

# **AT** MICROFICHE REFERENCE LIBRARY

A project of Volunteers in Asia

## Better Child Care

by: Helen Laugesen

Published by:

Voluntary Health Association of India  
C-14 Community Centre  
Safdarjung Development Area  
New Delhi 110-016  
India

Paper copies are \$1 plus postage to your country.  
For developing countries, \$.50 plus postage.

Available from:

Voluntary Health Association of India  
C-14 Community Centre  
Safdarjung Development Area  
New Delhi 110-016  
India

Reproduced by permission of the Voluntary Health  
Association of India.

Reproduction of this microfiche document in any  
form is subject to the same restrictions as those  
of the original document.



**Better Child Care**

This book is for all those who are interested in the care of children. It is specially for those who teach parents and relatives. It can be used in people's homes, in balwadis, schools, health centres, mahila mandals, and in fact in any place where workers teach parents about child care.

This book can be used by any worker giving child care and advice. It can be used as a *memory aid*. It reminds the worker to teach the most important messages for child care. It can also be used as a *teaching aid*. The worker uses the illustrations when she is talking to parents and relatives and village leaders.

Note : In this book the word *health worker* is used to include all those people trained to give health care and health teaching. This includes doctors, registered indigenous practitioners, registered nurses, A.N.M.s, L.H.V.s, multi-purpose workers and community health workers. It also includes trained *dais*, village health workers and others. This book is for these health workers, as well as for village level workers and those working in slums.



This is a village child aged 7 months. He is happy and healthy. This book shows how a mother can help her child to grow strong and healthy, even in the village. For this, a child needs good care and enough food. The mother should start giving this good care even before the child is born.



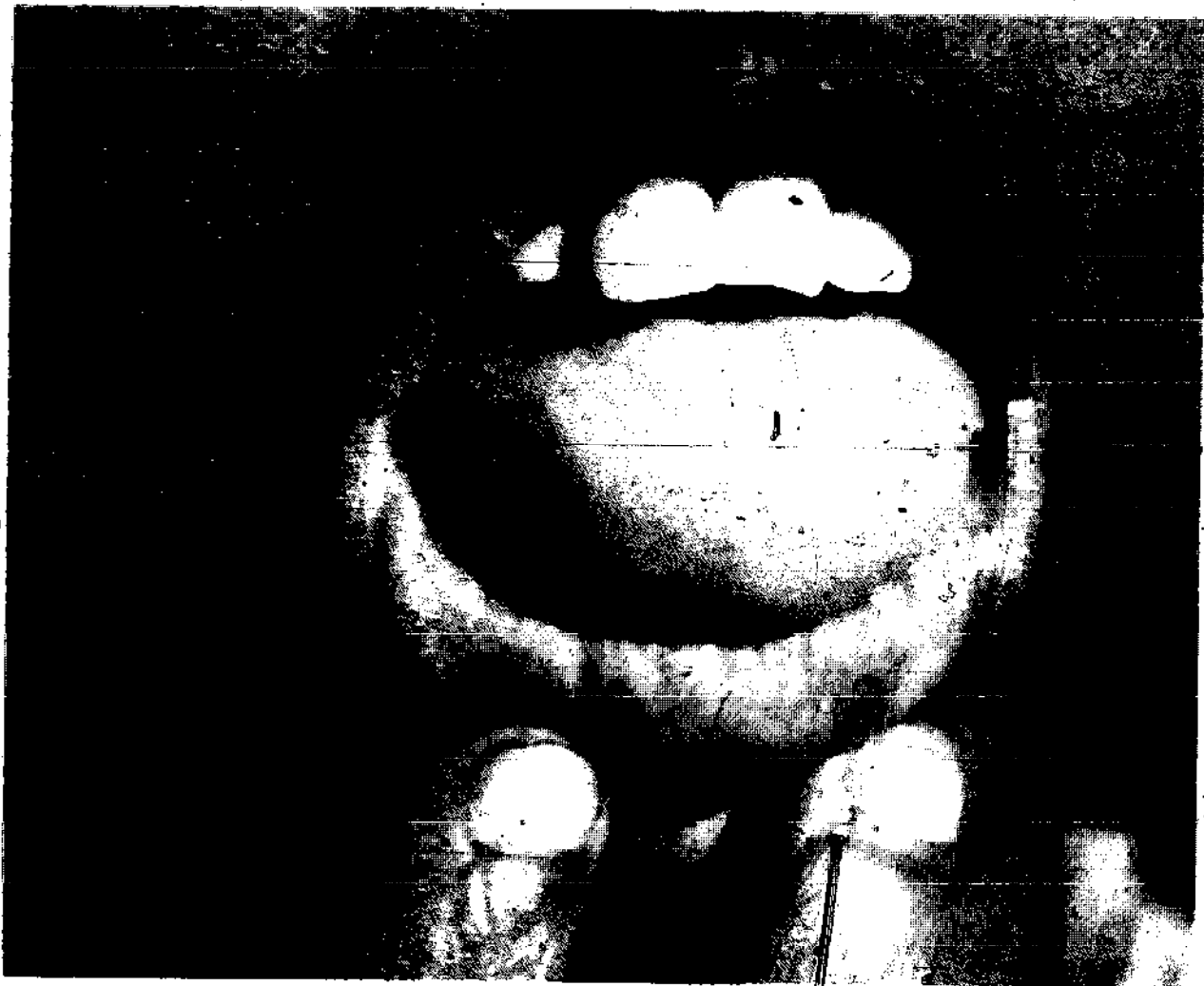
Every pregnant woman wants a healthy child. For this she has to eat more food while she is pregnant. She has to eat for two people. The pregnant woman needs food for herself and food for the baby growing inside her. When a mother eats enough food her baby grows healthy. This mother is eating *roti*, *khicheri* and *dal* with green leafy vegetables.



