



A FILM
FROM
IDRC

Users' Guide for Prescription for Health

Clean Water • Hygiene Sanitation

Fresh, clean water is essential to life. But poor sanitary practices can transform water into an agent of death.

In developing countries, waterborne diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and dysentery kill thousands every day. Children are the most frequent victims. Even when a source of drinking water is safe, polluted surroundings and lack of hygiene may contaminate the water, causing disease to spread.

The IDRC film, *Prescription for Health*, promotes personal hygiene and community practices that can help break the cycle of infection. Produced in collaboration with the World Health Organization and OXFAM, the film is aimed primarily at health care workers, and water and sanitation engineers and technicians in developing countries. It is also a prime source of information for policymakers.

The 23-minute, 16-mm colour film, produced by IDRC's Communications Division, was shot on location in Bangladesh, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Kenya. Extensive animation has been used to illustrate clearly the path of disease and to unify the film's message for audiences of diverse cultural backgrounds.



**FOR INQUIRIES ABOUT LOANS AND SALES,
SEE INFORMATION ON BACK AND INSIDE.**

203.2 - 8745-4924

THIS GUIDE is for use with the film *Prescription for Health*. When you're presenting the film the guide can help you to:

stimulate discussion
motivate the audience
initiate action.

About the Film

Prescription for Health is not about medicine or drugs; it's about preventing disease. Available on either film or video cassette, it was produced to promote an important message of the United Nations' Decade on Drinking Water and Sanitation.

The message can be summarized this way: Diarrhea is a deadly disease that can be spread by contaminated water and people's habits. Bringing clean water and latrines to a community will not by itself stop the spread of diarrheal disease. The people must be educated at the same time to develop an awareness of what actions are needed to create a healthy environment.

About the Guide

This guide was prepared as an aid to people who will be showing *Prescription for Health* to general audiences, such as community groups or schools. Its intent is to help you, the presenter, use the film as a motivating tool: to make people aware of the issues the film raises and to prompt them to discuss these issues and to take action.

The guide contains 13 modules, each dealing with one of the major topics covered in the film. Each module reviews an important message, such as Why Diarrhea is Dangerous. The modules can be copied and used as posters, or handed out to the audience. Each module also includes a series of questions that you can use before and after showing the film to help people understand the issues involved, and a list of discussion points that can be used to get people talking.

The modules cover three main topic areas:

DIARRHEA

What is Diarrhea?
Why People Get Diarrhea
Why Diarrhea is Dangerous

WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE HAS DIARRHEA

When to Get Help
A Simple Treatment that Works
The Importance of Eating and Drinking
Protecting Others in the Home

- Protect the cassette from dust, moisture, heat, and direct sunlight.
- It is rare for a video cassette to break during a showing. If it does, there is little you can do. It is good to have a spare.

Preparing Your Own Visual Aids

During the discussions before and after the film, it is often helpful to use visual aids. These can illustrate the topics you are talking about, and make it easier for people to understand the issues.

You may already have such materials, perhaps supplied by the government or some other organization. If not, there are many ways to produce your own materials. Copies of the front page of each of the modules can be used to make a visual display, if you have some way to copy them.

Usually pictures have a far greater impact than printed words, however. When selecting pictures, keep these guidelines in mind.

- Use photographs of real-life situations. This always helps people understand the problem. Photographs should be mounted on stiff board for protection, and kept out of direct sunlight.
- If photographs are not available, use drawings (you may be able to get someone to help with this). Keep the drawings simple and be sure that what they illustrate is clear. Avoid unnecessary detail and cluttered backgrounds.
- Test your visuals in actual presentations to groups before making many copies. Make sure that people understand what you want them to understand. If they don't, make changes, and test the material again.

In some places people learn things through songs, story-telling, or play-acting. You know your community best. It is up to you to observe what works and what doesn't, and to take advantage of the most effective ways of getting the message to the people.

Here are some other suggestions for visual aids:

Flip charts	Posters
Slides	Flannel boards
Blackboard	Flash cards
Simple models	T-shirts
Theatre	

You can probably think of many more. Perhaps you can use the preparation of such materials as one way of getting a community group together to take action on water and sanitation issues. Once they are involved, you can encourage them to move on to more direct action, such as building latrines, cleaning up common areas of the community, planning improvements to water supply, and so on.

For sources of information and teaching materials, see the enclosed list of addresses.

WHAT IS DIARRHEA?



Almost everyone gets diarrhea some time or other. That's why many people think that it's just something that happens, and that there's nothing much you can do about it. They're wrong.

Diarrheal diseases can be deadly. Thousands of people die every day as a result of diarrheal diseases. The weakest members of the family — the very young, the very old, and those who are already sick — are at greatest risk.

Diarrhea is most common where there is no clean drinking water, and where there is poor hygiene and inadequate sanitation. That's why poor communities suffer most with diarrhea. It is more than a disease, it is a community problem. And it can be prevented.

