Warning Watch for allergic reaction. Always be prepared to treat for allergic reaction and shock when injecting antibiotics.

Other medicines that may work

for severe infections: amoxicillin with clavulanate potassium (Augmentin), for gonorrhea, chancroid, or PID: kanamicin

Cephalexin (Ceporex, Keflex, Keftab)

Cephalexin is an antibiotic of the cephalosporin family used to treat breast and bladder infections, bronchitis and some skin infections.

In what forms does this medicine come?

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Tablets: 250 or 500 mg Liquid: 125 or 250 mg per 5 ml

How much and when to take

LABE

For breast or bladder infection: 250 mg by mouth 4 times a day for 7 days.

Who should not take this medicine?

X

Do not take Cephalexin if you are allergic to antibiotics of the cephalosporin family.

Side effects



Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. In rare cases, the beginning of bloody diarrhea with

fever.



Watch for allergic reaction.

Information you should know

If you start having bloody diarrhea with fever, stop taking cephalexin and treat with metronidazole.

Other medicines that may work

for breast or skin infection: erythromycin, dicloxacillin, amoxicillin for bladder infection: amoxicillin, co-trimoxazole, erythromycin, norfloxacin

activated charcoal (Activated Carbon, Liquid Antidote)

Activated charcoal is a specially prepared charcoal used to treat some poisonings by drugs like aspirin, acetaminophen, phenobarbitol, or other medicines or chemicals, or poisonous mushrooms. After giving activated charcoal, get medical help immediately.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Liquid: 25 g per 120 ml Powder: 15 g

How much and when to take

Take 30 to 100 g by mouth all at one time.

Who should not take this medicine?

Do not take if you have swallowed lighter fluid, fuel, kerosene or petroleum products.

Side effects



Black stools, vomiting, diarrhea.



Get medical help immediately. People who take too much of a drug can get very sick and may need much more help than activated charcoal.

chloramphenicol (Chloromycetin, Kemicetine, Mychel, Pharex)

Chloramphenicol is a very strong antibiotic used for serious infections after childbirth, miscarriage, or abortion. It should only be used when less dangerous drugs do not work or are not safe to take. As an ointment, it is also used for baby eye-care if tetracycline or erythromycin ointments are not available.

In what forms does this medicine come?





Capsules: 250 mg Liquid: 150 mg per 5 ml Powder for mixing for injection: 1 g Ointment: 1% Liquid for eye-care: 0.5%

How much and when to take



For infection after childbirth: Take 1 g by mouth one time only and then 500 mg by mouth 4 times a day for 7 days.

For serious infection after abortion: Inject 1 g into vein (IV) 4 times a day.

For baby eye care: put a little in each eye at birth.

Who should not take this medicine?



Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Side effects



Upset stomach, vision problems.

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Warning

Use other antibiotics if possible. Risk of permanent harm to the blood or even death in some people.

Information you should know

X

For serious infections, chloramphenicol should be taken with 10 million Units of benzyl penicillin.

Signs taking too much



Bleeding or bruising easily, vision problems.

Other medicines that may work

for serious infection: after birth after abortion for baby eye core: tetracycline or erythromycin ointments are better.

ciprofloxacin (Ciloxan, Cipro, Ciprobay)



Ciprofloxacin is a strong antibiotic of the quinolone family that is used to treat skin and kidney infections, and some STDs like gonorrhea, chancroid and PID.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Tablets: 250, 500 or 750 mg

How much and when to take



For gonorrhea, PID, or chancroid: 500 mg by mouth one time only

For kidney infection: Take 500 mg by mouth 2 times a day for 10 days.

Who should not take this medicine?



Do not use if you are pregnant, breastfeeding or younger than 16 years old.

Side effects



Nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, headache.



This medicine reacts with caffeine (in coffee, chocolate, cola drinks, etc.), making the caffeine even stronger Do not take with dairy products.

Information you should know

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Drink lots of water You can - eat while taking ciprofloxacin, just avoid dairy products.

Other medicines that may work

for chancroid: erythromycin, co-trimoxazole for PID: norfloxacin, doxycycline, metronidazole for kidney infection: amoxicillin, co-trimoxazole for gonorrhea: ceftriaxone, kanamicin, norfloxacin

clotrimazole (Canesten, Fungistin, Gyne-lotrimin, Mycelex-G)

Clotrimazole is used to treat yeast infections of the vagina, mouth and throat.

In what forms does this medicine come?

S.Ċ

Inserts: 100 or 500 mg Cream: 1% Lozenge: 10 mg

How much and when to take



For vaginal yeast infections: Inserts: Put one 500 mg insert in the vagina at bedtime one time only; on put two 100 mg inserts in the vagina at bedtime every night for 3 nights. Cream: Put 5 g in the vagina each night at bedtime for 7 to 14 days.

For mouth and throat infections: Take a 10 mg lozenge by mouth 5 times a day for 14 days.

Who should not take this medicine?

Do not use if you have had allergic reactions to this drug.

Side effects



Mild burning or itching. Nausea or vomiting if taken by mouth.



If clotrimazole burns the vagina, stop using it. Avoid having sex for 3-4 days so you do not pass the infection to your partner

Information you should know

The single, larger dose works better for pregnant women.

Other medicines that may work

for yeast infections: nystatin, miconazole, Gentian Violet or vinegar. for AIDS patients: ketaconazole.

Codeine

CAUTION

Codeine is a pain killer of the opiate family that also calms coughs and helps you relax and

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sleep. Only use codeine to calm very bad coughs after you have treated the cause for the cough. Only use codeine for pain when milder pain medicines do not work.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Liquid: 15 mg per ml Tablets: 15, 30, or 60 mg Cough syrup: Different strengths

How much and when to take



For coughs: 7 to 15 mg 4 times a day, only as needed. *For severe pain:* 30 to 60 mg 4 to 6 times a day, as needed.

Side effects



Causes constipation (difficulty passing stools) and temporary inability to pass urine. Nausea, vomiting, itching, headaches.

Information you should know

Codeine is habit forming (addictive). If you use it for more than a few - days, you will need more and more of it for the medicine to work.

Signs taking too much



Sleepiness, stupor, coma.

Treatment for taking too much

a a

Naloxone (Narcan) can be given as an injection to someone who has taken too much codeine. Seek medical help.

Other medicines that may work

for pain: acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen. for severe pain: morphine for cough: drink plenty of water, use home-made cough syrup

co-trimoxazole = trimethoprim + sulfamethoxazole (AzoGantanol, Bactrim, Coptin, Gantanol, Pologrim, Septra, Sulfatrim, TMP/SMX, Trimpex, others)

CAUTION

Co-trimoxazole is a combination of 2 antibiotics (one from the sulfa family) that is used to treat bladder and kidney infections, vaginal discharge caused by gonorrhea, and chancroid. It also helps prevent diarrhea and pneumonia for people with AIDS.

In what forms does this medicine come?

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Tablets: 120 mg (20 mg trimethoprim + 100 mg sulfamethoxazole)

480 mg (80 mg trimethoprim + 400 mg sulfamethoxazole), and 960 mg (160 mg trimethoprim + 800 mg sulfamethoxazole) Liquid: 240 mg (40 mg trimethoprim + 200 mg sulfamethoxazole) per 5 ml

How much and when to take



For bladder infection: Take four 480 tablets by mouth one time only.
For kidney infection: Take two 480 tablets by mouth 2 times a day for 10 days.
For vaginal discharges caused by STDs: Take ten 480 tablets once a day for 3 days
For prevention of pneumonia and diarrhea for people with AIDS: Take one 480 tablet every day or two 480 tablets two times a week

For bloody diarrhea, or pneumonia for people with AIDS: Take two 480 tablets by mouth 2 times a day for 10 days.