A pregnant woman does not need special foods. She should eat the same foods as usual, but she should eat more of these same foods. She needs to eat extra foods such as rice or wheat or maize or jowar or ragi, and she needs extra dals. She also needs to eat green leafy vegetables every day. She should cook a little extra food and put it aside for an extra meal.

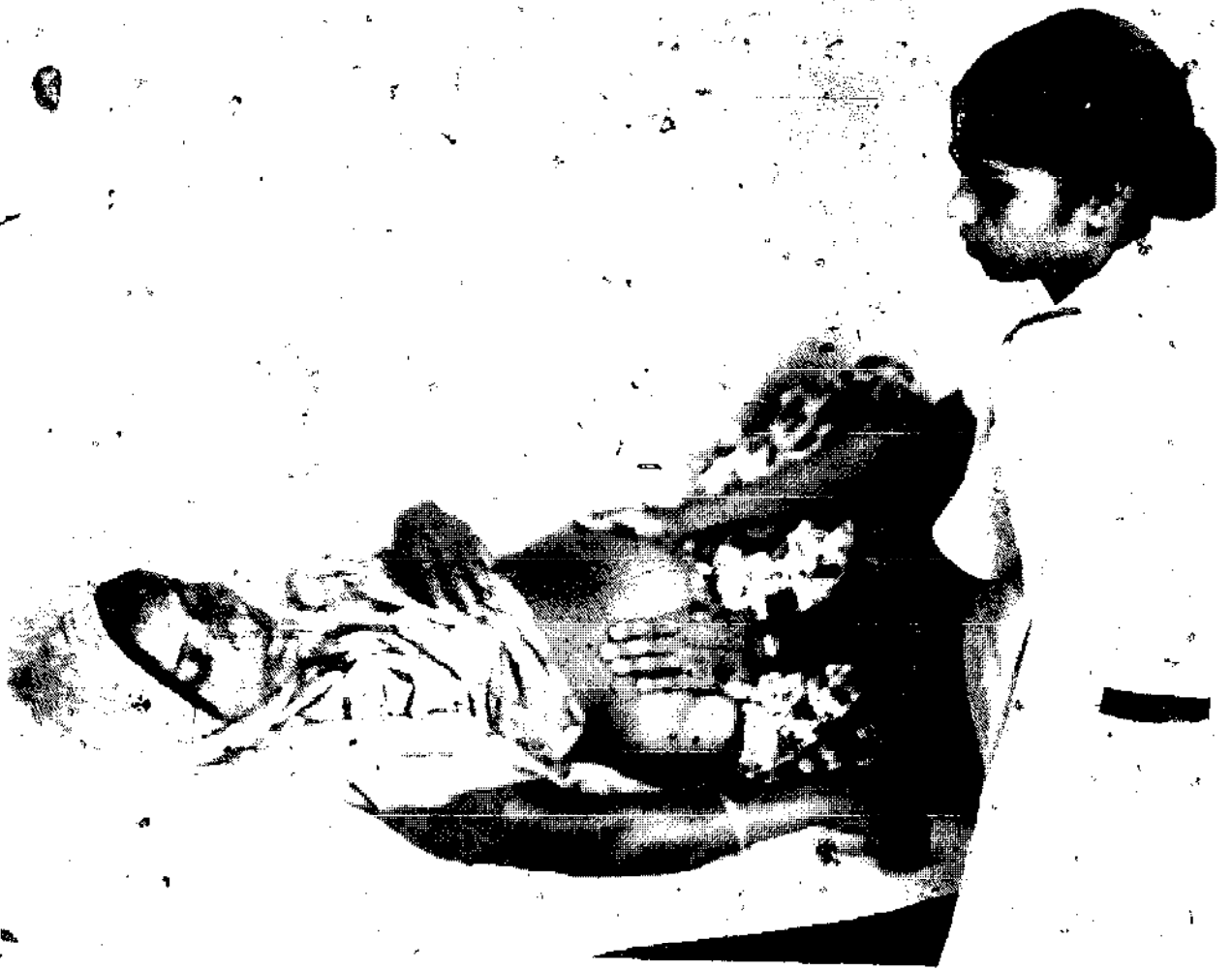


Sometimes a pregnant woman has pale lips and pale tongue. This is because she has a lack of good blood. This makes her weak. It also makes her baby small and weak. The delivery may be dangerous. The pregnant woman needs to take iron tablets with food every day to make her strong. She also needs to eat green leafy vegetables every day.



A healthy woman does not have pale lips and pale tongue. She has plenty of energy and is healthy for her delivery. This is because she has plenty of good blood. Iron tablets taken every day make a woman strong and healthy. Iron tablets are good for the blood. Green leafy vegetables are also good for the blood. When mother has good blood, baby grows strong. Baby also has good blood,