WHY PEOPLE GET DIARRHEA



Diarrhea doesn't just happen. It is caused by drinking water or eating food that has been contaminated by human or animal feces.

Water is the most common carrier of the disease. An uncovered well, a stream or a pond can easily become contaminated. Boiling water vigorously for at least 10 minutes will make it safe to drink, but this is often inconvenient and expensive. What is really needed is a clean drinking water supply. More than half the people in the world still don't have access to clean water from protected sources.

However, clean water alone is not enough. People, animals, even insects, if they have been in contact with feces, can carry the disease to food that people eat. Food too must be protected by proper storage.

PARTICIPATION

Before showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- What do they think causes diarrhea?
- Do they believe it can be prevented?

After showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- To list the causes of diarrhea given in the film. (Try to get several people to answer instead of having one person list them all.)
- Are some of these causes (e.g., contaminated water supply, no latrines) to be found in this community?
- If yes, why do these problems exist (e.g., poverty, lack of awareness, apathy)?
- What can be done to protect drinking water and food from contamination? (See modules 10 to 13.)
- Is there a time of year when diarrhea is most prevalent in the community? Why do they think this is so?

WHY DIARRHEA IS DANGEROUS



Acute diarrhea can kill. Repeated attacks of diarrhea cause malnutrition, weakening the victim so that he or she is susceptible to other diseases.

People who are sick with diarrhea quickly lose a lot of fluid from their bodies. They become weak and feverish. If they don't eat and drink they become weaker. Without treatment they may die. Unless proper precautions are taken, other members of the family may also become sick.

All this could be prevented. Clean water, proper hygiene, and sanitary measures can do much to control the spread of diarrheal diseases.

WHEN TO GET HELP



How can you tell when a child or adult is dehydrated? Early signs may be:

- dry mouth
- sunken, tearless eyes
- sunken soft spot on a baby's head
- loss of elasticity in skin
- little or no urine or urine dark in colour.

The patient needs medical attention immediately and should be taken to the nearest clinic or health centre if the health worker cannot come to the home. Continue trying to make the patient drink as much as possible, even while waiting at the health centre.

Act quickly. A small child suffering from dehydration is in great danger and must have immediate attention.

The later, more dangerous signs may be slow, deep breathing and convulsions. These are signs of a very dangerous situation and mean that the person could soon die.

PARTICIPATION

Before showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- Is it necessary to have a health worker treat a child who is suffering from diarrhea?
- Is there a health centre, clinic or hospital nearby?

After showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- How do children look when they have diarrhea? (Try to get several people to answer instead of having one person list all the symptoms.)
- If there is no local health facility, where is the nearest centre for emergency treatment? How long does it take to get there?
- What should be done for the patient while waiting for medical help?

Discussion

- Does the community need better health services?
- If yes, what can be done to improve the situation? (e.g. community health worker program)

A SIMPLE TREATMENT THAT WORKS



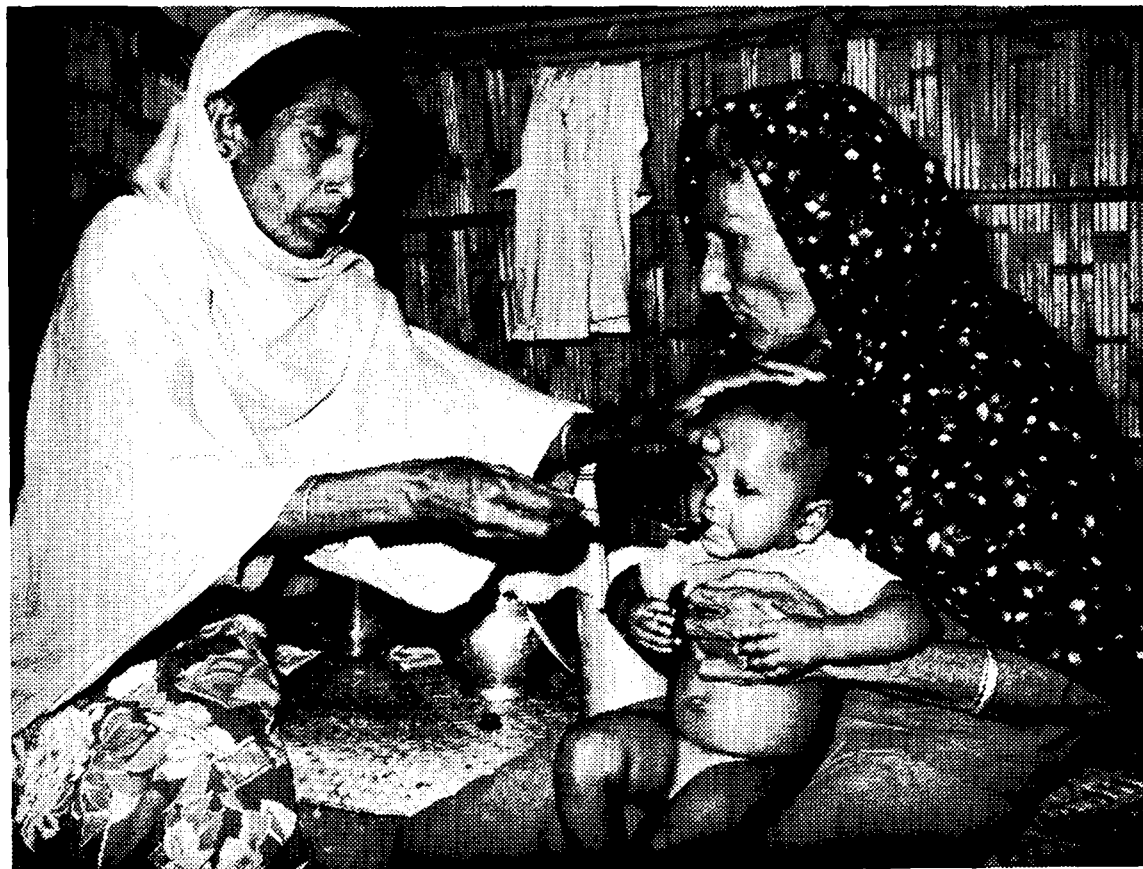
Dehydration from diarrhea can usually be prevented if the patient is given plenty of liquids or Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) from the first signs. ORS is easy to make, costs very little, and will help the patient recover. It may be available from the local health centre, clinic, or hospital. If not, use this recipe (or the locally equivalent measures):