For PID or chancroid: Take five 480 tablets by mouth 2 times a day for 3 days; or, if this makes you nauseous, take two 480 tablets by mouth 2 times a day for 7 days

Who should not take this medicine?

X

Women in the last 3 months of pregnancy should not use this medicine. If you are allergic to sulfa antibiotics, do not take this drug.

Side effects



Stop taking it if it causes allergic reactions like itching or skin rashes. Also may cause nausea and vomiting.



Take with lots of water

Signs taking too much



Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, confusion, sweating.

Other medicines that may work

for bladder and kidney infection: amoxicillin, nitrofurantoin, norfloxacin for gonorrhea: ceftriaxone, kanamycin, norfloxacin for chancroid: ciprofloxacin, ceftriaxone, erythromycin, kanamycin for PID: see drug combinations. for diarrhea for people with AIDS: norfloxacin, metronidazole

dexamethasone (Decadron, Decilone, Inflam, Maxidex)

Dexamethasone is a steroid medicine used to treat allergic shock.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Tablets: 0.25, 0.5, 0.75, 1, 1.5, 2, or 4 mg Liquid: 0.5 mg per 5 ml, or 1 mg per 1 ml For injection: 4, 8, 10, 16, or 20 mg per ml

How much and when to take



For allergic shock: Inject 20 mg into muscle. If signs return, take 20 mg by mouth and repeat once if needed.

Side effects



If the person has diabetes, it could make it worse for a few hours. Also, it might raise blood pressure.

Other medicines that may work

for allergic shock: hydrocortisone

diazepam (Anxionil, Calmpose, Valium) CAUTION 🗟 🖉

Diazepam is a tranquilizer used to treat and prevent convulsions and seizures. It also relieves anxiety and helps promote sleep.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 5 or 10 mg For injections: 5 mg per 1 ml or 10 mg per 2 ml

How much and when to take



For convulsions: Use 20 mg of injectable diazepam in the anus using a syringe **without a needle**. Repeat if needed using 15 mg after every convulsion. Use crushed up tablets in water it you do not have injectable diazepam.

To prevent seizures during alcohol withdrawal: Take 10 to 20 mg by mouth. Repeat after 1 hour if needed. If signs continue, give every 4 to 5 hours while seeking medical help.

For anxiety or sleeplessness: Take 2.5 to 5 mg by mouth.

Who should not take this medicine?

Pregnant or breastfeeding women should only use diazepam in an emergency.

Side effects



Frequent or large doses of diazepam during pregnancy can cause birth defects.

Warmins

Diazepam is an addictive (habit-forming) drug. Avoid taking with other drugs that will make you sleepy, especially alcohol.

Information you should know

Diazepam does not treat pain. It is very habit-forming.

Signs taking too much

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Sleepiness, loss of balance, confusion.

Other medicines that may work

for convulsions: magnesium sulfate for sleep: diphenhydramine for anxiety: hydroxyzine

dicloxacillin

Dicloxacillin is an antibiotic of the penicillin family used to treat breast and skin infections.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Capsules: 125, 250 or 500 mg Liquid: 62.5 mg per 5 ml

How much and when to take



For breast or skin infections: Take 250 mg 4 times a day for 10 days.

Who should not take this medicine?

Do not take this drug if you are allergic to penicillin.

Side effects



Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea.



Watch for allergic reactions or shock.

Other medicines that may work

for breast or skin infections: amoxicillin, cephalexin, erythromycin

diphenhydramine hydrochloride (Bectivo, Benadryl)



Diphenhydramine is an antihistamine that dries up mucus in the nose and also makes you sleepy. It is useful for treating chronic itching and sleep problems for people with AIDS. It is also a treatment for allergic reactions and allergic shock.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets or capsules: 25 or 50 mg Syrup: 12.5 mg per 5 ml Ampules for injection: 10, 30 or 50 mg in 1 ml

How much and when to take



For allergies, mild to moderate allergic reaction, or itching: Take 25 mg by mouth 3 or 4 times a day as needed.

For steep: Take 25 to 50 mg at bedtime.

For allergic shock: Inject 50 mg into muscle, repeat in 8 hours or sooner if needed.

Who should not take this medicine?



Pregnant and breastfeeding women should not use this drug as a long-term treatment for allergies. People with asthma should not take it.

Side effects



Sleepiness, dry mouth. Sometimes causes nausea and vomiting. In rare cases can have the opposite effect and excite rather than calm you.



Do not use if you need to be alert. Makes the effects of tranquilizers and alcohol dangerously stronger.

Information you should know

Only inject diphenhydramine for severe allergic reactions or shock.

Other medicines that may work

for allergies: hydroxyzine, promethazine *for sleep:* diazepam

doxycycline (Biocolyn, Doryx, Monodox, Vibramycin, Vibra-Tabs)

Doxycycline is an antibiotic of the tetracycline family used to treat many different infections including STDs, pelvic infections, infections after abortions, and others. It is used instead of tetracycline.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 50 and 100 mg

How much and when to take



For vaginal discharge from an STD: Take 100 mg by mouth 2 times a day for 7 days.
For syphilis: 100 mg by mouth 2 times a day for 15 days.
For late syphilis: 100 mg by mouth 2 times a day for 28 days.
For PID or infection after female circumcision: Take 100 mg by mouth 2 times a day for 10 days.
For risk of STDs before an abortion or to prevent infection after an abortion: Take

100 mg 2 times a day for 5 days.

For infections after an abortion: Take 100 mg by mouth 2 times a day for 10 days.

Who should not take this medicine?



Pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under 8. Doxycycline can damage a baby's or child's teeth and bones.

Side effects



Diarrhea or upset stomach. Some people get a rash after staying a longtime in the sun.



Do not take if pregnant or breastfeeding. Do not use doxycycline that is old or has passed the expiration date. Do not take with dairy products or antacids.

Information you should know

Do not take just before laying down. Sit up while taking pills and drink lots of water to prevent the irritation that swallowing this medicine can cause.

Other medicines that may work

for syphilis: benzathine penicillin for gonorrhea: co-trimoxazole for chlamydia: erythromycin to prevent infection after abortion: amoxicillin for infection after abortion

for infection after circumcision: erythromycin

Contraction or advanaling (Advanalin) D:/cd3wddvd/NoExe/Master/dvd001/.../meister13.htm

Epinephrine and adrenaline are two names for the same drug. It is used for allergic reactions or allergic shock, for example, allergic shock caused by penicillin. It is also used for severe asthma attacks.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Ampules for injection: 1 mg in 1 ml

How much and when to take



For asthma, moderate allergic reaction or allergic shock: Inject ¹/₂ mg (¹/₂ ml) just under the skin (not into muscle) of the upper arm. If needed, a second dose can be given after 20-30 minutes, and a third dose after another 20-30 minutes.

Side effects



Fear, restlessness, nervousness, tension, headaches, dizziness, increased heart rate.



Be careful never to give more than the recommended amount. Avoid injecting this into the buttocks, instead use the back of the upper arm.

Information you should know



Take the person's pulse before injecting. Do not give more than 3 doses. If the pulse goes up by more than 30 beats per minute after the first injection, do not give another dose.

Signs taking too much



High blood pressure, fast heart beat, stroke.

ergometrine maleate, methylergonovine maleate (Anurhage, Ergonovine, Ergotrate, Methergine)

Ergometrine causes contractions of the womb and its blood vessels and is used to control heavy bleeding after childbirth or an abortion. Ergometrine and methylergonovine are the same drug. After giving this medicine, get help.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 0.2 mg For injection: 0.2, 0.25 and 0.5 mg in 1 ml vial.