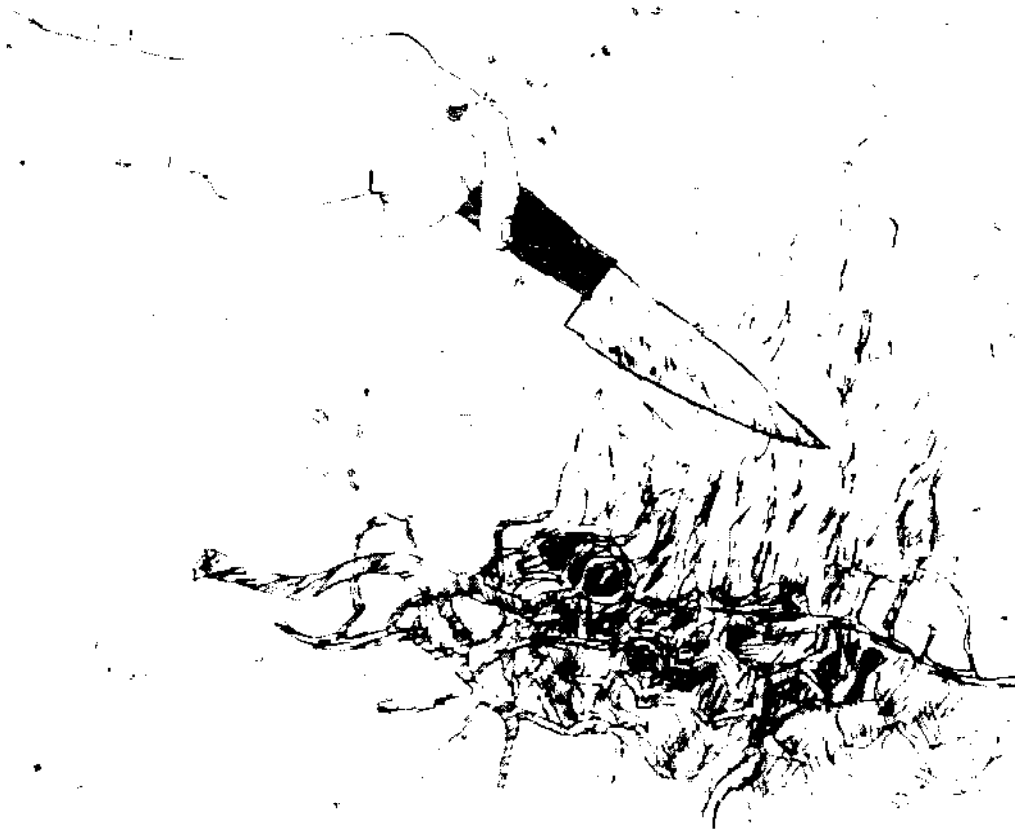
A pregnant woman should have check-ups from a trained health worker. She will give her the iron tablets for her blood. She will also tell how the baby is growing inside. She will advise the pregnant woman to eat extra food.



Sometimes newborn babies die of tetanus. The pregnant woman can protect her baby and herself from tetanus. She should go to the health worker for injections of tetanus toxoid to prevent tetanus. She should have the first injection early in pregnancy, and the last injection by the eighth month.



At the time of delivery, the pregnant woman needs a trained health worker or trained *dai*. The person doing the delivery should wash her hands with soap and water each time before she examines the woman. She should dry her hands in the air, not with a cloth. This helps to protect the woman from tetanus and from high fever after delivery.



The person doing the delivery should always clean the knife used to cut the cord of the baby. She holds the knife in the fire. She cools the knife in the air. Then she uses it to cut the cord. She uses a clean cloth to dress the cord. Cow dung and ash should never be used on the cord of the baby.



After baby is born, mother breast feeds him from the first day. If mother breast feeds her baby from the first day, mother's milk will come more quickly. The milk which comes in the first few days is good for baby. It is very good food for baby. This milk also protects baby from some diseases.



After baby is born, mother needs to eat as much food as possible. Then she will produce more milk for baby. Mother does not need special food at this time. She can eat the food she normally eats. But she needs to eat green leafy vegetables every day. Mother should visit the health centre each month to see that she and baby are healthy.



This mother has a new small baby. The mother is healthy because it is 3 years since her first child was born. The mother has had time to regain her strength. She gave good care to the other child for 3 years. Now she will give good care to the small baby. It is good for the health of both mother and baby if there is 3 years space between babies.



This mother is breast feeding her child. Mother's milk is clean and pure. It is good if baby gets this good milk for as long as possible. A healthy mother can breast feed her child till he is 2 or 3 years old. But when a child is four months old mother's milk does not give enough food. Baby needs to start eating other foods when he is four months old.





This mother is feeding soft food to her baby. He is only 4 months old. He is growing bigger. After 4 months mother's milk does not give baby enough food. So, baby needs extra soft food. Then he will grow well. If mother does not have enough milk, or there are twins, or mother has died, baby needs soft food **before** 4 months. This is very important



Usually a mother should start giving soft foods to baby when he is four months old. Porridge is a good first food for baby. Mother roasts a cereal such as wheat, maize, ragi or millet and grinds it finely. She can store this in a tin, and cook it with water or milk, a little at a time. Cooked rice can be given, mashed until it is very soft. Mother mixes the cooked food with a little milk or water to make it soft. She uses a spoon or a local feeding vessel to feed baby.



Often when baby first tastes such food he spits it out of his mouth. It tastes strange to him because he has not eaten it before. But mother should keep giving him the food. He will soon get used to it and learn to enjoy it.



Now baby is enjoying the new food. He needs a lot of food to grow strong. At first mother gives two spoons of food. Each day she gives the child a little more food. Soon the child is eating  $1/2$  cup of porridge or a whole banana in a day.

A small child has a small stomach. He cannot eat a lot of food at one time. So his mother should feed him often. She should give him as much food as possible. By **six months**, a child should eat five or six times a day. Then he will grow strong and healthy.



Morning



Afternoon



Evening



Night

When the child is six months old, mother chooses *one* or *two* of these foods each day—porridge, rice, bajra, jowar, ragi; dal, green leafy vegetables, banana, or other fruit.

Mother cooks the food without spices and mashes it. She adds a little ghee or oil to the food. Mother buys the foods which are less costly. She also buys the foods which ~~her~~ child likes to eat.

