

SAFE MOTHERHOOD



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INTRODUCTION

This flipchart is designed for use by both clinic and community based health workers to create awareness and generate discussions about women's health and well being during and after pregnancy. It can be used for one-to-one counseling or with a small group of people.

Tips for Flipchart Use

- Be sure you understand the contents of the flipchart before using it.
- Stand where everyone can see the flipchart
- Point to the illustration as you talk
- Make frequent eye contact with the individuals in your group
- Involve the individual/group. Ask questions and encourage discussion
- Use the text as a guide and include additional information as needed: see references on the back page
- Speak clearly and use words and language easily understood by the group

Chapter 1

PREGNANCY

During pregnancy the womb (uterus) holds the growing baby

Questions

1. What do you see in the picture?
2. How does pregnancy occur?
3. What are the main signs of pregnancy?
4. How will you know if the baby is growing?
5. When a woman is pregnant in your community, are there things she should do or avoid doing according to local traditions?

Discussions/Facts

The joining of an egg from a woman and sperm from a man (fertilization) marks the beginning of a nine-month process of growth and development in which the fertilized egg becomes a human baby.

FIRST TRIMESTER (1-12 weeks)

- Your breasts become bigger/and tingly
- You may urinate more frequently
- You may have saliva in your mouth more often
- You may feel like vomiting
- You may like or dislike certain foods
- You may feel tired easily and sometimes feel faint

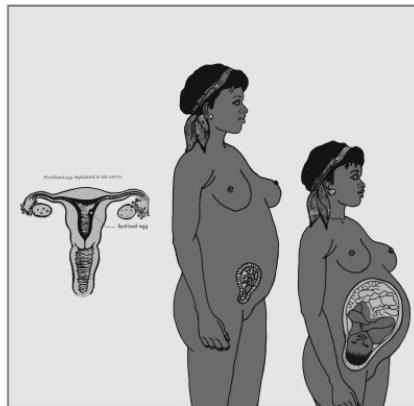
SECOND TRIMESTER (13-26 weeks)

- You may have more appetite/will gain weight
- Your tummy begins to show
- You may have slight pain in your lower abdomen
- A dark line will appear in the middle of your tummy
- You will begin to feel your baby move after five months (quickening)
- Digestion will slow down with some constipation and heart burn)

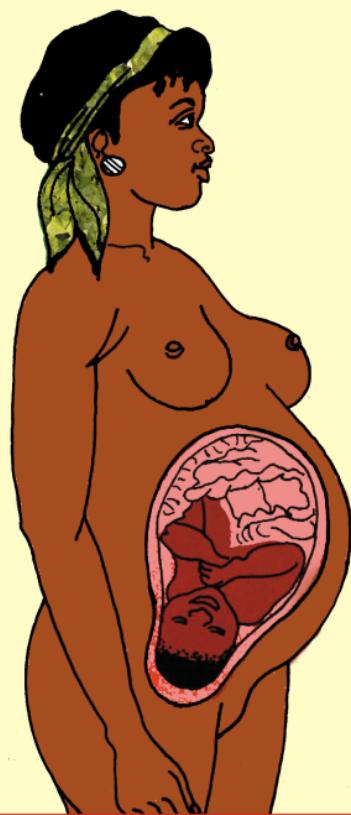
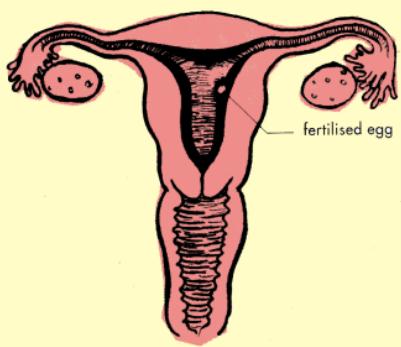
THIRD TRIMESTER (27-40 weeks)

- You can feel your baby stronger
- You can feel more tightening of your abdomen with slight pain
- You may have stretch marks on your abdomen
- Your breasts become heavier and contain slightly yellow fluid
- You may have shortness of breath as abdomen gets bigger
- You may feel more tired/have sleeping difficulty
- You may gain more weight
- In the last week, head of baby descends into the pelvis (lightening)

To be certain that you are pregnant, visit the clinic for a check up



Fertilised egg implanted in the uterus



Chapter 2

ANTENATAL CARE

During antenatal care pregnant women are screened and examined to ensure that they and their babies are well

Questions

1. What do you see in this picture?
2. Do women in your community usually attend antenatal clinic?
3. When do they attend and how often?
4. Why do some women fail to attend?
5. What happens during antenatal?

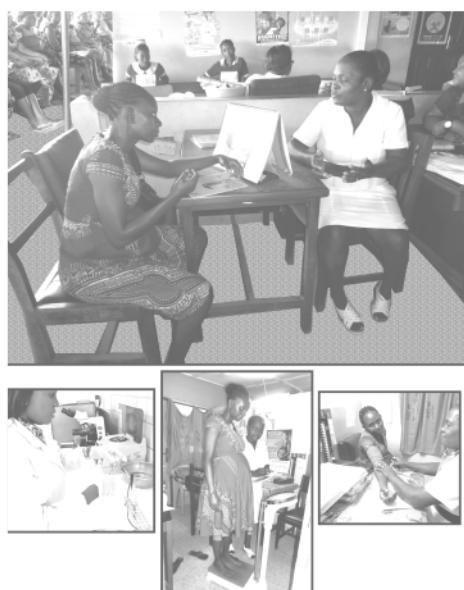
Discussion/Facts

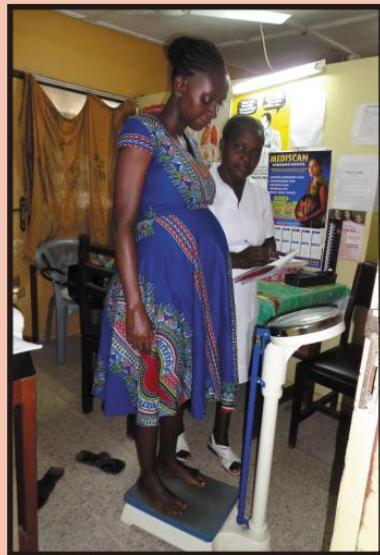
Antenatal care is important during pregnancy to make sure that the mother and the baby are in good health. During antenatal care, problems that occur in pregnancy are recognized and treated. Ideally a woman should make her first antenatal visit as soon as she realizes that she is pregnant, or within the first three months of pregnancy. Thereafter, she should visit the health center once a month or at least three more times during the pregnancy. But some pregnant women will have to visit the hospital more frequently when the doctor have to ensure that they do not have any difficulty when they are giving birth.