1 litre (35 oz.) of <i>clean</i> water	2 tablespoons of sugar or honey
¼ teaspoon of salt	¼ teaspoon of baking soda (if there's no soda, use salt)

Mix until all ingredients are fully dissolved. Make the patient sip this drink every 5 minutes, even if he or she vomits, until he or she recovers and is eating and drinking normally. A small child may need at least one litre of this drink every day. An adult may need 3 or more litres every day.

If the child is not weaned, breastfeed often, and give sips of the rehydration drink every 5 or 10 minutes, even if the child vomits.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EATING AND DRINKING



Never ignore diarrhea. During an attack of diarrhea the body loses fluid continuously. This can lead to dehydration, causing fever, and, if nothing is done, eventual death. Small children become dehydrated very quickly. Make sure the patient drinks lots of fluid.

The best treatment is to replace the lost fluid with a drink called Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS). If this is not available from the local clinic or pharmacy, make the patient drink as much clean water as possible until the solution can be obtained. Coconut water is also good.

The patient should be encouraged to eat as soon as he or she begins to feel better. Even a simple broth is better than nothing. Give energy-rich foods as soon as the appetite returns. (Seek the advice of local health authorities for the best locally available foods.)

Remember: Begin treatment immediately
 Make the patient drink to replace lost fluid
 Encourage the patient to eat.

PARTICIPATION

Before showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- Do they believe special treatment is needed for someone suffering from diarrhea?
- How many have treated people suffering from diarrhea? What did they do? Did they recover?

After showing the film:

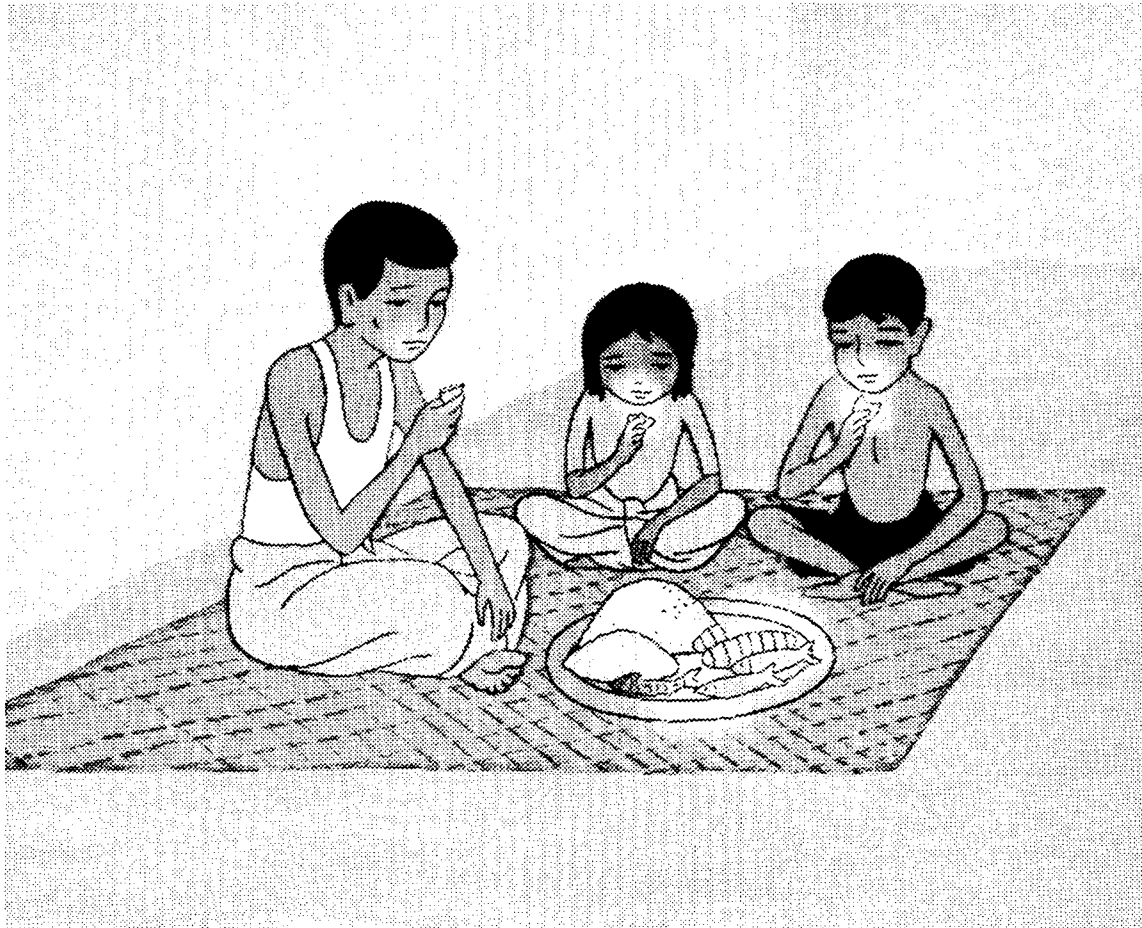
Ask the audience...

- What is the most important thing to do for someone who has diarrhea?
- Why is it important that people drink if they have diarrhea?
- Why is it important that people eat if they have diarrhea?
- What other steps should be taken?

Discussion

- Traditional treatments for diarrhea.
- Misconceptions about diarrhea (e.g., it is inevitable, nothing can be done for the patient).
- When to seek medical help.

PROTECTING OTHERS IN THE HOME



When someone in the family has diarrhea, everyone in the home is at risk. Remember, diarrhea is spread by contact with infected feces. When someone in the home has diarrhea, cleanliness and handwashing are very important.

To prevent the disease from spreading to other family members, follow the basic rules for health and hygiene:

- Keep food and drink covered when not in use.
- Make sure that everyone washes their hands with soap (or ash) and water, especially
 - after defecating
 - after handling a patient with diarrhea
 - before eating or preparing food.

Remove soiled clothing and bedding, wash thoroughly, and dispose of the wash water where it will not contaminate the household or surrounding environment.

PARTICIPATION

Before showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- Do they believe diarrhea can be passed from one member of the family to another?
- How might diarrhea be spread in the home? (Try to get several people to answer.)
- What can be done to prevent the spread of diarrhea? (Again try to involve as many people as possible.)
- Who should be responsible for taking these actions?

Discussion

- Diarrhea can become a persistent disease, spreading from one family member to another. How can you break this cycle of disease?
- What are the roles of parents, children, and grandparents in preventing the spread of disease in the home?

PRACTICE PERSONAL HYGIENE



Hands that have touched feces can spread diarrhea, even if they don't seem to be dirty. Washing with soap and clean water removes the feces so there is less chance of getting or spreading disease.

When soap is not available, ash can be used instead. It works almost as well as soap. Hands should always be washed after defecating, and before preparing food and drink or before eating.

Babies and small children need special attention because they cannot wash themselves. Hands should be washed with soap before and after cleaning a baby or changing a baby's diaper.

PARTICIPATION

Before showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- How is diarrhea spread?
- Who should wash themselves, when?

After showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- Why is washing important?
- Why should you wash in clean water?
- Is soap widely available in the community? If not, why not? (e.g., cost, supply) Can soap be made locally? Can ash be used instead?
- Why do some people not wash? (e.g., limited water supply, lack of awareness)

Discussion

- The importance of teaching the very young about personal hygiene. How can this best be done?
- Local customs and beliefs about personal hygiene.
- What help is available?

BREASTFEEDING



Children under the age of 2 years are the most vulnerable to diarrhea and other diseases. It is very dangerous for babies to have diarrhea. Because their bodies are so small, losing even a small amount of body fluid can be harmful.

One of the best ways to keep babies healthy is to feed them mother's milk as long as possible. It is the best food for babies because it contains the nutrients needed for growth, and also gives them protection from diarrhea and many other infections.