How much and when to take

For heavy bleeding after childbirth: After the placenta has come out, inject 0.5 mg into muscle, *or give* 1 tablet (0.2 mg) by mouth 4 to 6 times a day.

For heavy bleeding due to complications after an abortion: Give an injection of 0.2 mg into muscle, then give a 0.2 mg pill or a 0.1 mg injection every 4 hours for 24 hours.

Side effects



Nausea, vomiting, dizziness, sweating.



Do not use these drugs to start labor or make labor stronger. Never give this medicine before the baby and the placenta have come out.

Information you should know



Do not use this drug to cause an abortion because it could kill the woman before making her abort. (For abortion, see Chapter 15).

Other medicines that may work

oxytocin

erythromycin (E.E.S., E-Mycin, Ery-max, Ethril, Ilosone, Ilotycin)

Erythromycin is an antibiotic of the macrolide family used to treat many infections, including some STDs, respiratory and skin infections. It can be safely used during pregnancy and is widely available.

In what forms does this medicine come?





Tablets or capsules: 250 mg Ointment: 1% Powder for solution: 125 mg per 5 ml

How much and when to take

For bladder infections or chlamydia: 500 mg by mouth 4 times a day for 7 days *For breast infection, PID or infection from female circumcision:* 500 mg by mouth 4 times a day for 10 days

For chancroid or skin infections: 500 mg by mouth 3 times a day for 7 days *If you are treating genital sores but are allergic to penicillin:* 500 mg by mouth 3 times a day.

For early syphilis: 500 mg by mouth 4 times a day for 15 days.

For genital sores caused by chlamydia: 500 mg by mouth 4 times a day for 21 days. *For newborn eye-care:* Use 1% ointment one time only.

Who should not take this medicine?



Do not use if you are allergic to antibiotics of the macrolide family.

Side effects



May upset stomach or cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea.

Information you should know



Erythromycin works best when taken 1 hour before or 2 hours after a meal. If this upsets your stomach too much, take with a little food. Do not break up tablets. Many tablets are coated to prevent strong stomach juices from breaking down the drug before it can begin to work.

Other medicines that may work

for breast infection: amoxicillin, cephalexin, dicloxacillin for bladder infection: ampicillin, co-trimoxazole for infection after circumcision: doxycycline for STDs.

for drug combinations to treat STDs for baby eye-care: tetracycline ointment

estrogen (ethinyl estradiol, mestranol)

Chemical forms of estrogen are used in birth control pills and injections. They are similar to the hormone estrogen made in a woman's body. Estrogen can also be used to treat abnormal bleeding or problems of menopause *(see Chapter 8).* For more information, see the section on birth control pills, injections, and emergency family planning (see *Chapter 13).*

ethambutol (Interbutol, Myambutol, Mycrol, Odetol, Triambutol)

Ethambutol is used to treat tuberculosis (TB) especially where other TB medicines are no

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longer strong enough. It is used in combination with other drugs. See Chapter 25.

In what forms does this medicine come?

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Tablets: 100 or 400 mg

How much and when to take



The doses for tuberculosis medicines differ from region to region. See a health worker.

Who should not take this medicine?



People with serious vision problems, including cataracts, should not take this drug. Neither should people with severe kidney problems.

Side effects



Ethambutol often causes vision changes in one or both eyes. It might make the area of what you can see smaller, or cause patchy dark spots or "holes" in your vision. This usually goes away when you stop taking the drug.

Information you should know



It is very important that you take the entire course of treatment for tuberculosis, even if it

lasts for a year If not, you might infect other people.

gentamicin (Bactiderm, Garamycin, Servigenta)

CAUTION 🖉

Gentamicin is a very strong antibiotic of the aminoglycoside family that is used to treat gonorrhea, kidney and other serious infections, and for pelvic inflammatory disease in combination with other drugs. You should use this drug only when the woman is vomiting and cannot keep other medicines down or no other antibiotic is available.

In what forms does this medicine come?



In vials for injection: 10 or 40 mg per ml

How much and when to take



For severe infection after an abortion: Give this medicine according to a woman's weight: inject into muscle 5 mg for every kg of weight, split into 3 doses (morning, afternoon and night) for 5 to 7 days; or you can use the following average dose: Inject 80 mg into muscle, then give 60 mg injections 3 times a day for 5 to 7 days

Who should not take this medicine?

Pregnant women or people with kidney problems should use this drug very carefully. Do not use this drug if you are allergic to other antibiotics of the aminoglycoside family.

Side effects

This drug can damage the kidneys or cause deafness.



Use a different medicine if hearing problems or ringing in the ears start. Give with plenty of fluids.

Information you should know

Because of the serious side effects and the difficulty of calculating the dosage, this drug should only be used when safer antibiotics are not available.

Signs taking too much

Ringing in the ears or worsening of hearing. Kidney problems.

Other medicines that may work

for severe infection: cefixime, ceftriaxone, kanamycin for kidney infection: amoxicillin, ampicillin, norfloxacin

Gentian Violet (Crystal Violet, methylrosanilinium chloride)

Gentian Violet is a disinfectant used to help fight infections of the skin, mouth, and vagina.

In what forms does this medicine come?

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Liquid: 0.5%, 1%, 2% Tincture: 0.5% Crystals: 1 teaspoon in ° liter of water makes a 2% liquid.

How much and when to take



For vaginal yeast infections: soak clean cotton with 1% liquid and place high in the vagina overnight for 3 nights. Be sure to remove the cotton every morning. **For yeast infections in the mouth (thrush):** Rinse the mouth with 1% liquid for 1 minute 2 times a day, but do not swallow.

For skin infections: First wash with soap and water; and dry. Then paint on skin, mouth, or vulva 3 times a day for 5 days.

Side effects



Long-term use causes irritation. Use on a sore or on broken skin may stain that skin purple when it heals.



Do not have sex while you are using Gentian Violet for a vaginal infection to avoid passing the infection to your partner Stop using Gentian Violet if it starts to irritate you.

Information you should know



After putting this in an infant's mouth, turn the baby face down so it does not swallow too much. Gentian Violet will stain your skin and clothes purple.

Other medicines that may work

for skin infections: antibiotic ointments, iodine for thrush in the mouth: lemon (not for babies), nystatin for vaginal yeast infections: nystatin, miconozole, clotrimazole

hepatitis B vaccine (Engerix-B, Recombivax HB)

This vaccine provides immunity to Hepatitis B.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Liquid for injection: 2.5, 5, 10, or 25 mg per ml

How much and when to take



Always give this vaccine by injection in the upper arm or thigh in 3 doses. Try to give the 2nd dose 1-2 months after the 1st, and the 3rd dose 4-12 months after the 2nd.

Doses for these 2 brands of the vaccine are different:

	Engerix-6	Recombivax HB
Adulter	20 mg	10 mg

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Auuitsi	20 mg	10 1119
Children		
0 to 11 years	10 mg	2.5 mg
11 to 19 years	20 mg	5 mg

Side effects



Sometimes fever, headache, weakness, tiredness.

Information you should know

This vaccine needs to be stored at 2-8 degrees centigrade or it loses its strength. This vaccine should be injected in the upper arm or thigh.

