



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**
Program topic : **Prevention is better than cure! Family health and hygiene practices (PROTECTION)**

Guidelines to the presenter

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.
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Topic:

Prevention is better than cure! Family health and hygiene practices

Objectives:

- To inform parents that babies and young children are extremely vulnerable to preventable diseases.
- To inform parents that they have an important responsibility to adopt health seeking behaviours that prevent children becoming sick.
- To enable parents to identify the common causes of illness from poor health and hygiene practices
- To give parents information on how to ensure clean drinking water; hygienic hand washing with soap; safe disposal of faeces and rubbish; hygiene in the kitchen and home

- To encourage parents to check on health and hygiene practices in ECD centres.
- To inform parents about the importance of de-worming every 6 months from 1 year old

Introduction

In the last couple of weeks we have been discussing the importance of good nutrition, especially breastfeeding, to make sure your baby grows strong and healthy – both his body and his brain! In addition, there are other important ways parents and caregivers can make sure that they give their baby or young child the best possible start in life by keeping him or her healthy. Prevention is better than cure! Most of the diseases or illnesses that children suffer from, can be prevented by families practising good health and hygiene habits. Health is not just about going to the clinic or doctor when you are sick. Health is about PREVENTING that sickness in the first place.

Join us today as we discuss what are the health and hygiene habits we can practice as families to keep our children and ourselves healthy and well on <Show name>

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>Surely the health of children and adults is the responsibility of health workers, doctors, clinics and hospitals?</i></p>	<p>Absolutely not! Health workers, doctors, clinics and hospitals obviously play an important role in CURING us when we get sick, but each of us has a responsibility to practice behaviours that PREVENT us getting sick in the first place. Many of the diseases or illnesses we get could have been prevented. And because babies and young children get sick even more easily and quickly than adults, parents have an enormous responsibility to make health and hygiene practices an important part of their daily routine.</p>
<p>2. <i>Why are babies and young children so</i></p>	<p>Babies and young children are growing rapidly</p>

<p><i>vulnerable and what are the diseases they get that could have been prevented?</i></p>	<p>and have not had time to build up their immunity or body protection against disease. That's one of the reasons why breastfeeding is so important - because it helps the baby develop his body's immunity or protection against diseases. The World Health Organisation states that every year nearly 11 million children die before reaching their 5th birthday mainly from preventable and treatable diseases. The biggest killers of young children in developing countries like South Africa are diarrhoea, pneumonia and malnutrition. Malaria and measles are other threats to young children that can be prevented: malaria by using mosquito nets and measles through vaccination. Research has shown that most children who die in South Africa die at home, and often from sickness that could have been prevented or the child saved by seeking early treatment from a health worker.</p>
<p>3. <i>So what are some of the key family practices that prevent children and adults from getting sick?</i></p>	<p>One of the most important key family practices that can prevent children and adults getting sick is getting into the habit of <u>hand washing with soap</u> EVERY TIME you have been to the toilet or changed a nappy; before preparing food, breastfeeding or feeding your child. Research has shown that practicing hand washing with soap could reduce diarrhoeal disease by more than half and could save many lives of children. Diarrhoea is estimated to cause 1.5 million child deaths per year, mostly among children under 5</p>

<p>4. <i>What are the main causes of diarrhoea?</i></p>	<p>living in developing countries like South Africa.</p> <p>88% of cases of diarrhoea worldwide are caused through unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation and disposal of faeces (poo), and poor hygiene (no hand washing; dirty kitchens; rubbish lying around; flies; cockroaches; rats etc). All these things above mean that we are encouraging powerful germs, too little for us to see, that get into our bodies and make them sick, and in the case of young children, can kill them. It is possible for us to do something about all these things through changing the way we behave.</p>
<p>5. <i>You've talked about drinking clean, safe water and hand washing with soap as being two important health practices, but this is not always easy in some areas of South Africa where there are no taps or access to safe water. What can people do if they live in these conditions?</i></p>	<p>Drinking and using clean water is very important in keeping children and adults healthy. Water from a tap has been treated to make it safe for us to drink. If you get your water from a stream or dam or spring, you need to bring it to the boil and boil it for at least 3 minutes. Then put it in a CLEAN container, cover it (to protect it from flies) and leave it to cool before drinking it or using it to make a formula milk feed for your baby. The other way to make sure drinking water is safe, is by adding 1 teaspoon of bleach to 25 litres of water, mixing it well and leaving it to stand, covered, for at least 2 hours. Make sure you mix the RIGHT AMOUNT of bleach, as too much bleach is poisonous!</p>
<p>6. <i>And hand washing? Why does one have to use soap?</i></p>	<p>Hand washing just with water doesn't kill the germs, so it is important to use soap. To make</p>