When breastfeeding is not possible, bottle feeding will be necessary. The formula does not offer natural protection from infections, and the water that is used to make the formula and the bottle used to deliver it can be easily contaminated. It is important to know how to prepare the formula correctly, how much to give, and how often. Both mother and baby should always be clean when feeding. If a bottle has to be used, both bottle and nipple should be sterilized by boiling, if possible, beforehand. If the baby doesn't drink all of the formula, the remainder should be thrown away.

PARTICIPATION

Before showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- How many mothers have breastfed their babies? For how long?
- Which is better for the baby, breastfeeding or bottle feeding? (Try to get people to give reasons for their answers.)
- Is it normal for babies in their community to have diarrhea often?

After showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- Is it common for babies to have diarrhea in this community?
- Why is diarrhea more dangerous for babies than for adults?
- What are the dangers of bottle feeding?
- How can these dangers be reduced?

Discussion

- Advertising and other pressures to use bottle feeding.
- Other advantages of breastfeeding (e.g., economic, family planning).

KEEP FOOD CLEAN



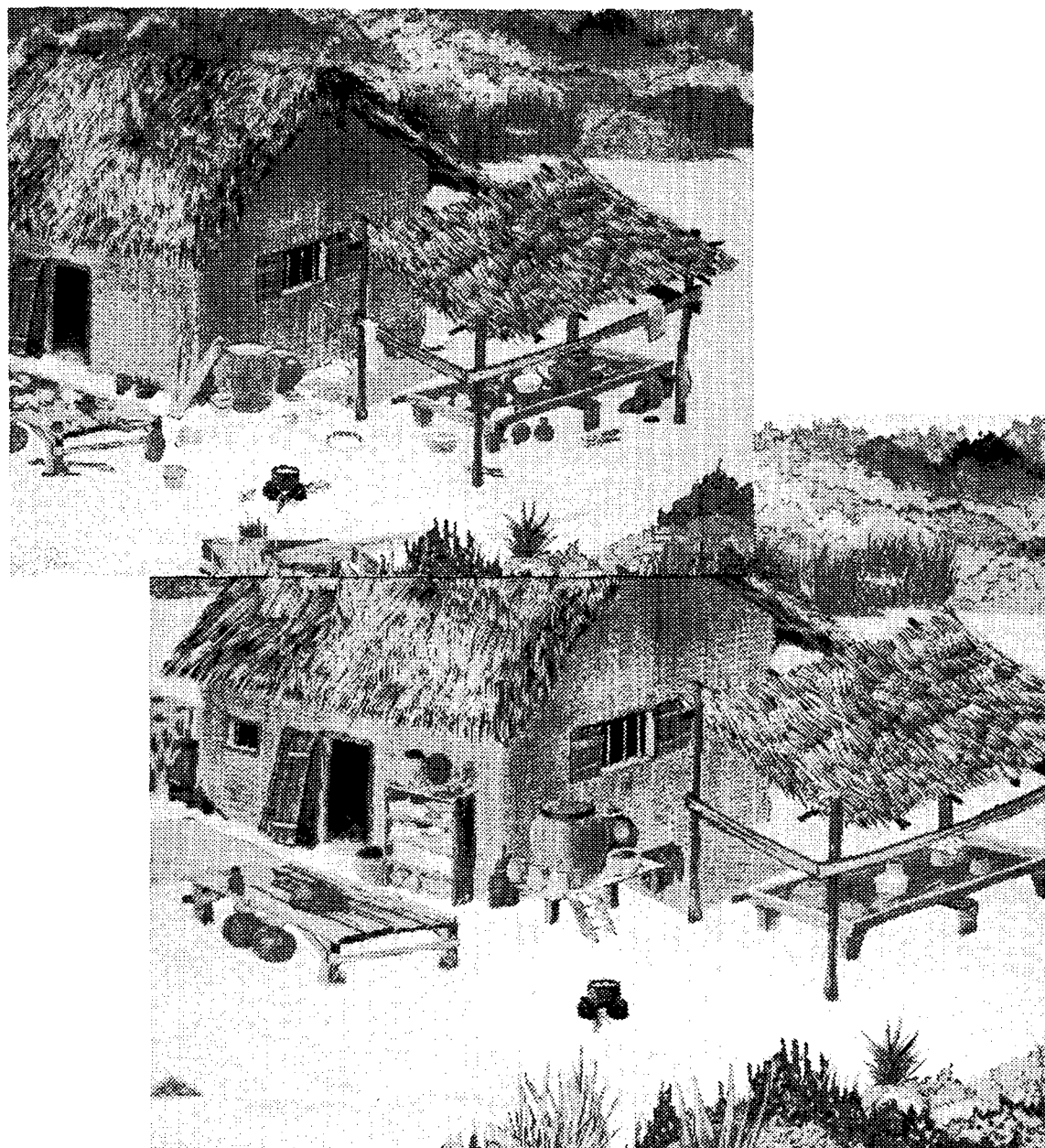
Diarrhea is usually caused by people consuming food or water that has come into contact with contaminated feces. People, animals, even insects can bring about that contact.