Other medicines that may work

Hepatitis B immune globulin

hydrocortisone or cortisol (Eczacort, Hycotil, Solu-Cortef, others) CAUTION

Hydrocortisone is an anti-swelling and anti-itch skin cream used to treat rashes. It is also useful for treating hemorrhoids (piles). In its injection form and as tablets it is an important drug for treating allergic shock.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Cream or ointment: 1% Tablets: 5, 10, and 20 mg Liquid for injection and powder for mixing for injection: various strengths

How much and when to take



For rash, itching or piles: Apply cream directly on skin 3 or 4 times a day. For allergic shock: Inject 500 mg into muscle, repeat in 4 hours if needed. If signs return later take 500 to 1000 mg by mouth and repeat once if needed.

Side effects



Cream may cause thinning and scarring of skin if used for more than 10 days.



Do not use cream with a bandage covering. Pregnant and breastfeeding women should use tablets with caution, but can safely use cream.

Signs taking too much



High blood pressure, passing more urine than usual.

Other medicines that may work

for allergic shock dexamethasone for allergies or itching: diphenhydramine

hydroxyzine (Atarax, Iterax, Marax, My-Pam, Vistaril)

Hydroxyzine is an antihistamine used for allergic reactions, to control itching, and sometimes to treat nausea, vomiting, and anxiety.

In what forms does this medicine come?

S.¢

CAUTION

Tablets: 25, 50 or 100 mg For injection: 25 or 50 mg

How much and when to take

For itching: Take 25 to 50 mg by mouth 3 or 4 times a day. To relieve anxiety: Take 25 to 50 mg by mouth 4 times a day, For moderate allergic reactions or allergic shock: Inject into muscle: 25 mg for children, 50 mg.

Who should not take this medicine?

X

Do not use during first 3 months of pregnancy. In the rest of pregnancy or if breastfeeding, use only if there is no other choice. Do not use this drug if you must stay

alert.

Side effects



Causes dry mouth, sleepiness, and may cause loss of appetite.

Signs taking too much



Sleepiness

Other medicines that may work

for itching, allergy or allergic shock: diphenhydramine, promethazine for anxiety: diazepam

ibuprofen (Actiprofen, Advil, Genpril, Motrin, Nuprin, Rufen, others)

Ibuprofen works against pain, swelling, and fever. It is very useful to relieve discomfort during monthly bleeding and pain from arthritis and AIDS.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 200 mg and larger Liquid: 100 mg per 5 ml

How much and when to take

Take 200 to 400 mg 4 to 6 times a day. Do not take more than 2400 mg daily.

Who should not take this medicine?



People with stomach ulcers. Pregnant women during the last 3 months.

Side effects



May cause stomach irritation or pain.



Avoid taking within a week of surgery.

Information you should know

X

Works best if taken with food, especially dairy products, at mealtimes.

Other medicines that may work

for pain, swelling and fever: aspirin for pain and fever: acetaminophen

for severe pain: codeine, morphine

isoniazid (Bisonid, INH, Isoniazdum, isonicotinic acid hvdrazide, Odinah, Zidrid) D:/cd3wddvd/NoExe/Master/dvd001/.../meister13.htm Isoniazid is used to treat tuberculosis (TB) in combination with other medicines. See Chapter 25.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Tablet: 100 or 300 mg Syrup: 50 mg per 5 ml

How much and when to take

× Contraction

The doses for tuberculosis medicines differ from region to region. See a health worker.

Who should not take this medicine?



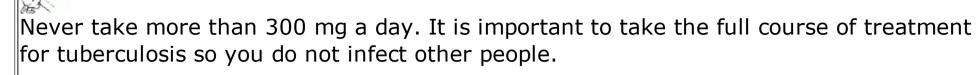
Anyone who has hepatitis, liver disease, or has taken isoniazid before and had liver problems, should not take this drug.

Side effects



May cause pain or numbness in arms and legs. Sometimes isoniazid may cause severe hepatitis with signs like tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, dark urine or yellowing of eyes. If this happens, stop taking this medicine immediately.

Information you should know



Signs taking too much



Nausea, vomiting, dizziness, slurred speech, blurred vision. If you take too much, take 1 g of pyridoxine (vitamin B6).

kanamycin *(Kantrex)*

Kanamycin is a very strong antibiotic of the aminoglycoside family that is used to treat gonorrhea and other serious infections. Kanamycin should only be used when other, safer antibiotics are not available.

In what forms does this medicine come?



In vials for injection: 75, 500, or 1000 mg Powder for mixing for injections: 1 g in 2 ml Tablets: 500 mg

How much and when to take



For severe infection: Give this medicine according to a woman's weight: inject into

muscle 15 mg for every kg of weight, divided into 2 doses (morning and night), for 5 to 7 days; or *you can use the following dose:* Inject 500 mg into muscle 2 times a day for 5 to 7 days.

For gonorrhea: Inject 2 g into muscle 1 time only.

Who should not take this medicine?



Pregnant women or people with kidney problems should not use this drug. Do not use this drug if you are allergic to other antibiotics of the aminoglycoside family.

Side effects

This drug can damage the kidneys or cause deafness.



R

Use a different medicine if hearing problems or ringing in the ears start. Give with plenty of fluids.

Information you should know

Because of the serious side effects and the difficulty of calculating the dosage, this drug should only be used when safer antibiotics are not available.

Signs taking too much

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Ringing in the ears or worsening of hearing. Kidney problems.

Other medicines that may work

for serious infection or for gonorrhea: cefixime, ceftriaxone, norfloxacin

ketoconazole (*Nizoral*)

Ketoconazole is a strong anti-fungus medicine that is used to treat thrush and other yeast infections. Use only if you have AIDS and other remedies do not work. It is expensive and sometimes hard to find.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 200 mg Also comes as skin cream and shampoo: 2%

How much and when to take



For fungal infection: Take 200 mg by mouth once a day for 10 days. *For yeast infection inside the mouth (thrush):* Take 200 mg by mouth 2 times a day for 14 days.

Side effects



May cause nausea, vomiting.

Warning

Use with caution if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Do not put cream or shampoo in vagina. Take with food. If taken by mouth, it may give you hot flashes if you also drink alcohol.

Information you should know

This medicine works best if taken with orange juice or another citrus fruit.

Other medicines that may work

for yeast infections without STDs: nystatin, clotrimazole.

magnesium sulfate

Magnesium sulfate is the best medicine to prevent convulsions in pregnant women with toxemia.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Injections of 10%, 12.5%, 25%, or 50% solution.

How much and when to take

For *convulsions:* Inject 10 g into muscle.

Who should not take this medicine?



Women with kidney problems should not be given this drug.



Only use this drug if a woman's blood pressure is over 160/110, After giving, continue to check her blood pressure. Too much of this medicine can slow down or stop her breathing!

Information you should know



Injecting a large amount needs a big needle and may be uncomfortable. You might want to split the dose in half and give 2 smaller shots, one in each hip.

Signs taking too much



Sweating, low blood pressure, weakness, problems breathing.

Other medicines that may work

For convulsions: diazepam

medroxyprogesterone acetate

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(Amen, Curretab, Cycrin, Depo-Provera, Megestron, Provera) CAUTION

Medroxyprogesterone acetate is a chemical form of progesterone, a hormone produced naturally in a woman's body. It can be used to treat irregular bleeding caused by changing hormones, especially around the time of menopause. For more information, see Chapter 8 "Older Women." For family planning, see Chapter 13.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Tablets: 2.5, 5, or 10 mg

How much and when to take

W Bar

For heavy bleeding: Take 10 mg once a day for 10 days. If bleeding continues, take for 10 more days.

Who should not take this medicine?



Women with hepatitis, or cancer of the breast or cervix should not take this medicine.