Antenatal care often involves:

- A personal medical history including whether that was the first pregnancy and also if there was any complications during previous pregnancies
- A thorough physical examination from head to toe
- Laboratory tests on blood, urine and other vaginal fluids
- Health Education etc.
- Taking of medicines such as anti malaria, tetanus injection and medicines for deworming

During pregnancy the emotional and health status of the mother affects the baby's well-being. Because pregnancy itself is very physically demanding, it is important for the woman to take good care of her health. She needs to have plenty of rest and good food and avoid smoking and alcohol intake. Moderate exercise, such as walking, helps women stay healthy, feel good and sleep well.





Chapter 3

NUTRITION DURING PREGNANCY

During pregnancy and especially while breast feeding, a woman should eat frequently throughout the day. She should eat a variety of nutritious foods.

Questions

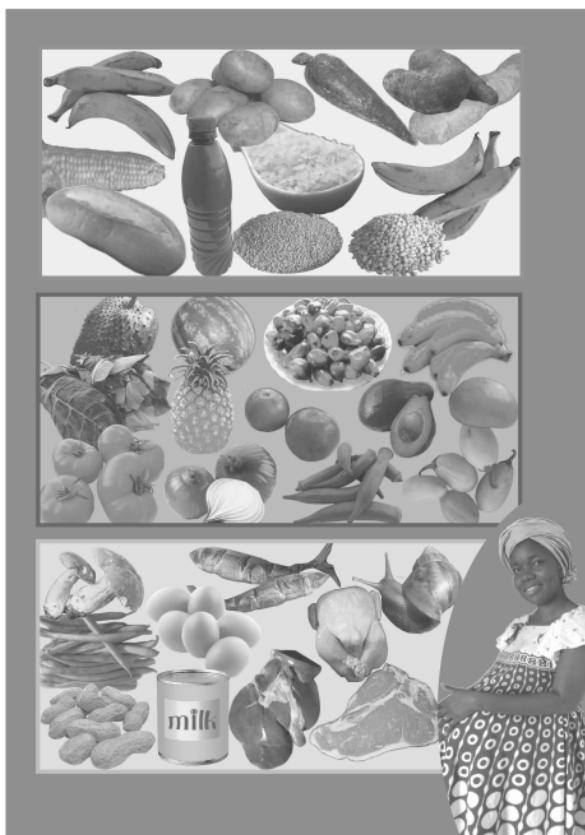
1. What do you see in this picture?
2. Mention some foods pregnant women commonly eat in your community?
3. Do they contain all the types of foods they need?
4. Do pregnant women take fruits? How often?
5. Are there foods that women in your community usually avoid when they are pregnant or breastfeeding? Why?

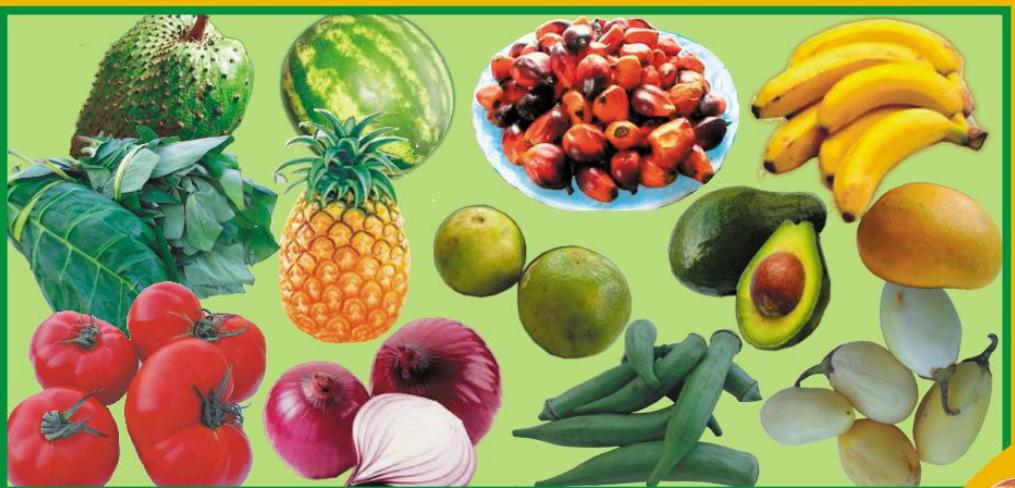
Discussion/Facts

Pregnancy takes a lot from a woman, it is therefore important that, she eats adequately from all the food groups to maintain her strength throughout her pregnancy and to ensure that the baby grows well. These include foods that are:

- Energy giving – maize, yam, plantain, cassava, rice, millet and other staples
- Body building – meat, fish, milk, eggs, beans, groundnuts, etc.
- Protective – Vegetables e.g. Tomatoes, carrots, green leaves (kontomire, aleefu,)
- Fruits e.g. Oranges, pineapples, banana, pawpaw, etc.

Some women are concerned that their babies might grow too big and give them problems during delivery. This is not true. In fact, if the baby is too small, it will be weak and the woman could have more problems during and after delivery.





Chapter 4

WORK AND REST DURING PREGNANCY

Women should avoid heavy work during pregnancy. They should get plenty of rest

Question

1. What is do you see in the picture?
2. What is the man/ old woman doing?
3. Is it common for the husband and other family members to help a woman when she is pregnant? In what ways can they help?

Discussions/Facts

Because pregnancy puts a lot of pressure on the woman, she should avoid:

- Too much work
- Walking or riding a bicycle for many hours
- Carrying or lifting heavy loads

It is therefore important that pregnant women:

- Rest for some hours everyday
- Reduce their workload
- Are assisted by their husbands/partners and other family or community members to have the required rest

Doing these could weaken the pregnant woman and lead to miscarriage, pre-mature birth/underweight baby and frequent minor ailments.