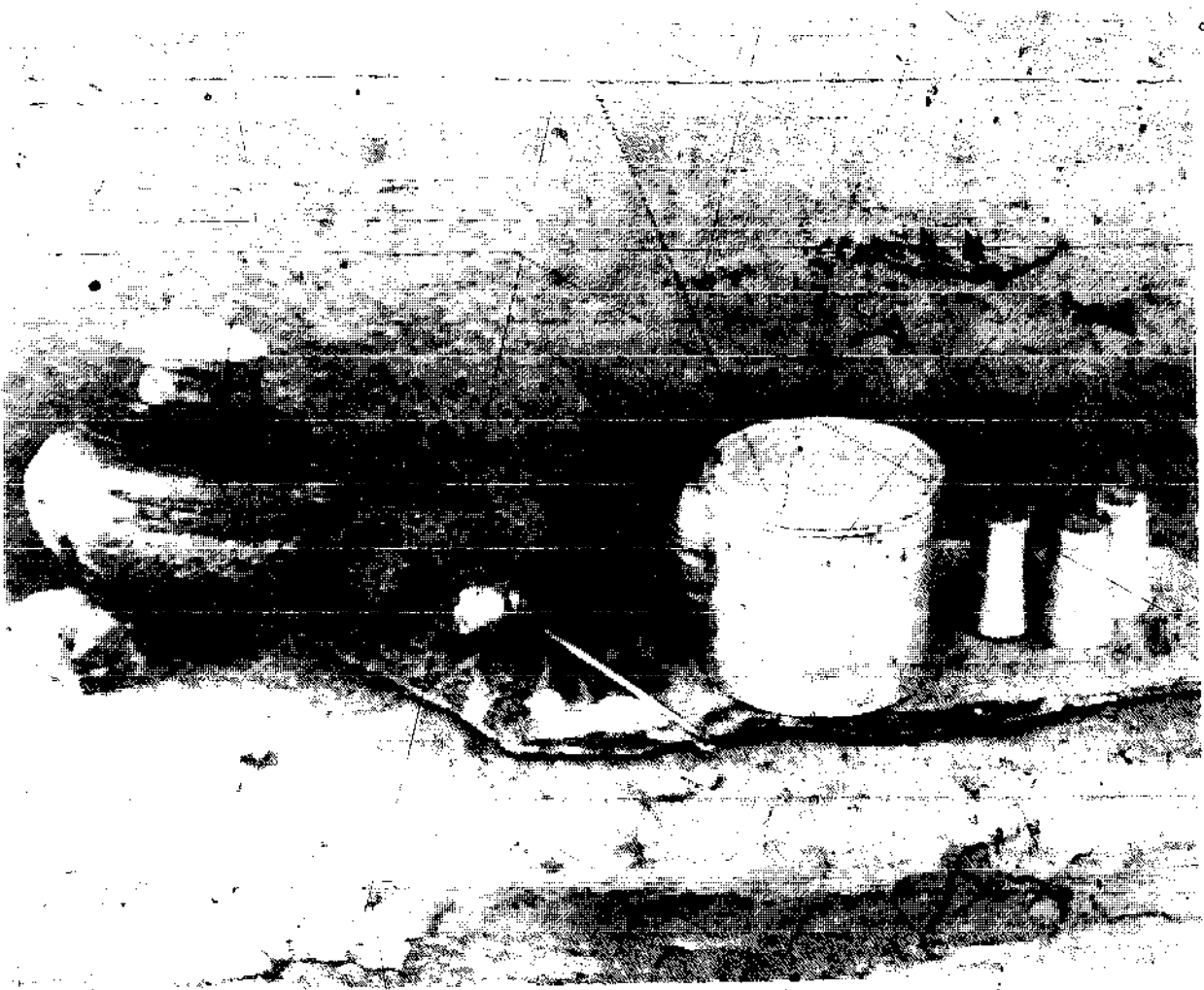


By the time a child is one year old, he should eat half as much food as his mother. The child may be much smaller than his mother, but he needs lots of food to grow properly. Mother gives this food in 5 or 6 meals. Then the child does not have too much food to eat at one time.

A one year old child needs this much food every day :

2 cups of rice: 2 small rotis: 1 cup dal:  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup green leafy vegetables: some oil, some gur, some milk, and any fruit or vegetable, the family can afford. In stead of rice, mother can give roti.  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of rice is equal to 1 roti