Protecting food in the home is very important. When preparing or eating food, hands and utensils must be clean (washed with soap or ash). If food is prepared with unclean hands, diarrhea can spread to the whole family.

Food and drink should be covered to keep animals and insects away until it is ready to be consumed. Food should be stored in a cool place if possible, not in the hot sun. Prepared food that has been left unprotected for long periods, or that you think may be contaminated in any way, should not be eaten.

The cooking area, cutting boards, spoons, etc., should be kept clean. Dishes and pots should be washed with clean water and soap or ash as soon as possible after they have been used, and stored under cover to prevent accidental contamination.

DESTROY HOUSEHOLD WASTES



Diarrheal diseases are often spread by domestic animals, insects, and rodents. These pests multiply in unsanitary surroundings, accumulated rubbish, and garbage in or near the house.

Food waste should be disposed of at once. Scraps can be fed to animals. If not, they should be buried, burned, or properly composted away from the home.

It is important that wastes are disposed of away from people's homes and sources of drinking water. It is everyone's responsibility to help prevent disease by keeping the environment clean.

PARTICIPATION

Before showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- What they mean by “household wastes.”
- Is there a community waste disposal site? Is it adequately maintained?
- If not, how do people dispose of household wastes?

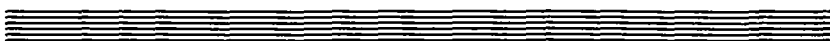
After showing the film:

Ask the audience...

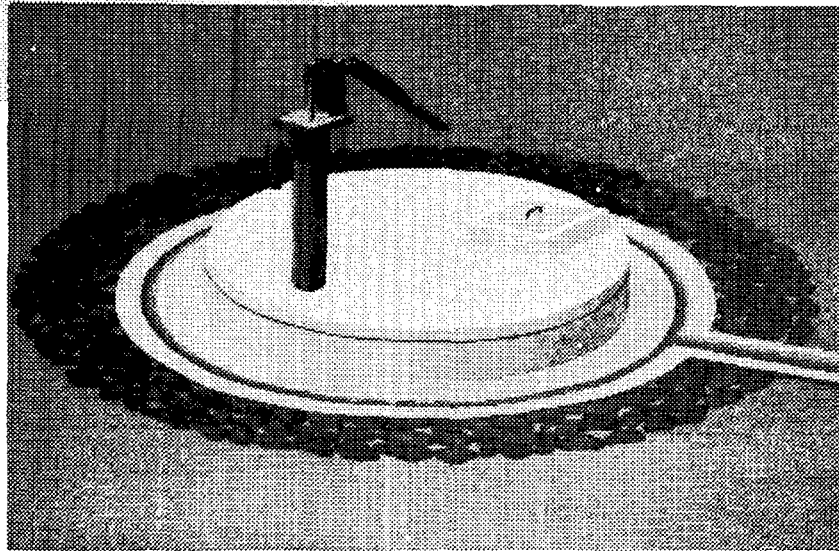
- Why is proper waste disposal important? (Ensure that the link to disease is understood.)
- Is there a problem with waste disposal in the community? Does it attract animals, insects, and rodents?
- If yes, what can be done about it?
- Whose responsibility is it?

Discussion

- The benefits of community waste disposal rather than by individuals.
- Advantages and disadvantages of different waste disposal techniques (e.g., burning, burial).
- What help is available?



PROTECT DRINKING WATER



The most common cause of diarrhea is drinking water that has been contaminated by animal or human feces. Water from a safe source, such as a covered well with a hand pump, is less likely to be contaminated. When people drink only clean water, they are less likely to get diarrhea.

If water must be taken from an unprotected source, such as a stream or a pond, or if you suspect it is contaminated, it should be boiled for 10 minutes. This destroys the bacteria that cause diarrhea and makes the water safe to drink. If available, inexpensive chemical disinfectants can be used as well, but care must be taken with their use.

In the home, drinking water should be stored in closed, clean containers. By keeping out animals and insects, or children who may have been in contact with feces, the risk of contamination is minimized.

Even if water looks clean, it does not mean that it is safe to drink. Building latrines downhill and as far away as possible from the water source protects the water from contamination. Water sources, such as wells, must be fenced to keep out animals, and household waste must not be disposed of nearby. Everybody should share the responsibility for keeping their water supply safe.

PARTICIPATION

Before showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- Do they have a good drinking water supply? Does it deliver safe water? Is it well maintained? Who is in charge?
- Whose job is it to fetch water? How far do they have to walk?