Men who help their wives during pregnancy should advise other men in the community about how they can help their wives and why it is important to do so





Chapter 5

EXERCISE DURING PREGNANCY

The pregnant woman needs a lot of strength during pregnancy and delivery

Question

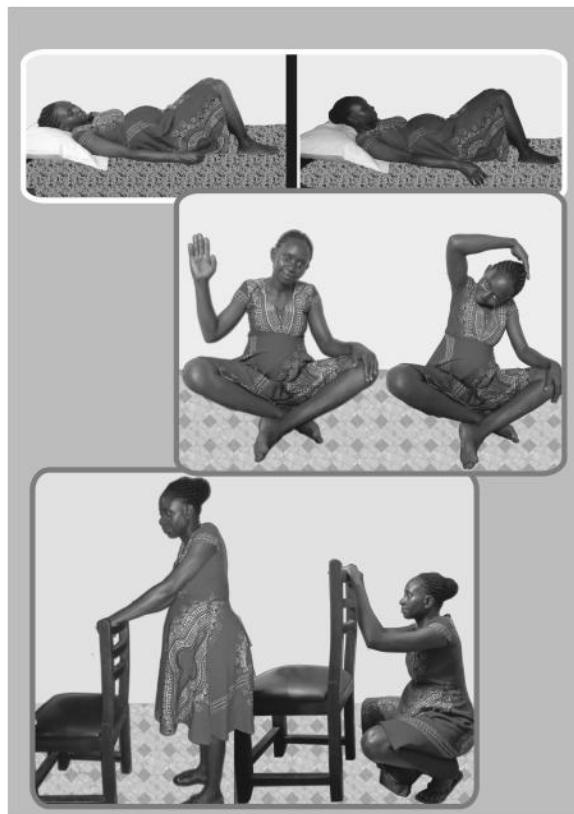
1. What do you see in the picture?
2. Why do you think the pregnant woman is doing these exercises?
3. Do pregnant women do this in your community?

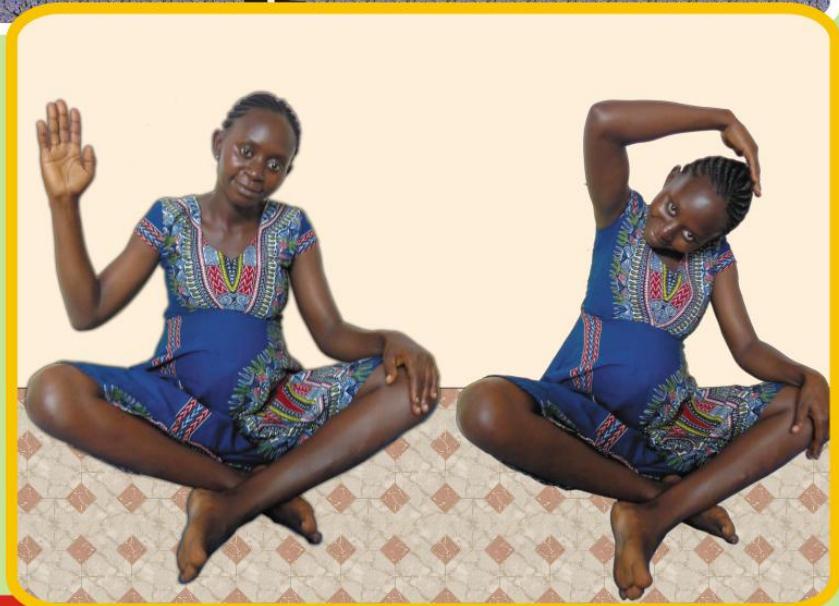
Discussions/Facts

Every pregnant woman need to do exercises to strengthen their muscles used in pregnancy and delivery
When a pregnant woman exercises her muscles:

- it helps relieves backache and
- Strengthens muscles in the abdomen and reduces pressure in the abdomen
- It strengthens her muscles for delivery
- It strengthens her leg muscles
- It makes it easier for her to breathe
- It help her deliver safely
- It reduces her chance of complications during delivery

A pregnant woman can keep herself strong by doing exercises that will help her have a safe delivery





Chapter 6

PLANNING FOR DELIVERY

**When planning for delivery, some basic items are needed at the time of delivery.
These items should be ready before labour begins**

Questions

1. Can you name the items in this picture?
2. What are they used for?
3. What problems might a woman face in getting these items?
4. How can she overcome these problems?

Discussions/Facts

Every pregnant woman should prepare by getting the basic items needed for delivery before labour begins. During labour and child birth these items will be used for both the mother and the baby. It is advisable to give birth in a health facility especially where the woman attended ANC. A pregnant woman, who had no problem during the entire pregnancy, can develop a serious problem during delivery.

The following basic items are necessary: items such as:

- Clean cloth and rags, cotton wool, soap, clothing for the baby and mother, court sheet, sterile gloves, sanitary pads and some money.
 - A pint of blood is very much needed before the pregnant woman goes into labour. A serious problem such as heavy loss of blood can occur and the woman may need to be given blood.
 - Someone who will have to be supporting the pregnant woman need to be identified
- Transportation should be arranged in advance to take the pregnant woman to health facility when she goes into labour.





Chapter 7

MISCARRIAGE AND ABORTION

An incomplete miscarriage or unsafe abortion can result in severe bleeding, infection, cramps, and fever. If any of these signs develop, the woman should go immediately to a health facility.

Questions

1. What could be happening to the woman in this picture?
2. What should women do to avoid this situation?
3. What are some of the reasons why a woman might not go to a hospital or clinic during miscarriage or abortion?

Discussions/Facts

- Miscarriage is a complication of pregnancy
- It occurs when pregnancy ends before the baby has any chance of survival, usually in the first twelve (12) weeks.
- Miscarriage usually indicates that something was wrong with the fertilized egg
- In an incomplete miscarriage, part of the foetus or placenta remains in the womb
- This may cause bleeding and infection that lead to fever and pain in the reproductive organs
- If infection is not treated early, it could cause infertility, long-term illness or even death
- Sometimes, for a variety of reasons women end unwanted pregnancies through induced abortion
- Abortions done under unclean environment, using unsafe methods and by an unskilled person usually lead to infection that can cause infertility, long-term illness or even death
- A woman who has had a miscarriage or abortion needs medical attention if she experiences any of the following:
 - Fever or chills
 - Pains in the abdomen, cramping or backaches
 - Heavy bleeding from the vagina that does not stop
 - Bad smelling discharge from the vagina

A woman who has had a miscarriage, or abortion should report immediately to health facility





Chapter 8

ANAEMIA IN PREGNANCY

If a woman feels very tired and weak most of the time, dizzy, or if the inside of her eyelids or her palms are unusually pale, she might have anemia.

Questions

1. What is happening to the pregnant woman in the picture?
2. What are the signs that a person has anaemia, which is sometimes called weak blood?
3. What should a pregnant woman do if she has anaemia?