If bleeding continues after 20 days of treatment, see a health worker It could be a serious problem.

methyl ergonovine (Methergine)

Methyl ergonovine causes contractions of the womb and its blood vessels and is used to control heavy bleeding after childbirth. It is the same drug as ergometrine and ergonovine. See ergometrine.

metronidazole (Flagyl, Methoprotostat, Metro, Metroxyn, Satric) CAUTION

Metronidazole is used for vaginal infections caused by yeast and trichomonas. It is also effective against some bacteria and amebic dysentery (also see Where There is No Doctor).

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 200, 250, 400, or 500 mg Inserts: 500 mg For injection into vein: 500 mg in 100 ml

How much and when to take



For PID or infection after childbirth: Take 500 mg by mouth 2 times a day for 10 days *For mild vaginal infections:* Put one 500 mg insert in the vagina 2 times a day for 10 days.

For trichomonas, yeast, or bacterial vaginosis: Take 2 grams by mouth 1 time only, but not if you are pregnant. *If you are pregnant:* Take 400 mg by mouth 2 times a day for

7 days (to treat abnormal discharge with or without an STD, see drug combinations). For serious infection after abortion: Give 500 mg by mouth 4 times a day or inject 1 g into a vein 2 times a day (see treatment combinations recommended). For bloody diarrhea with or without fever: 500 mg 3 times a day for 7 days.

Who should not take this medicine?



People with liver problems like jaundice (yellow eyes).

Side effects



Metallic taste in mouth, dark urine, upset stomach or nausea, headache.



Stop taking it if you feel numb. If you are in the first 3 months of pregnancy, try not to use this medicine. If you must, do not take the one large dose during pregnancy. But if you are breastfeeding, the 1 large dose is the safest way to take it.

Information you should know

X

Your sexual partner should also be treated. Do not drink alcohol, not even 1 been while you are taking metronidazole. It will make you feel very nauseous.

Other medicines that may work

for yeast and trichomonas: tinidazole

miconazole (Daktarin, Fungtopic, Micatin, Monistat)

Miconazole is an anti-fungus medicine used to treat vaginal yeast and other fungus infections.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Cream: 2% Inserts: 100 mg and 200 mg

How much and when to take



For yeast infections: Cream: put 5 g in the vagina every night for 7 days. 100 mg inserts: put 1 in the vagina every night for 7 days. 200 mg inserts: put 1 in the vagina every night for 7 days.

Who should not take this medicine?



Women in the first 3 months of pregnancy.

Side effects



Irritation



If miconazole irritates you, stop using it. Avoid having sex for 3-4 days so you do not pass it to your partner Keep it out of your eyes.

Other medicines that may work

for yeast infections: nystatin, clotrimazole, Gentian Violet or ketaconazole

mifepristone (RU 486)

CAUTION

Mifepristone, used together with misoprostol or other drugs, can be used for abortion. This drug is available now only through special programs in some countries, and is given in clinics and hospitals where the woman can be watched and treated for complications.

In what forms does this medicine come?

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Tablets: 200 mg

How much and when to take



For medical abortion: 600 mg is given 1 time before the woman is 2 months pregnant. After 48 hours, another medicine such as misoprostol (400 mcg) is placed high in the vagina.

Who should not take this medicine?

Women who are more than 9 weeks from their last monthly bleeding.

Information you should know



After cramping and heavy bleeding, the abortion is usually completed within 48 hours after the second medicine is given.

If this medicine fails, an abortion by manual vacuum aspiration (MVA) or dilation and curettage (D and C) may be necessary. (See *Chapter 15*, "Abortion.")

Other medicines that may work

misoprostol

misoprostol (Cytotec)

CAUTION 🖉

Misoprostol is used for stomach ulcers. It can be used for abortion because it makes the womb contract, bleed, and expel the pregnancy.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 100 or 200 mcg

How much and when to take



For medical abortion: Place 400 mcg high in the vagina. If bleeding has not started in 12 hours, repeat. If bleeding still has not started, wait 2 weeks and try again.

Who should not take this medicine?



Women after the third month of pregnancy must not use this medicine. It could cause the womb to split open.

Side effects



May cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and headache. If breastfeeding, will cause diarrhea in infants.



Do not use more than 400 mcg at once or take it more often than every 12 hours because it can make the womb split open.

Information you should know

An abortion caused by misoprostol may take several hours to several days to finish. Most of the time, complete abortion does not occur See a health worker after bleeding has begun to have the womb emptied completely.

Signs taking too much



Severe pain in the belly and very heavy bleeding. Get medical help immediately.

nitrofurantoin (Furadantin, Macrobid, Macrodantin)

CAUTION 6

Nitrofurantoin is an antibiotic used to treat kidney and bladder infections.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 25, 50 or 100 mg

How much and when to take

For bladder infections: 50 mg 4 times a day for 7 days. For kidney infections: 100 mg 4 times a day for 7 days.

Who should not take this medicine?



People with kidneys that did not work well before they got an infection. Women in their last month of pregnancy.

Side effects



Nausea or vomiting, headaches, passing gas.

Signs taking too much



Vomiting, chest pains.

Other medicines that may work

for bladder or kidney infections: ampicillin, amoxicillin, co-trimoxazole, erythromycin, norfloxacin

norfloxacin (Lexinor, Noroxin, Uritracin)

Norfloxacin is an antibiotic of the quinolone family used to treat gonorrhea, bladder and kidney infections, and serious cases of diarrhea.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Tablets: 400 mg

How much and when to take

For bladder infections: Take 1 tablet 2 times a day for 3 days, either 1 hour before eating or 2 hours after eating. For kidney infections: Take 1 tablet 2 times a day either 1 hour before eating or 2 hours

after eating for 10 days.

For PID, gonorrhea, or vaginal discharge with STDs: Take 800 mg one time only For diarrhea for people with AIDS: Take 400 mg 2 times a day for 5 days.

Who should not take this medicine?



Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or under 16 years old should not take norfloxacin. People with allergies to quinolone antibiotics should not take norfloxacin.

Side effects



May cause lightheadedness and increase the effect of caffeine.



Take with lots of water Do not take this drug while using antacids or vitamins that contain iron or zinc. If norfloxacin gives you an allergic reaction, stop using it.

Other medicines that may work

for bladder or kidney infections: ampicillin, amoxicillin, nitrofurantoin, co-trimoxazole, erythromycin for gonorrhea: ciprofloxacin, ceftriaxone, cefixime, kanamycin for diarrhea for people with AIDS: metronidazole, co-trimoxazole

nystatin (Dermodex, Mycostatin, Nilstat, Nystat)

Nvstatin is an anti-fungus medicine used to treat veast infections in the mouth (thrush), D:/cd3wddvd/NoExe/Master/dvd001/.../meister13.htm the vagina, or the skin.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Inserts: 100,000 U Lozenges for the mouth: 100,000 U Cream: 100,000 U per gram Liquid: 100,000 U per ml

How much and when to take



For mouth or throat infections: Three or four times a day put 1 ml of liquid in mouth, swish around both sides of mouth for 1 minute and swallow. Do this for 5 days.
For skin infections: Keep area dry and apply ointment 3 times a day.
For vaginal infections: Put cream inside the vagina twice daily for 10-14 days; or put 100,000 U insert inside the vagina at bedtime for 10-14 days.
For vaginal discharge not caused by STDs: Put 100,000 U insert in the vagina at bedtime for 7 nights.



If nystatin causes you irritation, stop using it. Avoid having sex for 3-4 days so you do not pass the infection to your partner

Information you should know

Nystatin works only against candida yeast infections, while miconazole works against other fungal infections as well. Clotrimazole may be less costly and easier to use.