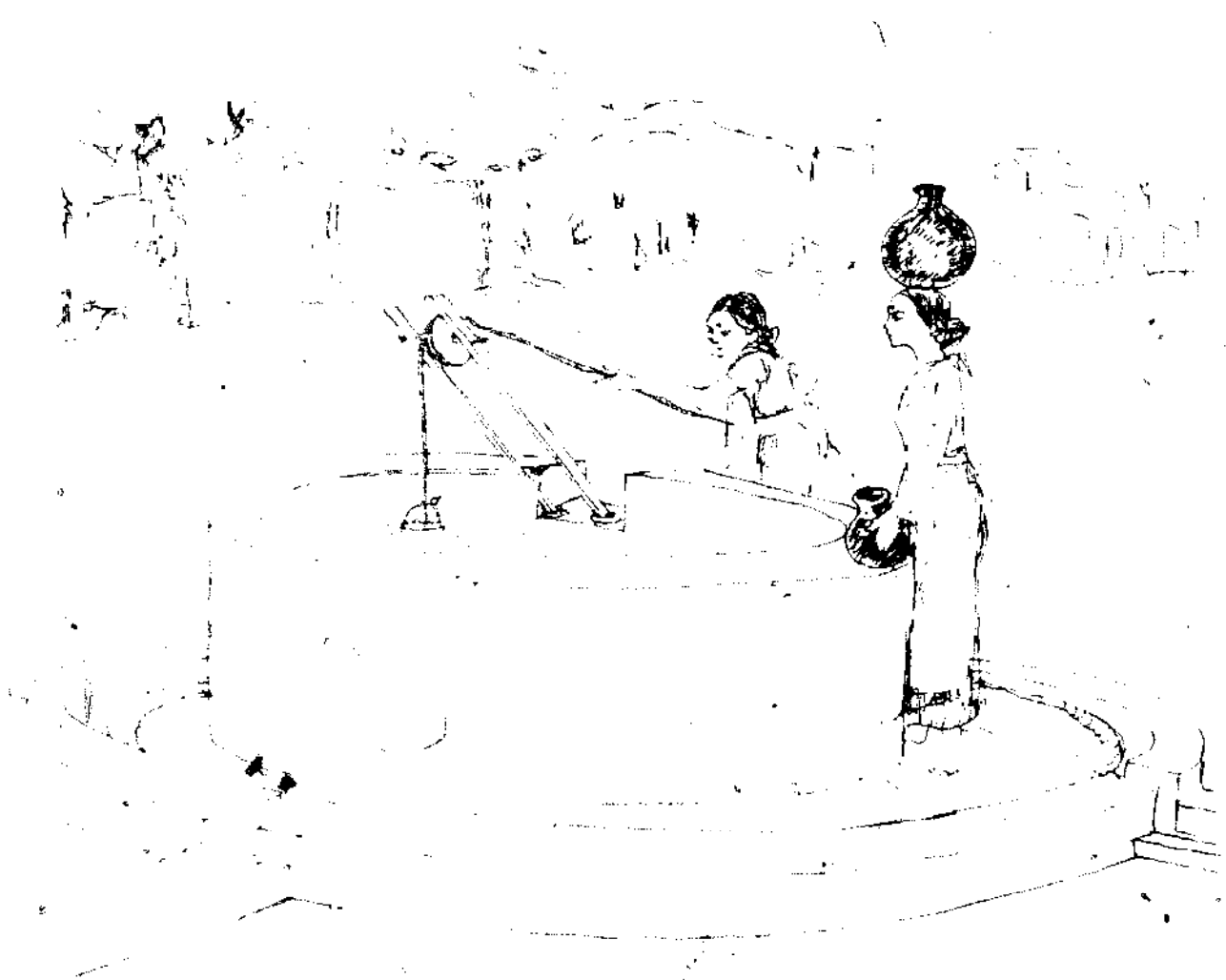


Children need clean food. Dust and flies and dirty hands make food dirty. Dirty food makes children sick. Mothers should cover food to keep out dust and flies. She should wash her hands before she prepares food. She should wash her hands before she feeds her child. And she should wash her child's hands before he eats.





A small child also needs water to drink especially in hot weather. A small child cannot tell mother that he is thirsty, but he needs water several times every day. Mother should take the water from a clean well and keep it in a covered container. If possible mother should boil the water for her small child.



This is a clean well. People do not bathe here. People do not wash their clothes by the well. There is a separate place for the animals to drink water. In many villages mothers get water from the wells or ponds which are not clean. Many illnesses are caused by dirty drinking water. For good health it is very important to have clean water to drink.

MARIAMMA  
# 3-94 kg  
7-12-70



Before



MARIAMMA  
# 7-33 kg  
24-7-71

4 months later

This thin child has not had enough food to eat. She needs to eat more food to grow strong and healthy.

This is the same child four months later. Her mother has given her more of the ordinary household food. Now she is much stronger and healthier.

How can mother find out if her child is growing properly ? The health worker can tell by weighing the child. Mother can ask the health worker to weigh her child when she visits the health centre every month. A good health worker will tell mother what the weight of the child is.

A healthy child should weigh this much or more :

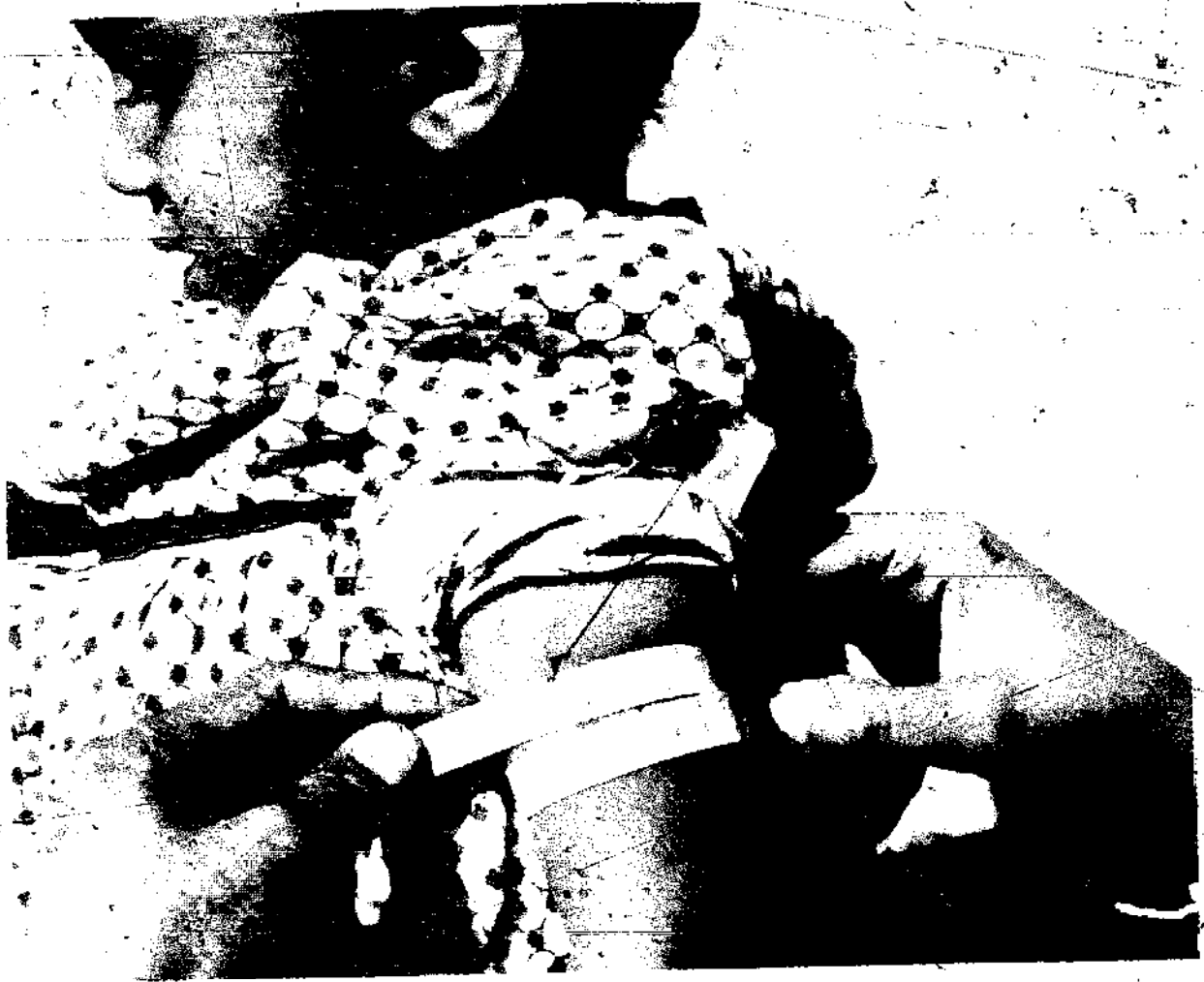
at 6 months	6 kgs
at 9 months	7 kgs
at 1 year	8 kgs
at 1½ years	9 kgs
at 2 years	10 kgs