Discussion/Facts

- Anaemia is a common complication of pregnancy that occurs when the blood does not have enough iron, which is needed to make it strong.
- If anaemia is not detected and treated, it gets worse during pregnancy.
- When anemia gets worse during pregnancy it can lead to:
 - Heart failure
 - Miscarriage
 - Premature labour
- Anaemia can also worsen other problems like, bleeding and infections
- It also reduces the body's resistance to other diseases.
- If a pregnant woman has anaemia just before you are expecting your baby, there is a risk that, if you bleed even a small amount during birth, you may become severely weak.
- If a pregnant woman has anaemia immediately after birth, you will need to be offered a blood transfusion.
- If a pregnant woman has a blood condition, such as sickle cell disease she will have an increased risk of developing severe anaemia when you become pregnant.

Causes of anaemia and how to prevent them

| CAUSES | PREVENTION |
|---|---|
| A diet low in iron-rich foods | Eat foods rich in iron eg. Eggs, lean meat, green leafy vegetables, liver. Also take iron tablets that is given you at the antenatal clinic regularly |
| Malaria, hookworm or bilharzia | Pregnant women from malaria prone areas should take anti malaria tablets to prevent having malaria. They should seek treatment for other diseases eg. Bilharzia |
| Repeated pregnancies too close together | Allow two (2) to three (3) years between pregnancies by practicing family planning |
| Certain blood disorders such as sickle cell disease | Eat foods rich in iron and take Iron-folic acid tablets given to you at the antenatal clinic regularly |

Anemia in pregnancy can be very dangerous to the health of the pregnant mother and her baby's health





Chapter 9

PRE-ECLAMPSIA OR PREGNANCY INDUCED HYPERTENSION (PIH)

Swelling in the feet, hands and fingers, as well as the face is a sign or preeclampsia

Questions

1. What do you see on this woman's legs, feet and face?
2. Have you or anyone you know ever experienced this type of swelling during pregnancy?
3. What do you think a woman in this condition should do?

Discussion/Facts

Pre-eclampsia is high blood pressure caused by pregnancy. It can occur anytime during pregnancy but usually occurs towards the end.

The major signs of Pre-eclampsia (PIH) are:

- Swelling of the feet, hands, fingers and face
- A rise in the blood pressure
- Protein in the urine

These must be identified and treated early and properly, if not they can lead to:

- Severe high blood pressure
- Kidney damage
- Increasing fluid in the body
- Inadequate oxygen and food for the unborn baby that may cause it to be small and weak
- Severe headaches, blurred vision and spots before the eyes
- Vomiting
- Fits

It is therefore very important that:

- Women and their family members know the signs of pre-eclampsia and how to prevent it from getting worse
- Women with signs of pre-eclampsia go to the hospital even if they do not feel ill
- Women with signs of pre-eclampsia rest for long periods, if it becomes necessary a complete bedrest
- They eat foods that are rich in protein and iron and low in salt
- Such women deliver in a health facility
- If a pre-eclampsia condition is not well managed it can lead to eclampsia.

Women with signs of pre-eclampsia should plan to deliver in a health facility.





Chapter 10

ECLAMPSIA

Eclampsia causes fits or convulsions, and sometimes fainting. It is a life threatening condition for both mother and baby. It can be prevented from occurring through prompt and proper management of pre-eclampsia.
If a woman begins to have fits before, during or after delivery, she should be taken to hospital immediately.

Questions

1. What do you see in this picture?
2. What could be the problem?
3. What should be done if a woman has fits during or after delivery?