After showing the film:

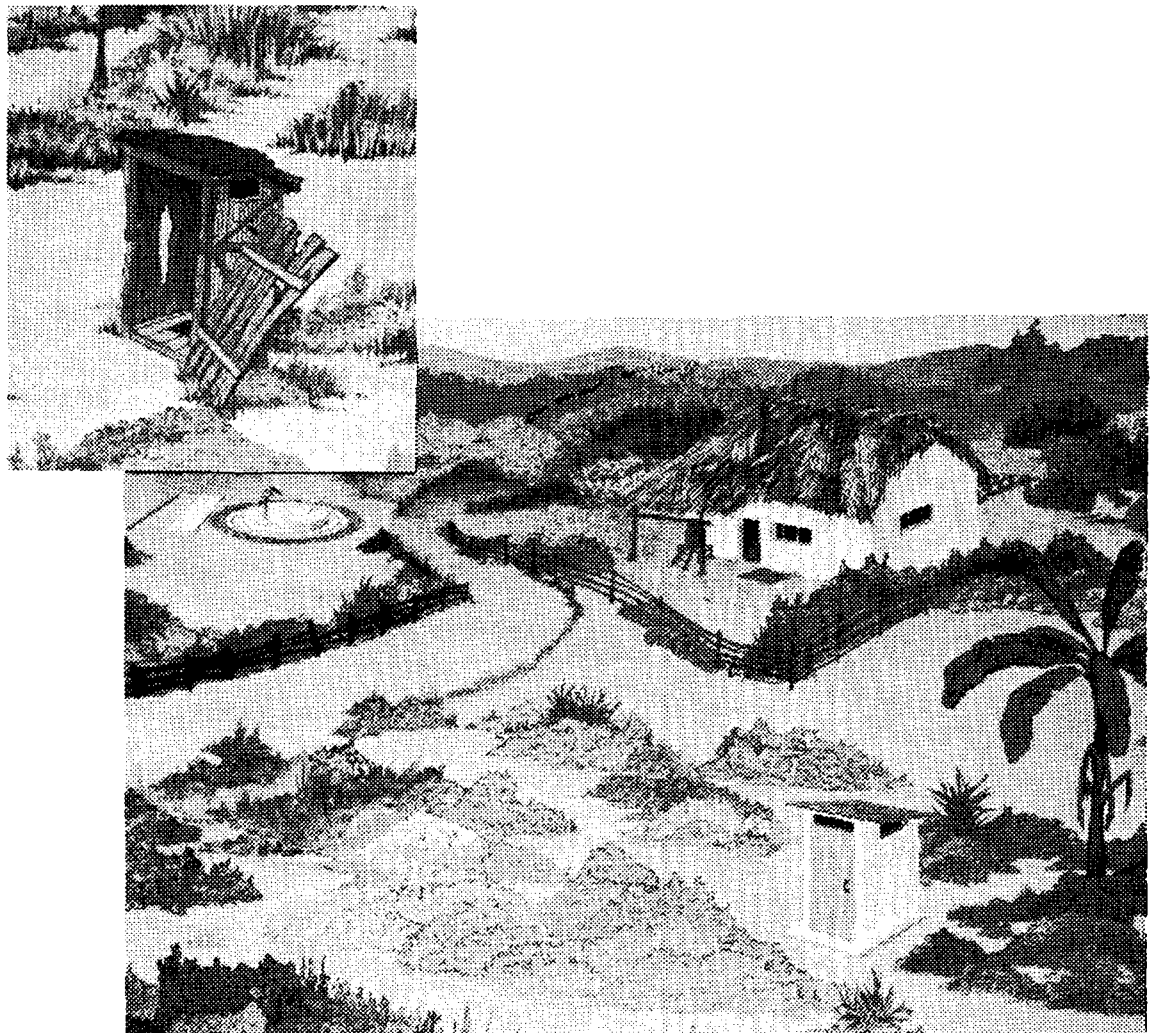
Ask the audience...

- How does a water source become contaminated?
- Do any of these problems exist in the community?
- If yes, do people boil their water? What fuel do they use? What is the cheapest fuel? Are there other methods used to disinfect water in the community?
- Should something be done to protect the water supply?
- If yes, what should be done?
- Who should do it? How?

Discussion

- The advantages and disadvantages of different types of water supply systems.
- Where the water supply should be located, and why.
- Who should pay for and maintain a community water system?
- What help is available?

BUILD AND USE LATRINES



Diarrhea is usually caused by human or animal feces coming into contact with drinking water or food. Diarrhea can be reduced by building and using proper latrines.

It is important that latrines be built in the right place. Never build a latrine close to the water supply — if you do, the water may become contaminated and unsafe to drink.

Latrines must be kept clean or they may become a source of disease themselves. People won't use a dirty latrine.

Everybody should understand the importance of safe disposal of feces. Some people believe it's better to defecate in the fields. They are wrong! Exposed feces can be transferred to water and food by people, insects, or animals and are a source of contamination that can cause diarrhea. The purpose of the latrine is to minimize the contact between feces and humans, animals, and insects. This reduces the chance of transferring contaminated feces to food and water.