soap last longer, you can put it in an old sock, stocking or orange bag & tie it above the water used for hand washing. If there are many people using the water to wash hands, it will need to be changed often, otherwise the water will have germs that will be spread from one person (child) to the next. This is especially important for the children at a crèche or an ECD centre. If there is no access to a tap, you can make a hand washing bottle. Take an empty 2 litre plastic bottle (not one that has ever contained anything poisonous); make a hole in the lid; turn it upside down and sprinkle water onto each child (or family member's) hands. For young children you can teach them to make this a habit through using songs, rhymes and games, and by making sure you follow through with hand washing EVERY TIME they have been to the toilet and before eating. And, if possible, each child or family member should have their own small towel to dry hands, so that once again, you don't spread germs.

7. *What are other habits of cleanliness and hygiene that families should practice?*

Parents should keep children's nails short. They should wash children's hair often, as lice are a common problem with young children. They should also make sure children's faces, and especially their noses, are kept clean. Flies spread germs quickly and easily. Flies are attracted to dirty things, especially poo, and will then settle on a dirty child's face or runny nose and spread germs to the child.

8. *You've mentioned that flies spread disease; that they love dirty things, especially poo. How can families make sure that no faeces or poo is around and that flies do not have dirt to breed in?*

Safe disposal of faeces, including baby or young children's poo, is very important, as this is a common cause of the spread of disease and diarrhoea. Every household should have a safe toilet. If you make a pit toilet, build it soundly with a concrete slab, so that people, especially children cannot fall into the pit. Many municipalities (through their Environmental Health Department), and some NGOs, are supporting communities to build safe toilets, like the VIP toilet that also comes with a fly-trap or cover, to stop flies getting to the poo and so spreading disease.

- Keep toilets clean so they are not smelly.
- Pit toilets are not always safe for young children to use, so they should always be supervised by an adult.
- If not, rather use a potty, a small bucket or newspaper.
- If you use disposable nappies for your baby, either burn or bury them in a suitable deep pit away from the house and nowhere near any water source, river or stream.
- If you are using a potty, bucket or newspaper, this poo should also be buried in a proper deep pit away from any water source.
- The germs from buried poo can run