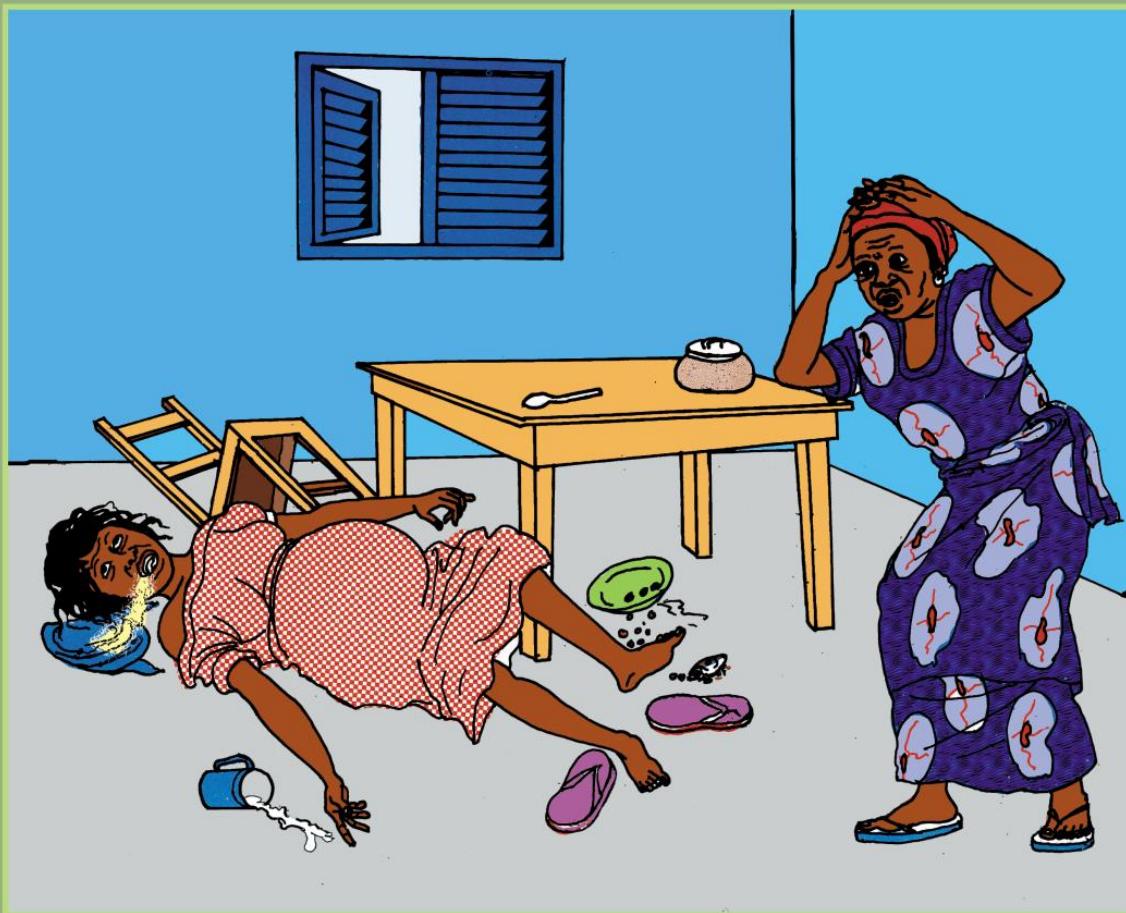
Discussions/ Facts

- Eclampsia occurs when pregnancy induced high blood pressure worsens and leads to fits, convulsions or coma. It is life threatening for both mother and baby
 - It usually occurs in the last stages of pregnancy, during labour or shortly after delivery
 - Severe eclampsia during labour may make it necessary to deliver the baby by Caesarean Section
 - Family and Community members should know signs of eclampsia and rush anybody with these signs to a hospital
 - A woman having fits or convulsions (eclampsia) needs help from family members
- They should ensure that she does not hurt herself by:
- Putting soft things (pillow) under her head
 - Pushing the handle of a spoon wrapped with cloth between her teeth
 - Making her lie on her left side
 - Keeping her cool while waiting for transport

*A woman with eclamptic fits or convulsions cannot infect those helping her.
People should therefore help promptly and properly without any fear*

If a woman begins to have fit before, during or after delivery, she should be taken to hospital immediately





Chapter 11

OTHER WARNING SIGNS DURING PREGNANCY

**A pregnant woman must ensure that she is always healthy throughout
the period she is carrying her baby in her womb**

Questions

1. What do you see in the picture?
2. What are the signs that the women may not be feeling well?
3. What should a pregnant woman do if she has any of this signs?

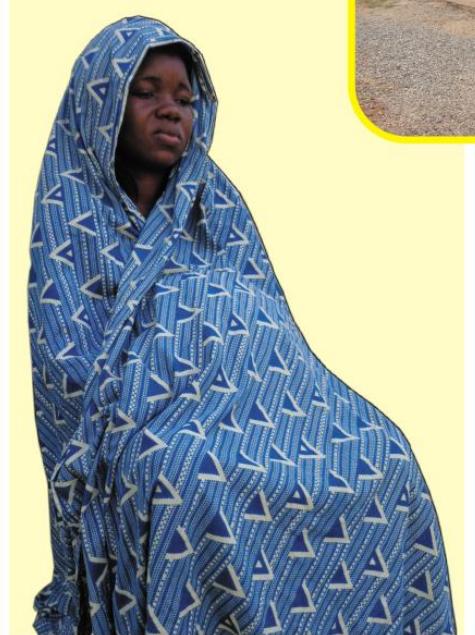
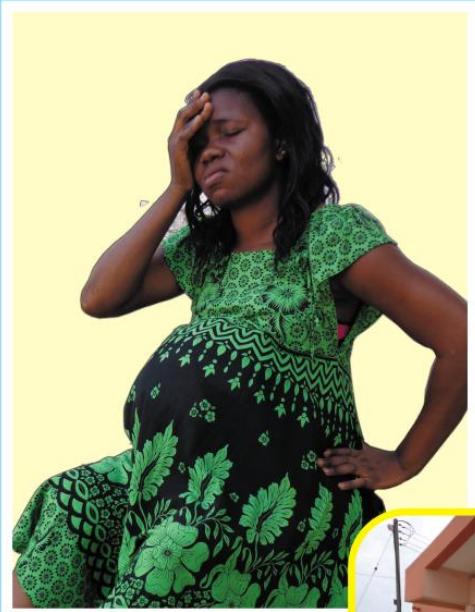
Discussions/Facts

Every pregnant woman should look out for these signs when she is not feeling well. These signs may not make the pregnant woman healthy or make the unborn baby grow well and healthy in the womb. Some of the signs are:

- Severe headache or blurred vision
- Severe stomach pain
- Persistent or continuous vomiting
- Jaundice
- Water gushing out from the womb
- Offensive or discoloured discharge from the vagina
- Fever
- Baby in the womb not moving

**If any of these signs occur, report immediately to a hospital near you for examination and treatment.
Danger signs can be very dangerous to the health of the pregnant mother and her unborn baby's health.**





Chapter 12

OBSTRUCTED LABOUR

Obstructed labour is very dangerous for the woman and baby. If a woman has been in labour for 12 hours and a skilled attendant is present, the attendant should check whether labour is progressing, and make a decision about whether the woman needs to go to hospital. She may need special help or an operation to deliver. If there is no skilled attendant present, any woman who is in labour for more than 12 hours should be taken to hospital

Questions

1. What do you see in the picture?
2. What could be the cause of prolonged labour?
3. Have you, or anyone you know, ever experienced obstructed labour? What happened?
4. What should be done if a woman has obstructed or prolonged labour?
5. What are some of the reasons why a woman with obstructed labour might be reluctant or unable to go to the hospital?
6. How can family members and other people in the community help?

Discussions/Facts

- Obstructed labour is a common complication of pregnancy, and one of the most dangerous in Ghana.
- Obstructed labour is when the baby cannot be born through the vagina without causing serious damage or injury to the mother and the baby

The following type of women are more likely to have obstructed labour. They should make arrangements to deliver in a health facility

- Girls in their early teens
- Women with certain abnormalities of the spine or lower limbs
- Women who have undergone female genital mutilation(circumcision)
- Women whose babies are unusually big or women who are carrying twins
- Women with babies who are lying the wrong way in the womb
- Women who have delivered many times (5 or more)

Women who are more likely to have obstructed labour should make sure they deliver in a health facility. If a woman has been in labour for 12 or more hours without making any progress, she should be taken quickly to a health facility. Every pregnant woman can develop complications during labour, such as obstructed and prolonged labour

Family members should arrange transport in advance to take such pregnant women to a health facility quickly





Chapter 13

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

A pregnant woman will help save her own life and that of her unborn baby if she knows that there can be emergencies during child birth and she prepares very well towards it.

Questions

1. What do you see in this picture?
2. What do you know about the National Health Insurance Card?
3. Why should a pregnant woman get blood donated for her during pregnancy?
4. Is it difficult to get these items in your community?

Discussions

Every pregnant woman must attend ANC regularly by having a Health Insurance Card. The health insurance card allows the pregnant woman to have free access to care at the health facility. She will be given:- Medication such as Iron folic acid, malaria tablets to prevent malaria.

The pregnant woman must have her husband, or any other relative or a friend voluntarily donate a unit of blood which will be kept in stock and will be used for her during delivery or after child birth if there is any complication.