Sanjiv Prakash



Often the health worker uses a weight chart like this one. She weighs the child, then she records his weight. She does this every month. When the child is growing properly, the weight increases. The line on the weight chart goes upwards.



Often the health worker finds out how the child is growing by seeing how fat his arm is. She uses a measuring tape to measure the child's arm. A healthy child's arm should measure 13.5 centimetres (5½ inches) or more from his first birthday to his fifth birthday.



The health worker can see if a child is healthy by looking at his lips. She pulls down the lower lip with two fingers. Then she can see the inside of the lip. When the lip looks pale, like the picture on page 4, the child is not healthy.



A child who always looks pale needs to eat green leafy vegetables every day. A pale child also needs iron tablets every day. This will give him more good blood. Then he will grow stronger. He will not look pale and will not feel tired and weak.





This child will not get ill with whooping cough. The health worker is giving 'triple' injection (D.P.T.) which prevents whooping cough and diphtheria and tetanus. This child will not catch any of these diseases. Every mother should take her child to the health worker for these injections. It is important to have all three injections. The health worker can also give injections to prevent T.B. and typhoid.



Every child gets sick sometimes, however much care his mother takes. When a child is ill, his mother should take him to a health worker quickly. The health worker will know if the illness is serious or not. He will advise the mother how to care for the child.



A child who is ill with fever or diarrhea or other illness should keep having breast milk. He gets strength from the milk, and he will get better more quickly. It is harmful to stop giving him breast milk.



A sick child also needs extra water. When a child has fever or measles or malaria or other illness, mother should give him clean water to drink many times a day.



Especially when a child has diarrhea or vomiting he loses a lot of water from his body. He needs extra water many times a day. If he does not get water he may die. Even if he is vomiting, mother should keep giving a little water. She gives the water again and again, a little at a time.

Instead of just giving water, mother can also make a salt and sugar and water drink like this. She takes a glass of clean water. She adds a pinch of salt.



She adds a piece of jaggery or a big spoon of sugar.



She stirs the salt and sugar and water and gives it to her child to drink. The child enjoys the taste of this drink. It is specially good if he has diarrhea.





When a child has fever or measles or malaria or other illness, she needs soft food. This helps her to get better quickly. It is bad for mother to stop giving her food. The child gets strength to recover by eating food.



Even when a child has loose stools he can continue eating soft food. This stops him from getting very weak. This child has loose stools. But his mother keeps giving him soft food to eat. She gives him food like *daliya* or *khicheri* mixed with milk and water.





Often a child eats earth. Then he gets pale and often gets worms in his stomach. Eating earth is harmful. Mother should stop her child from eating earth. Eating earth may be a sign that the child has a lack of blood. Mother should take her child to the health worker. The health worker will give the child iron tablets to be taken daily.



People who have worms sometimes pass them in their stool. They also pass the eggs of the worms daily. These eggs are so small they cannot be seen. They live in the earth in the fields. The eggs often get on the child's hands when he plays in the dust. When he eats food the eggs get from his hands into his stomach. Then the eggs grow into worms. So mother should wash her child's hands before he eats food. She also cuts his fingernails short so that the dirt from the field does not stay under the fingernails.



To prevent worms mother should always wash her hands before she prepares the food. The eggs of the worms are often on vegetables, so mother should carefully wash vegetables before the family eats them uncooked. The best way to prevent worms is for people to have a separate place for passing stool. Children should not play in that place.



This family has two healthy children. The parents and the children eat enough food. If there are many children it is more difficult for the father to earn money to buy enough food for everyone. If there are only two children it is not so difficult. It is good to have only two children. Then the parents can give the children better care, and enough food.



A healthy child has healthy eyes. This mother keeps her child's hands clean. Then he does not wipe dust into his eyes. The mother also prevents flies from sitting on her child's eyes.