Other medicines that may work

for yeast infections: miconazole, ketoconazole, clotrimazole, vinegar or Gentian Violet

oxytocin (Oxtimon, Pitocin, Syntocinon, Uteracon)

Oxytocin is used to cause contractions of the womb and its blood vessels to control heavy bleeding after childbirth or if the placenta takes more than 1 hour to come out.

In what forms does this medicine come?



For injection: 10 Units in 1 ml

How much and when to take



Inject 10 Units into muscle after the baby is born. Repeat every 10 minutes if needed.

Side effects



Oxytocin can cause the womb to contract so strongly that it will not relax after and may even tear the womb. Also, oxytocin can cause high blood pressure.



Do not use this drug to cause an abortion, because it could kill the woman before making her abort. (See *Chapter 15, "Abortion."*)

Using oxytocin to speed up labor or give strength to the mother in labor can be dangerous to both mother and child. Do not give it before the baby is out.

Other medicines that may work

for heavy bleeding after childbirth: ergometrine

paracetamol, acetaminophen (APAP, Panadol, Tempra, Tylenol, others)

Paracetamol and acetaminophen are 2 names for the same drug that is used to ease pain and lower fever. It is one of the safest pain killers. It does not cause stomach irritation and so it can be used instead of aspirin or ibuprofen by people with stomach ulcers. It can also be used by pregnant women, and is safe at lower doses for children.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 100, 325 and 500 mg Liquid: 120 or 160 mg per 5 ml Inserts: 300 mg Drops: 80 mg per 0.8 ml

How much and when to take

500 to 1000 mg by mouth 4 to 6 times a day.

Who should not take this medicine?

Do not take acetaminophen if you have liver or kidney damage.



If your fever or pain lasts for more than 3 days, get medical help. Acetaminophen can cause liver damage if you take too much or if taken with or after drinking alcohol.

Information you should know



Acetominophen does not cure the sickness, it only eases the pain or the fever. It is important to find the cause of the pain or fever and cure that

Signs taking too much

Å

Nausea Vomiting Pain in the stomach

Other medicines that may work

for pain, fever, or swelling: aspirin, ibuprofen (do not take either if you are pregnant)

for severe pain: codeine

penicillin (Betapen VK, PenVee K, phenoxymethyl penicillin)

Penicillin is an antibiotic used to treat mouth, tooth, skin, womb and many other D:/cd3wddvd/NoExe/Master/dvd001/.../meister13.htm

infections.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 250, 500 mg Liquid: 125 or 250 mg per 5 ml

How much and when to take



For womb infection after childbirth: 250 mg (which is the same as 400,000 U) by mouth 4 times a day for 7 days *For skin infection:* 250 mg by mouth 4 times a day for 10 days.

Who should not take this medicine?



Do not take if you are allergic to any antibiotics of the penicillin family.

Side effects



Rash

Warning Watch for allergic reactions and allergic shock

Other medicines that may work

for skin infection: ampicillin, amoxicillin, erythromycin for infection after childbirth: procaine penicillin, amoxicillin, metronidazole

podophyllin (Condylox, Podocon-25)

Podophyllin is a liquid that can be put directly on genital warts to shrink them.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Liquid: 10% to 25%

How much and when to take



Apply liquid to warts with a cotton swab or clean cloth rolled to a fine point. Wash it off carefully with soap and water after 4 hours. Use once a week for 4 weeks.

Who should not take this medicine?

Do not use this if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Side effects



Podophyllin can be very irritating to skin.

Warning

Do not put on bleeding warts. If severe skin irritation occurs, do not use it again.

Information you should know

Podophyllin is very irritating to healthy skin. Protect the area around the wart with petroleum gel before using podophyllin.

Signs taking too much



Nausea, vomiting, belly pain, diarrhea. Too much might cause the skin to thin, break, and bleed.

Other medicines that may work

for genital warts: trichloracetic acid, bichloracetic acid

probenecid (Benemid, Probalan)



Used with some antibiotics of the penicillin family, probenecid increases the amount of penicillin in the blood and makes it last longer, increasing the effectiveness of treatment.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 500 mg

How much and when to take

× Contraction

Take 500 mg to 1 gram by mouth each time you use an antibiotic from the penicillin family.

Who should not take this medicine?



Do not give probenecid to children under 2 years old.

Side effects



It sometimes causes headache, nausea, or vomiting.



Use with caution during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and if you have a stomach ulcer.

Signs taking too much



Vomiting

procaine penicillin (Benzylpenicillin Procaine, Bicillin C-R, Crysticillin, Duracillin AS, Penadur, Pfizepen AS, Wycillin)

Procaine penicillin is an antibiotic used to treat womb and other infections. D:/cd3wddvd/NoExe/Master/dvd001/.../meister13.htm

In what forms does this medicine come?

For injection: vials of 300,000, 400,00 or 600,000 Units Powder for mixing for injection: 1 gram = 1 million Units

How much and when to take



For womb infection after childbirth: Inject 800,000 Units into muscle 2 times a day for 7 days

For fever during pregnancy: Inject 1.2 million Units every 12 hours while you take the woman for medical treatment.

Who should not take this medicine?



Do not use this drug if you are allergic to antibiotics of the penicillin family.



Use with caution if you have asthma. Do not use with tetracycline. Never inject this into the vein.

Information you should know

When taken with probenecid, the amount of penicillin in the blood increases and lasts

longer making the treatment more effective.

Other medicines that may work

for fever during pregnancy: ampicillin for womb infection after childbirth: amoxicillin, metronidazole, penicillin

progesterone, progestin



Progestin is a chemical found in birth control pills and injections that is similar to the hormone progesterone produced in women's bodies. It is also used to treat irregular bleeding caused by changing levels of hormones. For information about birth control pills, injections, and emergency pills, **see Chapter 13.**

promethazine (Mepergan, Phenergan, Thaprozine)

CAUTION 🍓 🖉

Promethazine is an antihistamine that dries up mucus and makes you drowsy. It is used for allergic reactions, to sleep at night, and to help stop uncontrollable vomiting.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Tablets: 10, 12.5 or 25 mg Syrup: 5 mg per 5 ml Injection: ampules of 25 mg in 1 ml Rectal inserts: 12.5, 25, or 50 mg

How much and when to take



For moderate allergic reaction: Give 25 mg by mouth or injection into muscle. Repeat in 8 hours or sooner if needed.

For allergic shock: Inject 50 mg into muscle. Repeat in 8 hours or sooner if needed.

For vomiting: Inject 25 to 50 mg every 6 hours as needed.

For sleep: Take 25 to 50 mg at bedtime.

Who should not take this medicine?



Pregnant and breastfeeding women should not use this drug for long-term treatment. Do not take this if you need to stay alert.

Side effects



Often causes dry mouth and blurry vision. In rare cases, may cause twitching movements of body, face or eyes.



Pregnant and breastfeeding women should take with caution. Do not drive or use heavy machines if you are taking this medicine.

Signs taking too much



Unconsciousness, seizures.

Other medicines that may work

for allergy or allergic reaction: diphenhydramine, hydroxyzine

pyrazinamide (Isopas, Pyzamed, PZA, Zinamide, Zinastat)

Pyrazinamide is used to treat tuberculosis (TB) (see Chapter 25).

In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 500 mg

How much and when to take



The doses for tuberculosis medicines differ from region to region. See a health worker

Who should not take this medicine?

X

People with liver damage or hepatitis should not take this medicine.

Side effects



Yellow skin or eyes, fever, loss of appetite, tiredness, liver tenderness, gout or arthritis. If

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you have any of these problems, get medical help.