PARTICIPATION

Before showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- Where do most people in the community defecate?
- Does the community have latrines? If so, how did they acquire them?
- Do most people use the latrines?
- Who is responsible for sanitation in the community?

After showing the film:

Ask the audience...

- Are latrines important for the community?
- If not, why not? (Is there much diarrhea in the community?)
- Does the community have enough latrines? Are they used by adults? By children? If not, why not?
- Are the latrines properly located? (Ask people to explain the reasons for their answer.)
- Are there other problems with the latrines (e.g., flies, bad smell)? If so, what can be done about this?
- If more or better latrines are needed, who should build them?
- Who maintains the latrines in the community?
- Are there any social or cultural problems related to the use of latrines in the community?

Discussion

- The relationships between water supply, latrines, and diarrheal diseases.
- Local customs and beliefs about sanitation practices.
- Sanitation as a community responsibility.
- What help is available?

"PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTH" BOOKING REPORT

(1) Type of organization showing the film:

Nongovernmental (NGO) Governmental United Nations Other donor
Academic Other

(2) Purpose of screening:

Entertainment Training in health sanitation Health education
Other

(3) Screening date(s): _____ Attendance: _____

(4) Education level of audience:

Primary Secondary University Professional/trade

(5) Please describe the nature of the program/project the film is being used for:

(6) What messages from the users' guide were understood by the audience?

(7) What messages were most difficult for the audience to comprehend?

(8) Please note any questions, comments or teaching techniques you believe would be of interest to others who might use this film:

General comments:

Please return form to:

Audio-Visual Coordinator
Communications Division
International Development Research Centre
P O Box 8500
Ottawa
CANADA K1G 3H9

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Audio-Visual Coordinator
Communications Division
International Development Research Centre
P O Box 8500
Ottawa
CANADA K1G 3H9

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE
1100 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
OTTAWA, ONTARIO K1N 6N5
CANADA

sn 4924
20428745

The International Development Research Centre is a public corporation created by the Parliament of Canada in 1970 to support research designed to adapt science and technology to the needs of developing countries. The Centre's activity is concentrated in six sectors: agriculture, food and nutrition sciences; health sciences; information sciences; social sciences; engineering and earth sciences; and communications. IDRC is financed solely by the Parliament of Canada; its policies, however, are set by an international Board of Governors. The Centre's headquarters are in Ottawa, Canada. Regional offices are located in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

INQUIRIES AND LOANS: English, French, and Spanish

Africa and the Middle East:

IDRC
P.O. Box 62084
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel.: 330850
Cable: RECENTRE NAIROBI
Telex: 23062 RECENTRE

CRDI
B.P. 11007, CD Annexe
Dakar, Senegal
Tel.: 21-42-31
Cable: RECENTRE DAKAR
Telex: 21674 RECENTRE SG

IDRC/CRDI
P.O. Box 14 Orman
Giza, Cairo, Egypt
Tel.: 738760
Telex: DEVCN UN 92520

Latin America and the Caribbean:

CIID Apartado Areo 53016
Bogota, D.E.
Colombia
Tel.: 2558600
Cable: RECENTRE BOGOTA
Telex: 45366

Asia:

IDRC
Tanglin P.O. Box 101
Singapore 9124
Republic of Singapore
Tel.: 2351344
Cable: IDRECENTRE SINGAPORE
Telex: RS 21076

IDRC
11 Jor Bagh
New Delhi 110003
India
Tel.: 619411
Telex: 31 61536 IDRC IN

Other Regions:

IDRC
Communications Division
P.O. Box 8500
Ottawa, Canada. K1G 3H9
Tel.: (613) 236-6163
Cable: RECENTRE OTTAWA
Telex: 053-3753

PURCHASES:

16-mm and video
IDRC
Communications Division
(See Ottawa address)

Note: The Spanish version may also be purchased in video format (NTSC) from:

Pan American Health Organization
525 — 23rd Street, N.W.
Washington, DC, USA 20037
Attn: Programa de Textos
Tel.: (202) 861-3451
Cable: OFSANPAN
Telex: 248338-PASB

The film may also be borrowed from Canadian Embassies and High Commissions in the following countries:

English

Australia
Bangladesh
Cameroon
China
Ecuador
England
Ghana
Guyana
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Jamaica

Korea
Malaysia
New Zealand
Nigeria
Pakistan
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Sri Lanka
Tanzania
Thailand
Zimbabwe

French

Benin
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Côte d'Ivoire
France
Gabon
Ghana
Haiti
Kwanda
Mali
Tanzania
Zaire

Spanish

Argentina
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Cuba
Guatemala
Mexico
Peru
Venezuela

The film is also available in many local, national, and regional languages. Please see the information enclosed in this folder.