When a child's hands are dusty he wipes dust into his eyes. He also has flies sitting near his eyes. Flies and dust spread disease. The child gets red eyes like this. Then what can mother do ?

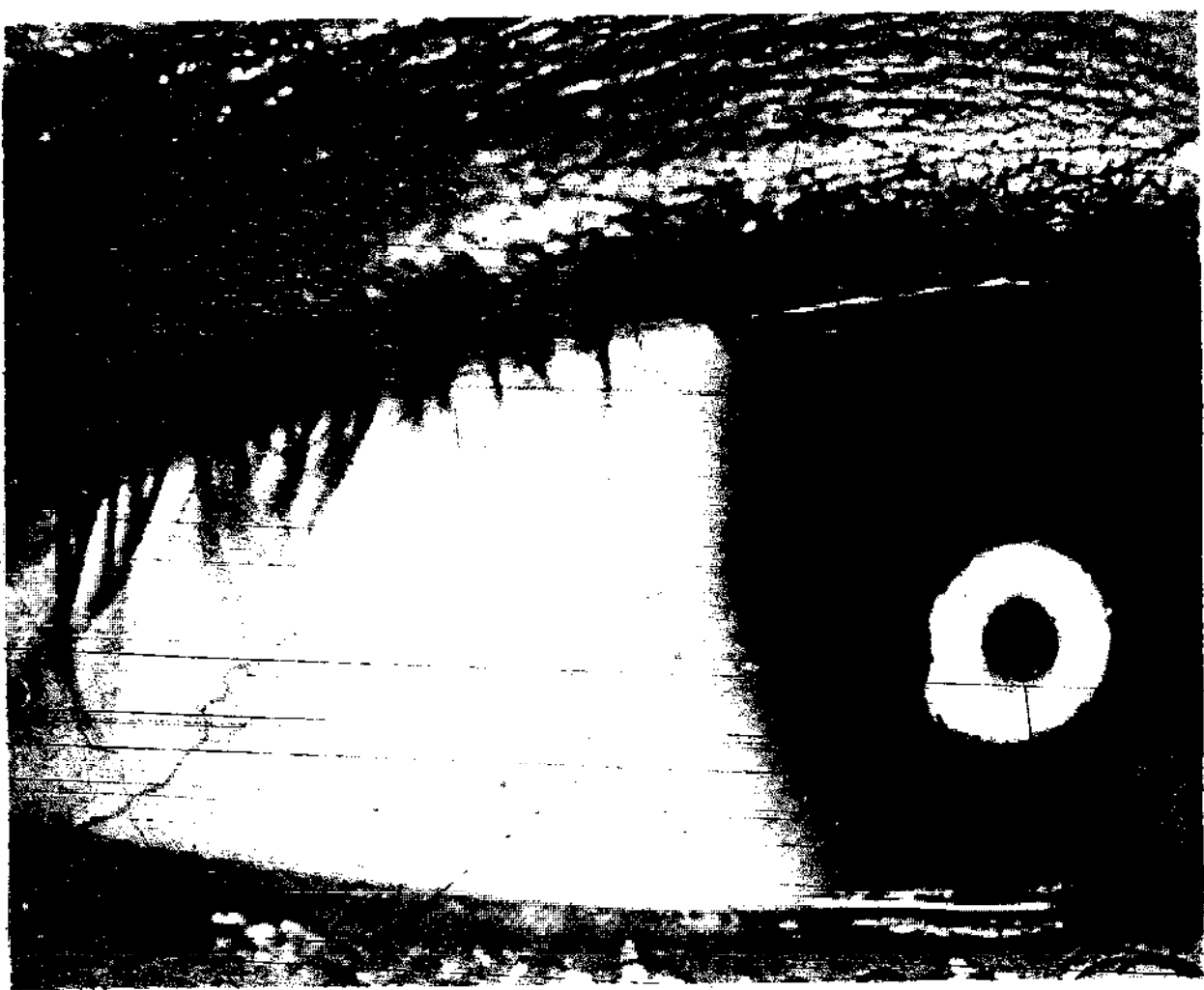
Sanjiv Prakash



Mother can add a pinch of salt to a cup of water. She puts this water and salt in a cooking pot and adds some pieces of cotton. She boils these things together. When this water is cool, she washes the red eyes with cotton and plenty of the clean salt water. If the eyes are still red the next day, mother should take the child to the health worker.



A healthy child can see in the dawn and evening. But this child cannot see in dawn and evening. He is night blind. Also he does not like the bright light. This child may become blind after some time. To prevent this his mother should give him more food. The child should eat green leafy vegetables every day. His mother should take him to the health worker. She will give the child Vitamin A medicine.



White patch

Camera flash reflection

Sometimes a child has a dry eye. There may be a white patch on the white part of the eye. This patch is usually on the outer side of the eye. This is a sign that the child may become blind. He needs more food. The child should eat green leafy vegetables every day. The mother should take him to the health worker quickly. She should give the child Vitamin A medicine.





Radish Leaves



Drumstick Leaves



Spinach

Every child should eat half a cup of green leafy vegetables every day. Then his eyes will be healthy. He will not become night blind. Green leafy vegetables keep the child's eyes healthy. When a child does not eat enough of vegetables like these, he may become blind. Mother can mix the green leafy vegetables with *dal* or other foods. Then the child enjoys the food.



This father grows vegetables close to his house. The mother gives her child vegetables to eat every day. Their child gets good food to eat. He is growing up healthy. Every mother and father should grow some vegetables and give them to their children to eat.