Pregnant and breastfeeding women should avoid this drug since its effects on the baby are not known. It is very important that you take the entire course of treatment for tuberculosis. If not, you might infect other people.

rifampicin (Resimin, rifampin, Rifastat)

CAUTION 🖉

Rifampicin is an antibiotic used to treat tuberculosis (TB) (see Chapter 25) and other kinds of infections, including leprosy (Hansen's Disease).

In what forms does this medicine come?

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Tablets: 150 or 300 mg Liquid: 50 mg per 5 ml Ampules for injection: 600 mg

How much and when to take

Doses for tuberculosis medicines differ from region to region. See a health worker

Who should not take this medicine?



People with liver damage or liver disease should not take this medicine.

Side effects



- Nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, diarrhea, cramps
- Hot face, itching, rash
- Headaches, fever; chills, bone pain
- Yellow skin or eyes

Except for yellow skin or eyes, these side effects usually happen 2 to 3 hours after taking this medicine and can sometimes be avoided by taking the medicine with food.

Information you should know



May turn your urine, stool, tears, sweat, or spit a red-orange color It is very important that you take the entire course of treatment for tuberculosis so you do not infect others.

streptomycin



Streptomycin is an antibiotic of the aminoglycoside family used to treat tuberculosis (TB). It is given only by injection into muscle. It is used for TB in combination with other medicines. See Chapter 25.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Liquid for injection: 400 mg per ml

How much and when to take

- AND -

The doses for tuberculosis medicines differ from region to region. See a health worker

Who should not take this medicine?



Pregnant women should not use streptomycin because it can cause deafness in the baby. People with allergies to antibiotics of the aminoglycoside family like gentamicin should not take this drug. People with kidney problems should use with caution.

Side effects



May damage hearing or balance, and can cause a rash.

Information you should know

Wear gloves if you touch this medicine often because it can cause a serious rash.

It is very important that you take the entire course of treatment for tuberculosis. If not, you might infect other people.

SUIIISUNALUIC (Jaiili ISIII) CAUTION

Sulfisoxazole is an antibiotic of the sulfonamide family used to treat bladder infections.

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In what forms does this medicine come?



Tablets: 500 mg Liquid: 500 mg per 5 ml

How much and when to take



For bladder infections: Take 1,000 mg by mouth 4 times a day for 10 days.

Side effects



Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, rashes, headaches.

Who should not take this medicine?

Pregnant women should not take this drug in the last 3 months. Do not give Sulfisoxazole to anyone who has allergies to sulfa antibiotics or kidney problems.

Information you should know



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Drink at least 2 liters of water every day when you are taking Sulfisoxazole.

Other medicines that may work

for bladder infection: amoxicillin, ampicillin, co-trimoxazole

tetanus toxoid (Tetavax)

Tetanus toxoid is an immunization given to prevent a tetanus infection. It can be given during or after pregnancy, or after an abortion. If a woman gets 2 injections (or better still, 3 injections) when pregnant, it will also prevent this deadly infection in her newborn baby.

In what forms does this medicine come?

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Liquid for injection: 4, 5, or 10 U per 0.5 ml
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How much and when to take



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To be safe from tetanus for your entire life, you must get 5 immunization injections, and then one injection every 10 years.

For each immunization: Give 1 injection of 0.5 ml into the muscle of the upper arm.

Side effects



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Pain, redness, warmth, slight swelling.
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Information you should know



Tetanus immunizations should be given to everyone, starting in childhood. Tetanus immunization is often given to children as part of a combined immunization called DPT and the three DPT immunizations are equal to the first 2 tetanus toxoid immunizations.

The schedule below gives the *minimum* time in between injections for adults.

First	As soon as possible
Second	4 weeks after the first
Third	6 months after the
Fourth	1 year after the third
Fifth	1 year after the

tetracycline (Achromycin, Sumycin, Terramycin, Theracine, Unimycin)

Tetracycline is an antibiotic of the tetracycline family. It is used to treat many infections including chlamydia, syphilis, pelvic inflammatory disease, kidney and bladder infections, respiratory infections, diarrhea, and other infections. Doxycycline works for all the same infections, costs less and is easier to take

In what forms does this medicine come?



Capsules: 100, 250, or 500 mg Ointment: 1%

How much and when to take



For chlamydia: 500 mg 4 times a day for 7 days (also take other medicines). **For syphilis:** 500 mg 4 times a day for 15 days (also take other medicines). *For PID:* 500 mg 4 times a day for 10 days.

For baby eye-care: a bit of ointment in each eye at birth, one time only.

Who should not take this medicine?



Do not use tetracycline if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Do not give to children under 9 years old except for baby eye care. Do not take if allergic to antibiotics of the tetracycline family.



Do not take within 1 hour of eating dairy products or antacids. Do not take if past expiration date.

Information you should know

Tetracycline does no good in fighting common colds or preventing STD infections.

Side effects

you spend a lot of time in the sun it can cause skin rashes. It may cause diarrhea or

upset stomach.

Other medicines that may work

for chlamydia: amoxicillin, erythromycin for syphilis: benzathine penicillin for PID: amoxicillin for baby eye-care: erythromycin ointment

thiacetazone

CAUTION 🍓 🗳

This drug is combined with isoniazid to fight tuberculosis (TB). **People who have the HIV** virus must not take this drug! See Chapter 25.

In what forms does this medicine come?

Tablets: 50 mg with 100 mg of isoniazid

How much and when to take

× Post

The doses for tuberculosis medicines differ from region to region. See a health worker

Who should not take this medicine?

A

People who have the HIV virus must not take this drug because it can cause severe, even deadly allergic reactions, and can make their skin peel off. People with liver or kidney problems should also not use this drug.

Side effects



Rashes, vomiting, dizziness, loss of appetite. Sometimes causes uncontrollable laughing.

trichloroacetic acid, bichloroacetic acid

Either trichloroacetic acid or bichloroacetic acid can be used to treat genital warts.

In what forms does this medicine come?



Liquids in strengths between 10% and 35%

How much and when to take



Put only on wart once a week for 1 to 3 weeks as needed.

Side effects



Trichloroacetic acid will hurt or destroy normal skin if spilled.

ЩH

Use very carefully. It can burn normal skin badly enough to cause a scar.

Information you should know



First protect the area around the wart with petroleum gel. Then put on trichloroacetic acid. It will hurt for 15 to 30 minutes. If it spills onto normal skin, wash it off with soap and water You can also put baby powder (talc) or baking soda on spills.

Other medicines that may work

for genital warts: podophyllin

ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES (BIRTH CONTROL PILLS)

Most birth control pills contain 2 hormones similar to those produced in a woman's body to control her monthly bleeding. These hormones are called estrogen and progesterone (progestin). The pills come under many different brand names with different strengths and combinations for the 2 hormones. A few of the brand names are listed in the groups below.

Usually, brands that contain a smaller amount of both hormones are the safest and work best for most women. These "low dose" pills are found in Groups 1, 2, and 3.

Group 1 - Triphasic pills

These contain low amounts of both estrogen and progestin in a mix that changes

throughout the month. Since the amounts change, it is important to take the pills in order.

Brand names:

Logynon Tricyclen Trinovum Triphasil Synophase Trinordiol Triquilar

Group 2 - Low dose pills

These contain low amounts of estrogen (35 mcg of the estrogen "ethinyl estradiol" or 50 mcg of the estrogen "mestranol") and progestin in a mix that stays the same throughout the month.

Brand names:

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Brevicon 1 + 35
Norinyl 1 + 35, 1 + 50
Neocon
Noriday 1 + 50
Ortho-Novum 1/35, 1/50
Ovysmen 1/35
Norimin
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Group 3 - Low dose pills

These pills are high in progestin and low in estrogen (30 or 35 mcg of the estrogen "ethinyl estradiol").