Every pregnant woman who prepares well is likely to have a safe delivery





Chapter 14

BLOOD LOSS IN PREGNANCY OR DURING DELIVERY

Too much blood loss during pregnancy, at or after delivery can affect the woman and her baby.

Questions

1. What is happening to the pregnant woman in this picture?
2. Have you ever seen any pregnant woman having any of these signs?
3. What do you think are the causes of these problems?
4. What should the pregnant woman do if this occurs?
5. How is this case treated in your community?
6. What do you think the relatives of the pregnant woman must do if any of these occurs?
7. When a woman is bleeding too much when she is pregnant in your community, how is she treated according to local traditions

Discussions/Facts

It is normal for a woman to have some bleeding when she gives birth. But if she loses a pint or more of blood, it means her bleeding is heavy (haemorrhage). Although it is not expected for a woman to bleed heavily in labour or delivery and after delivery yet this can occur. Heavy bleeding leads to loss of blood in the body and can cause a lot of problems for the mother and her unborn baby. The blood that is lost must be replaced to save the life of the woman and her baby.

This heavy bleeding (haemorrhage) can occur:

- early in pregnancy if you have an ectopic pregnancy (when the pregnancy is growing outside the uterus) or a miscarriage
- during pregnancy
- during birth
- immediately after birth

Heavy bleeding can occur when:

- A piece of placenta remains inside the uterus after delivery
- Labour prolongs or abnormal
- A woman has delivered more than five babies
- The vagina or cervix is torn or cut during delivery
- When the substance which helps blood to clot is low in the woman's blood

Even with excellent care in pregnancy and monitoring during labour, it is not possible to tell or know every complication in time to prevent the pregnant woman from having heavy bleeding.





Chapter 15

DONATING BLOOD FOR THE PREGNANT WOMAN

Questions

- 1. What can you see in this picture
- 2. Why do you think the man is donating blood
- 3. Who will the pregnant woman get to donate blood for you?

Discussions/Facts

To be certain that the pregnant woman will deliver safely, the husband, relatives or friends must donate a unit of blood which will be used for her during delivery. A woman cannot donate blood for herself when she is pregnant. Giving blood in late pregnancy will make the pregnant woman not to have enough blood for her and her unborn baby. It will also reduce oxygen to the unborn baby in the womb. This can cause the pregnant woman and the baby to die during pregnancy.

- Donating blood for the pregnant woman should be done from the heart and should not attract any fee.
- Blood donation is not painful but a unit of the blood donated will save the pregnant woman's life.

Every pregnant woman need to be shown love and care from the time she knows she is pregnant, labour, delivery and when she is caring for the baby. The partner, brother, sister, or in-laws can donate a unit of blood for her before delivery.





Chapter 16

TRANSFUSING BLOOD DURING DELIVERY

**If a pregnant woman lost too much blood from delivery,
she may need a blood transfusion to replace it.**

Question

1. What do you see in the pictures?
2. Why is the woman been given blood?

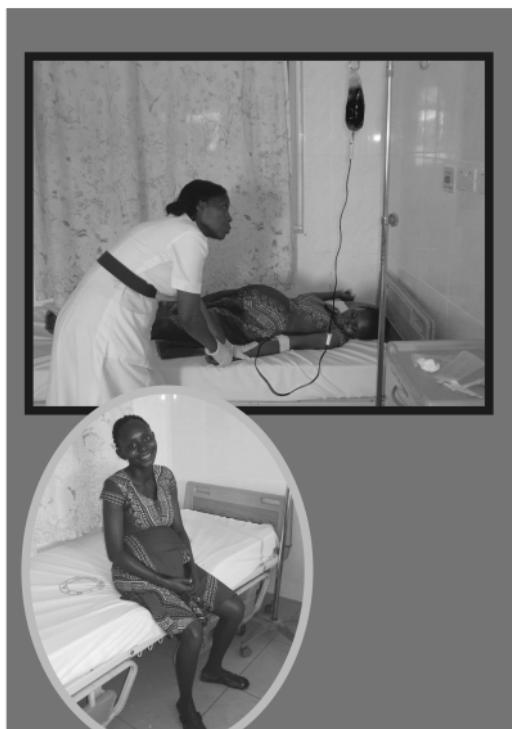
Discussions/Facts

If a woman bleeds heavily after child birth, she will become very anaemic and will not feel well too. If she has less blood in her body and unwell, and making it difficult for her to care for her baby, she has to be given blood to restore her blood level and give her strength. The mother needs to be healthy so that she can take good care of her baby. If a woman bleeds heavily during delivery or after she needs to be given blood at the hospital to keep her alive.

- Only blood that is free from any infections is used in a blood transfusion. The chance of a pregnant woman getting an infection from a blood transfusion is really not common.
- The pregnant woman is carefully checked and watched before and during when she is being given blood. The midwife will take her blood pressure, temperature and heart rate during the transfusion.
- Some people get mild side effects, such as headaches, chills and fever, a rash and itchiness. These signs will go when the woman is given medicine such as paracetamol, and will improve within a day.

Do not prevent the doctor from giving the woman blood because of your traditions or religious believes. The woman will live when she is giving blood. She may die when you prevent the doctor from giving her blood.

Blood transfusion for the pregnant woman during delivery will save the pregnant woman's life and that of her baby.





Chapter 17

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AFTER BIRTH

A mother's body has undergone many changes during pregnancy, as well as with the birth of her baby. She needs to heal and recover from pregnancy and childbirth. After the delivery of the baby the woman must return closely as possible to how she was before she got pregnant

Questions

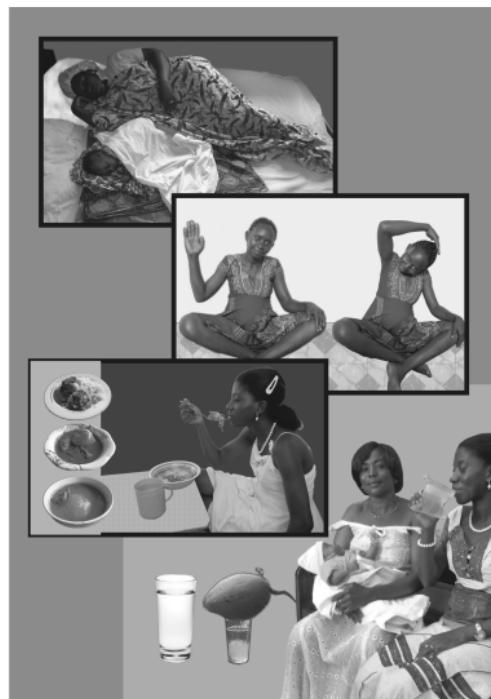
1. What do you see in this picture?
2. What are some of the things a woman should do for herself after giving birth?
3. How should the woman be cared for after giving birth?
4. Do women in your community receive this care?