<p>9. <i>What about the household rubbish. How should families deal with that?</i></p> <p>10. <i>What about the kitchen area? How can families practice hygiene in the kitchen?</i></p>	<p>through the soil and contaminate the water around you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animal poo also attracts flies and spreads disease, so keep your yard free of animal poo. <p>The same applies to the household rubbish. If you do not have municipal rubbish collection, you need to dig a pit away from the house and bury your household rubbish so that it does not attract flies. Kitchen rubbish like potato peels, egg shells and left overs can be buried separately to make compost to put into the soil to grow vegetables.</p> <p>Kitchens should be kept clean, old food thrown away into plastic bags or containers and then buried. Fruit and vegetables need to be washed before cooking or eating and all food kept covered with a clean cloth, so that flies cannot sit on it. Make sure you cook all meat and chicken thoroughly to kill germs. Undercooked chicken can be a source of food poisoning. Store food like maize meal, flour and sugar properly, so that rats and insects cannot get into it. Keep eating utensils clean and cover them when not in use, also to protect them from flies. As we said in a previous radio show, babies and small children should have their own cups and dishes and extra care should be taken to clean them in hot soapy water. Babies' bottles and teats need to be sterilised in solution or by boiling them for</p>
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<p>11. <i>What about other areas of the family dwelling, especially for crawling babies?</i></p>	<p>5 minutes. If flies are really bad, you could ask your Environmental Health Officer at the municipality to spray bad fly areas in the community. You could also make fly traps using saucers of sugar water, put out of reach of children.</p> <p>Yes, you are quite right! The floor of the home needs to be kept as clean and safe as possible for your crawling baby. This is the age of exploration! Your crawling baby will want to touch and feel everything he finds, AND put it into her mouth! So it's important for the family to keep the floor clean and check that there's nothing dirty or unsafe for baby. Toys or anything baby handles, including soft toys and blankets need to be washed regularly. And check the area outside your home as well. Make sure there's nothing dangerous like wire, broken glass, rusted corrugated iron, berries or anything else that could hurt your baby or toddler, or make her sick. And old tyres and other containers that trap water and are left lying around are a great breeding ground for flies and mosquitoes.</p>
<p>12. <i>Once again you are emphasizing the important role that parents play in taking responsibility for their child's health and safety. What about if the child goes to crèche or an ECD centre?</i></p>	<p>Yes, it is the parents' responsibility to make sure their baby, toddler or young child is healthy and safe at all times. So they should check out the crèche or ECD centre and make sure that they ALWAYS practice health, hygiene and safety habits and are teaching the children these</p>

habits as well:

- safe, clean drinking water always available for each child in a clean cup
- hand washing with soap in clean water EVERY TIME after toilet and before food
- each child has his own small towel or cloth to dry his hands
- faces and noses are kept clean. You and the teachers should be teaching children to wipe noses and to cough into their hands & then wash them. There are lots of rhymes like 'This is the way we wash our hands' that make these health practices fun for children.
- toileting is done IN the toilet or potty and NOT OUTSIDE in the garden
- toilets are clean and not smelly
- there are not lots of flies
- the kitchen area is clean and safe, and food hygienically prepared and served.
- For babies and toddlers there is a nappy changing area that is clean, and dirty nappies are safely disposed of and not left lying around; staff wash their hands with soap and water; EVERY baby has his or her own bottles, cup, dish and spoon. Bottles and teats are properly sterilised and all utensils are kept clean and covered.
- If there is a sandpit, it is kept covered when not in use and disinfected weekly

<p>13. <i>You mentioned that young children are at risk of getting worms in their stomachs. What can parents do about this?</i></p>	<p>with a sprinkling of coarse salt. This is to keep it safe from animals and to reduce the risk of children getting worms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For vomit, blood spills or bleeding wounds, adults use plastic gloves or plastic bags on their hands. • There should also be a health practice that children who are clearly sick should not be sent to crèche or pre-school. They should be kept at home. Illnesses spread very quickly when groups of children are together. <p>Intestinal worms (or worms in the stomach) are very common in children, that's why it's so important to take them to clinic for every visit marked on their Road to Health Booklet. From 1 year old, the clinic will de-worm the child every 6 months. Worms are a major cause of illness, malnutrition, poor growth and poor health in young children.</p>
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Conclusion

So parents and families have an important responsibility to practice health and hygiene habits. And it is so easy and costs almost nothing! It's about changing our behaviour and teaching our children healthy habits from as young as possible. Remember children copy what they see the adults in their lives doing. So if you practice health and hygiene habits, they will copy you. In this way we can PREVENT many of the diseases or illnesses that make our children so sick and can kill them.

Learning outcomes

After listening to this show the audience should:

- know that babies and young children are extremely vulnerable to preventable diseases.
- Know that they have an important responsibility to adopt health seeking behaviours that prevent children becoming sick.
- Be able to identify the common causes of illness from poor health and hygiene practices
- Have information on how to ensure clean drinking water; hygienic hand washing with soap; safe disposal of faeces and rubbish; hygiene in the kitchen and home
- Be encouraged to check on health and hygiene practices in ECD centres.
- know the importance of de-worming every 6 months from 1 year old