Brand names:

Lo-Ovral Microvlar Lo-Femenal Microgynon 30 Nordette

To assure effectiveness and minimize spotting (small amounts of bleeding at other times than your normal monthly bleeding), take the pill at the same time each day, especially with pills that have low amounts of hormones. If spotting continues after 3 or 4 months, try one of the brands in Group 3. If there is still spotting after 3 months, try a brand from Group 4 (see the next page).

As a rule, women who take birth control pills have less heavy monthly bleeding. This may be a good thing, especially for women who are anemic. But if a woman misses her monthly bleeding for months or is disturbed by the very light monthly bleeding, she can change to a brand with more estrogen from Group 4.

For a woman who has very heavy monthly bleeding or whose breasts become painful before her monthly bleeding begins, a brand low in estrogen but high in

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progestin may be better. These pills are found in Group 3.

The higher progestin pills in Group 3 may sometimes cause or increase pimples or hair growth on your arms or upper lip. If this bothers you, you may want to change to a pill that is lower in progestin.

Women who continue to have spotting or miss their monthly bleeding when using a brand from Group 3, or who became pregnant before while using another type of pill, can change to a pill that has a little more estrogen. These "high dose" pills are found in Group 4.

Group 4 - High dose pills

These pills are higher in estrogen (50 mcg of the estrogen "ethinyl estradiol") and most are also higher in progestin.

Brand names:

Eugynon Femenal Minovlar Neogynon Nordiol Norlestrin Ovcon 50 Ovral Primovlar

If spotting continues even when taking pills from Group 4, the brands Ovulen and Demulen will often stop it. But these are very strong in estrogen and so are rarely recommended. They are sometimes useful for women with severe acne.

Women who are disturbed by morning sickness or other side effects after 2 or 3 months of taking birth control pills, and women who have a higher risk for blood clots, should try a Triphasic birth control pill, low in both estrogen and progestin, from Group I,

Women who are breastfeeding, or who should not use regular pills because of headaches or mild high blood pressure, may want to use a pill with only progestin. These pills in Group 5 are also called "mini-pills."

Group 5 - Progestin only pills

These pills, also known as "mini-pills," contain only progestin.

Brand names:

Femulen Mocrolut Micronor Mocronovum Nor-Q D Ovrette

These pills should be taken at the same time every day, even during the monthly bleeding. Menstrual bleeding is often irregular. There is also an increased chance

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of pregnancy if even a single pill is forgotten.

EMERGENCY FAMILY PLANNING (EMERGENCY PILLS)

Emergency pills are special doses of certain birth control pills for a woman who has had unprotected sex and wants to avoid pregnancy. Using birth control pills this way is safe, even for many women who should not use pills all the time.

Dose:

The sooner you take the pills after unprotected sex, the more likely you will not get pregnant. For emergency family planning, carefully follow these instructions:

Take 2 "high dose" birth control pills from GROUP 4 within 3 days of unprotected sex, followed by 2 more GROUP 4 pills 12 hours later.

or

Take 4 "low dose" birth control pills from GROUP 2 or GROUP 3 within 3 days of unprotected sex, followed by 4 more GROUP 2 or GROUP 3 pills 12 hours later.

or

Take 20 progestin only pills or "mini-pills" from GROUP 5 within 2 days of unprotected sex, followed by 20 more GROUP 5 pills 12 hours later.

New birth control pills have been developed just for emergency family planning and may be available where you live. Some brand names include: *PC4, Postinor-2,*

and *Tetragynon*. With *Postinor-2,* for example, which contains only progestin, you take 1 pill within 2 days of unprotected sex, followed by 1 more pill 12 hours later.

Side effects:

More than half of all women who use emergency pills will have nausea and even vomiting. If vomiting occurs within 3 hours after taking the pills, another dose must be taken. If vomiting is a problem for you, you can take 25 mg of promethazine by mouth 2 times a day (see Green Pages). Or, instead of taking the emergency pills by mouth you can place them high in the vagina. This method works just as well to prevent pregnancy. It does not reduce the side effects of nausea or vomiting, but it does prevent you from vomiting the pills.

Progestin only pills cause less nausea and vomiting, but must be taken within 2 days of unprotected sex.

INJECTABLE CONTRACEPTIVES

With this type of family planning, an injection of hormones is given to a woman every 1, 2 or 3 months, depending on the brand. It is very effective.

Two brand names, *Depo Provera* (DMPA) and *Noristerat* (Net-En) are progestin only injections. Like the mini-pill and implants, these injections may be a good choice for women who cannot take the regular pill because of medical risks or side effects. The dose for *Depo Provera* (DMPA) is 150 mg once every 3 months, and the dose for *Noristerat* (Net-En) is 200 mg once every 2 months.

Sometimes these injections cause sore breasts or nausea, or make women feel

tired. This usually goes away after two months. Some women have headaches or feel nervous, depressed or dizzy. Any side effects may last until the injection wears off. While some women can get pregnant 3 or 4 months after their last injection, other women have to wait up to 18 months to get pregnant again.

Do not use injectable contraceptives if you think you might be pregnant, if you have vaginal bleeding and do not know why, if you have liver problems, breast cancer, or blood clots in the legs, lungs, or eyes.

Two other brand names, *Cyclofem* and *Mesigyna,* are injections of both progestin and estrogen. These injections do not cause the problems with irregular bleeding that progestin only injections cause, but women who cannot take regular birth control pills because of medical risks or side effects should not use them. The dose for *Cyclofem* is 25 mg DMPA with 5 mg estradiol cypionate once every month, and the dose for *Mesigyna* is 50 mg Net-En with 5 mg estradiol valerate once every month.

With all injectable contraceptives, monthly bleeding may be irregular and often becomes very light or stops after the first year. This is not serious, but it worries some women. Older women may mistake this for menopause, stop getting injections and then become pregnant. If very heavy bleeding occurs, seek medical advice.

CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANT (NORPLANT)

Implants are a very convenient and effective form of birth control. Because they contain only progestin, they can be used by women who should not use regular

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pills because of headaches or mild high blood pressure.

Six small rubber tubes are put under the skin in a woman's upper arm by a specially trained health worker. They prevent pregnancy for about 5 years, but can be removed sooner if the woman wants to become pregnant. The tubes should be inserted 5-7 days after the woman starts her monthly bleeding.

SPERMICIDES

Spermicides are foams, jellies, and tablets which are placed in the vagina to kill sperm and prevent pregnancy. Some spermicides contain nonoxynol-9, which may also prevent some STDs, but not all brands have this. Remember, no spermicide can prevent the passing of the HIV virus which can give you AIDS. Use a condom.

Contraceptive foam (Delfen, Emko, Koromex)

Contraceptive foam is put in the vagina with a special applicator. The foam will kill sperm for 1 to 2 hours. You must put in another applicator full of foam every time you have sex. Foam prevents pregnancy better than inserts, jellies, or creams, and is very effective when used together with a condom.

Contraceptive inserts (Encare, Koromex, Neo Sampoon)

This is a tablet containing spermicide that a woman puts deep in her vagina near her cervix. The insert should be put in 10 to 15 minutes before having sex, and works for up to one hour. It is a fairly effective method of birth control alone, and very effective if used with a condom. Use one insert each time you have sex.

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Contraceptive jellies and creams (Conceptrol, Koromex, Ortho Gynol)

Jellies and creams work best with a diaphragm. They do not cover the vagina as well as foam or inserts. They are put in the vagina with an applicator and kill sperm for at least 1 hour. Used with a diaphragm, they work for 6 to 8 hours. For even better protection against pregnancy and to prevent STDs or HIV infection, also use a condom.