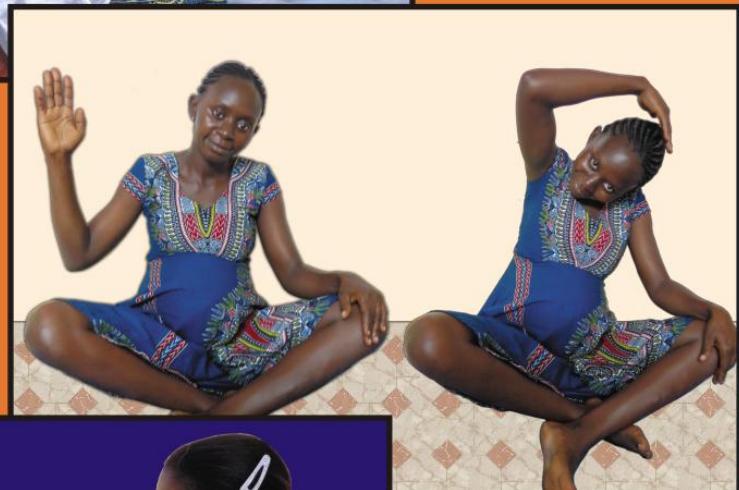
Discussion/Facts

It takes six to eight weeks for the new mother to return closely as possible to how she was before getting pregnant. The new mother needs care from everybody for her to be healthy and be able to care for her baby well. The new born mother needs to do the following to keep very healthy.

- **Rest:** The mother of the new born baby need enough rest. She needs not do anything other than breastfeeding the baby and taking care of herself. She should sleep when the baby sleeps and this may be several times in a day. It will make her rest enough.
- **Exercise:** The mother should get outside for a few minutes each day. She can begin to walk around and also do some exercises as advised by a midwife
- **Nutrition:** A mother needs to continue eating healthy diets so that she can be healthy and full of energy to be able to care for their new born baby. The mother should eat balanced diet from the three food groups.
- **Fluids:** Many mothers find they become very thirsty while the baby is nursing. Water, milk, and fruit juices are excellent choices

A mother who wants to lose her pregnancy weight after giving birth should avoid eating heavily but quick weight loss can be dangerous to you and your baby's health if you are breastfeeding.





Chapter 18

CARING FOR YOUR BABY IN THE FIRST MONTH

The baby in the first month needs to be provided with special care

Questions

1. What do you see in this picture?
2. What is the mother doing for her new born baby?
3. How does a mother care for her new born baby in your community?

Discussions/ Facts

- Always make sure that your baby's head is supported, however you are holding him. A newborn baby's head is heavier than the rest of his body so he won't be able to hold himself up on his own. Your baby's head will probably fall backwards if not supported, and this may make the baby feel uneasy.
- Hold your baby close to your body rather than at arm's length.
- Avoid picking up or putting down baby too roughly or too suddenly.
- Do not squeeze the baby's head when bathing him or her. This can cause injury to the head and make the baby not think well when he or she grows
- Give only breastmilk to your baby the first six months. Your breastmilk supplies the baby with all the nutrients he/she needs to grow the first six months
- Do not give water or food apart from breastmilk the first six months
- Give breastmilk to your baby when he or she cries
- Bath the baby two or three times in a week, most babies do not need a bath every single day.
- Take your baby to the health facility when he or she cries too often and will not stop. It shows the baby is in pain
- The midwife will tell you how to care for the umbilical cord. But take the baby immediately to the hospital if you see these signs:
 - Bleeding from the end of the cord or the area near the skin.
 - Pus (a yellow or white discharge).
 - Swelling or redness around the navel.
- Signs that the navel area is painful to your baby.

**Visit the clinic with your new born baby for check up within the
first three weeks after delivery**





Chapter 19

POSTPARTUM INFECTION

Signs of Postpartum sepsis (infection after delivery) include: fever, headaches, lower abdominal pain, offensive vaginal discharge, vomiting or diarrhoea

Questions

1. What could be happening to the woman in this picture?
2. Have you, or anyone you know, ever experienced such a problem after delivery? What happened?
3. What should you do if this problem occurs?

Discussions/ Facts

Infection after delivery can be caused by:

- Prolong labour
- Early breaking of the waters
- Poor hygiene during delivery or during an operation such as caesarean delivery (e.g. birth attendants hands or instruments were not clean)
- Fistula (a hole between the vagina and urinary tract or rectum which causes urine or faeces to leak from the vagina)

Danger signs after delivery include:

- Fainting, fits or convulsions
- Heavy bleeding with clots or pieces of tissue
- Severe pain in the abdomen
- Vomiting and diarrhoea
- Fever
- Bleeding and/or offensive vaginal discharge
- Severe pains in the chest or shortness of breath
- Pains, swelling, redness and/or discharge at the site of a cut (from episiotomy or a caesarean section)
- Urine or faeces leaking through the vagina
- Pains when urinating

A woman with any of the above danger signs should seek medical attention immediately





Chapter 20

POSTNATAL CARE

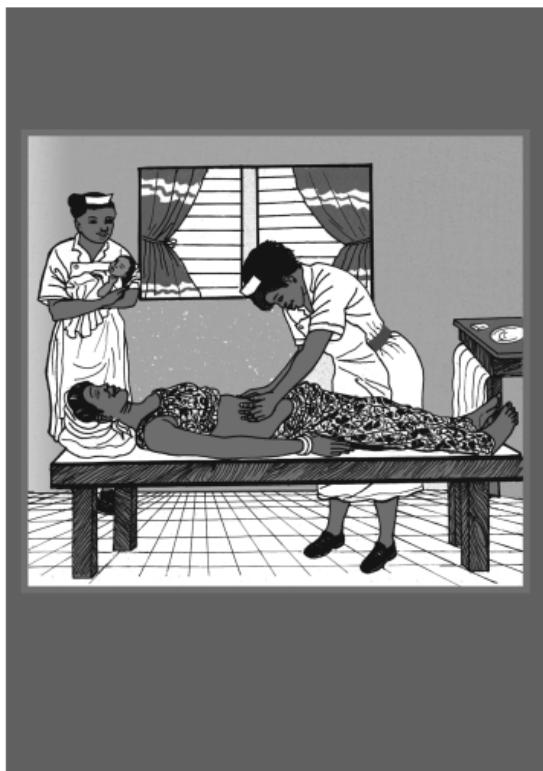
**A mother should visit a health facility or be visited by a health worker at home
within seven to ten days after delivery**