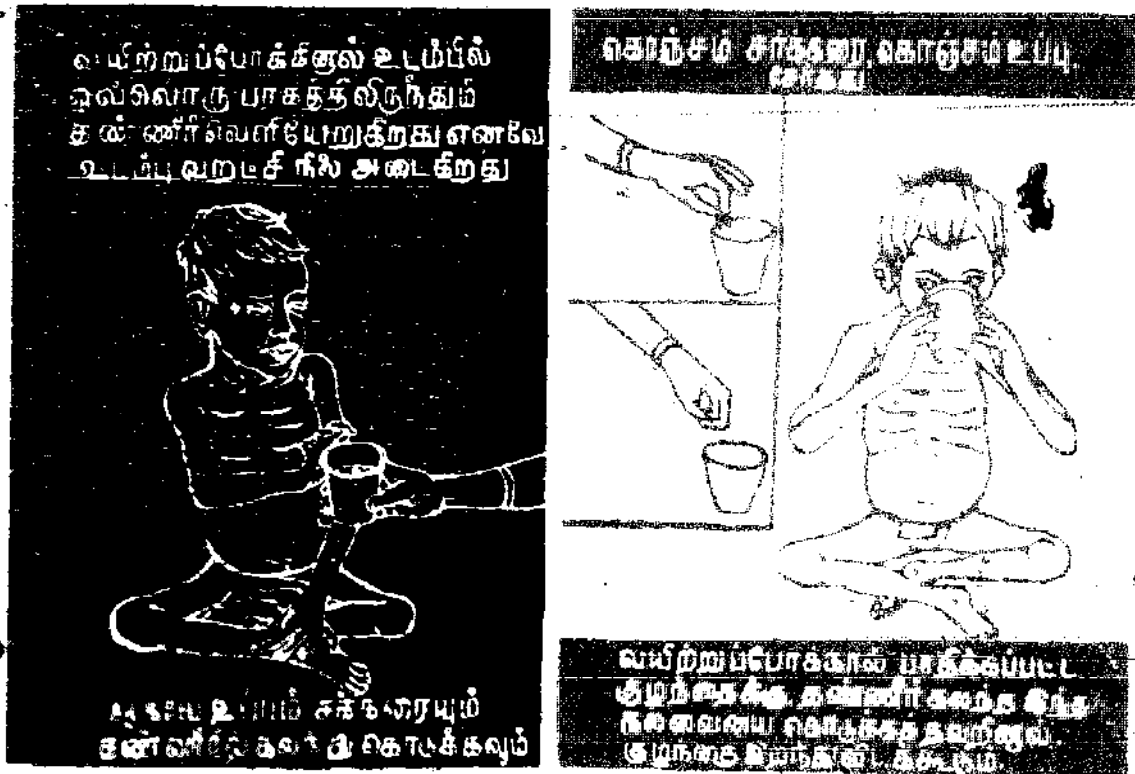
This child lives in the village. He has an intelligent mother who takes good care of him. She follows the rules for Better Child Care shown on the back page of this book. The child is healthy. Every child can grow healthy if his mother gives him enough food. Every child needs some wheat or rice or bajra or maize every day. He needs vegetables which are in season. He needs dal, and green leafy vegetables and a little oil or ghee every day. Then the child looks happy and healthy like this child.

## HINTS FOR USING THIS BOOK



This book can be used by everyone working for the health of young children. You can use it when talking to small groups of mothers at the health centre, and when you are talking to mothers in their homes. It is also useful when you are talking to older people or to village leaders. It is a small booklet. You can carry it easily in your pocket or in a shoulder bag. You can take it with you when you go to the health centre or when you are visiting village homes.

# HINTS FOR USING THIS BOOK



Whenever you show the booklet to people they become interested in the pictures. Then they begin to ask questions. This creates an interest in the subject. This is the right atmosphere for teaching. This way you can start a good conversation with people.

You can use the messages and illustrations in the book to give you ideas for making your own teaching aids such as flashcards and posters. Karigalan, a village artist in Tamil Nadu, has produced this poster. He used "Better Child Care" to give him ideas for the message and the drawings.

## HINTS FOR USING THIS BOOK



The booklet contains messages that are important for child care. The answers to common problems are found here. You can study it and remind yourself of all these things. This helps you to give the right answers to the problems. It helps you to recognise children with common illnesses such as anaemia, malnutrition and Vitamin 'A' deficiency. You can identify these illnesses before it is too late. You can show mothers the cause of these illnesses. Then you can give simple advice.

## HINTS FOR USING THIS BOOK



You will be surprised how interested people are to read this book. Try leaving it with a few people in the village. You will find men, women and even children enjoy looking at the pictures and reading the booklet. This is because it gives answers to problems that the people want to know about. This book is your memory aid and your guide when you give advice to parents. Spend time reading it. And share it with other people. Think how many lives of small children you can save just by giving the right advice at the right time.

This book is available in English and Hindi, and is being produced in Assamese, Bengali, Garo, Gujarati, Kannada, Khasi, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.

**Acknowledgements :** We are grateful to many people, especially Dr. Shanti Ghosh, Miss T. Padmasini Asuri; Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre, Government Hospital, Madurai; Community Health Project, Holy Family Hospital, New Delhi; and UNICEF.

Text by Helen Laugesen  
Photography by Sunil Mehra  
Drawings by June Mehra

© 1977, Voluntary Health Association of India  
C-14, Community Centre,  
Safdarjung Development Area,  
New Delhi 110016



## Rules for BETTER CHILD CARE

- Breast feed your child for as long as possible
- Start to feed your young child soft food when he is four months old
- Feed your young child five or six times a day
- Continue to feed your child when he is ill
- Give your child extra water when he is ill, especially if he has diarrhea
- When your child is ill, seek help early from the nearest health centre
- Get your child immunized
- Keep flies off food
- Wash your own hands and your child's hands before feeding him
- Give your child clean water to drink
- Have only two or three children
- Make sure there is two to three years space between each child