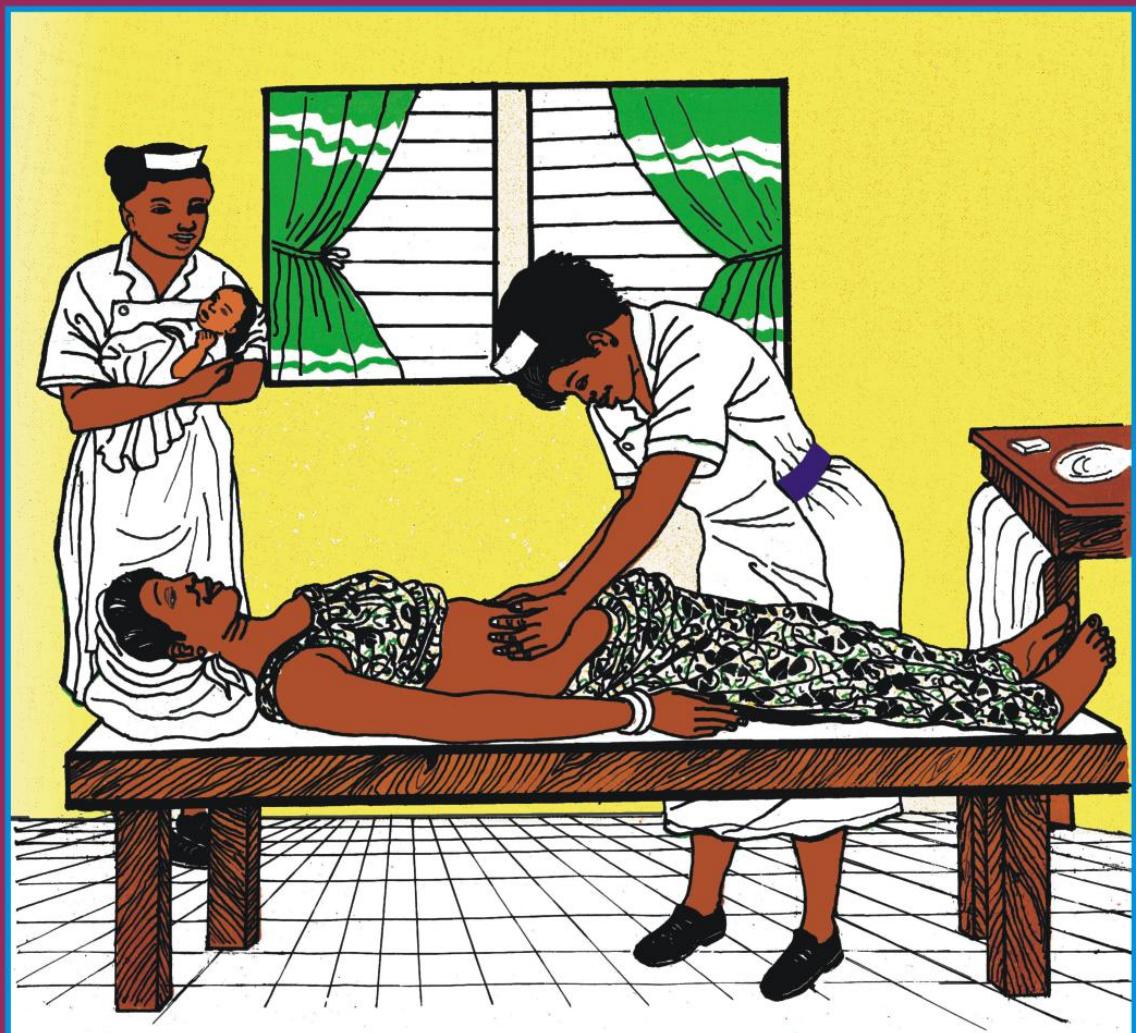
Questions

1. What do you see in this picture?
2. Do women usually visit the clinic after delivery? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever visited the clinic after delivery? What happened during the visit?
4. In your opinion, how soon should a mother visit the clinic after delivery

Discussions/ Facts

- A mother should visit a health facility within 7-10 days after delivery. This is especially important if she delivered at home
- The first visit to the clinic after delivery is important because it enables health workers to ensure that the woman and the newborn baby are recovering from labour and delivery
- This visit provides an excellent opportunity for the woman to ask any questions she may have about breastfeeding, sleep, immunizations for the baby and other topics
- If the mother and infant are well, the second visit should be about six weeks after the birth of the baby
- During the second visit, both the mother and baby should have a thorough physical examination, and the baby should be immunized against tuberculosis and polio
- In addition, the woman can ask any questions she may have about sexual relations, family planning, arranging for other immunizations for the baby and other topics
- The father and other family members should ensure that the mother and baby visit the clinic by arranging for transport, clinic fees and care for other children at home





Chapter 21

THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD

After the baby is born, the father and other family members can help with day-to-day tasks like caring for the older children while the mother recovers from the pregnancy and delivery and adjusts to her new responsibilities

Questions

1. How does a woman feel after she delivers a baby?
2. Does she have any special needs after the birth of her baby?
3. What can the family do to help her?

Discussions/ Facts

Women feel very tired after delivery and need a period of about 6 weeks of rest and recovery known as the postpartum period.

After delivery:-

- The woman's womb becomes smaller again
- Her birth canal returns to normal
- She experiences a discharge from the vagina, that changes colour from red to cream and finally stops
- She should keep herself clean and avoid tampons, douching and sex
- Women who feel persistently anxious and depressed need help from a health worker. Women need support and love from partners and other family members. They can support by taking over some household duties
- Fathers and other family members need to know postpartum danger signs to enable them arrange for medical attention for their wives when necessary
- Breastfeeding is one most critical activity during the postpartum period and after. To breastfeed successfully mothers need
 - Plenty of nutritious foods and fresh vegetables
 - Lots of water, fruits and other fluids
- If possible sexual activity should be avoided during the postpartum period to prevent infection
- Because pregnancy can occur before the start of menstruation, it is important that :
 - Mothers are well counseled on family planning
 - Mothers use a family planning method

