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# Vocabulary

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This vocabulary is listed in the order of the alphabet:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Words marked with a star (\*) are usually not used in this book but are often used by doctors or found on package information of medicines.

Most names of sicknesses are not included in this vocabulary. See the Index (yellow pages) and read about the sickness in the book.

## A

**Abdomen** The part of the body that contains the stomach, liver, and guts. The belly.

**Abnormal** Different from what is usual, natural, or average. Not normal.

**Abscess** A sac of pus caused by bacterial or other infection. For example, a boil.

**Acne (pimples)** A skin problem causing bumps on the face, chest, or back that form small white 'heads' of pus or sometimes 'blackheads' of dirt. Most common in young people (adolescents).

**Acute** Sudden and short-lived. An acute illness is one that starts suddenly and lasts a short time. The opposite of 'chronic'.

**Acute abdomen** An emergency condition of the abdomen that often requires a surgical operation. Severe pain in the belly with vomiting and no diarrhea may mean an acute abdomen.

**Adolescent** The years in which a child becomes an adult. The teens: 13 to 19 years old.

**Afterbirth** See **Placenta**.

**AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)** An illness caused by the HIV virus. A person has AIDS when the immune system gets so weak it can no longer fight off the disease.

**Alcoholism** A continual need a person cannot control to overuse alcoholic drinks such as beer, rum, wine, etc.

**Allergy, allergic reaction** A problem such as rash, itching, hives, sneezing, difficult breathing, or shock that affects certain people when specific things are breathed in, eaten, injected, or touched.

**Amebas (also amoebas)** Tiny animals that live in water or in the gut and can only be seen with a microscope. They can cause diarrhea, dysentery, and liver abscess.

**Amputation** Loss of a body part.

**Analgesic** Medicine to calm pain.

**Anemia** A disease in which the blood gets thin for lack of red blood cells. Signs include tiredness, pale skin, and lack of energy. See also **Pernicious anemia**.

**Antacid** Medicine used to control too much stomach acid and to calm stomach upset.

**Antibiotic** Medicine that fights infections caused by bacteria.

**\*Antiemetic** Vomit-control medicine. A medicine that helps keep people from vomiting or feeling nauseated.

**Antihistamine** Medicine used to treat allergies such as hay fever and itching. Also helps control vomiting and causes sleepiness.

**Antiseptic** A soap or cleaning liquid that prevents growth of bacteria.

**Antispasmodic** Medicine used to relieve cramps or spasms of the gut.

**Antitoxin** Medicine that acts against or neutralizes a poison or toxin.

**Antivenom (anti-venin)** An antitoxin used to treat poisoning from a venom, such as snake poison.

**Anus** The opening at the end of the large intestine; asshole.

**Aorta** The main artery or vessel that carries blood out of the heart to the body.

**Apoplexy** An old word for stroke. See **Stroke**.

**Appendix** A finger-like sac attached to the large intestine (gut).

**Appropriate** Something that is easiest, safest, and most likely to work in a particular situation or condition.

**Artery** A vessel carrying blood from the heart through the body. Arteries have a pulse. Veins, which return blood to the heart, have no pulse.

**Ascaris (roundworm)** Large worms that live in people's intestines and cause discomfort, indigestion, weakness, and sometimes gut obstruction (blocking of the gut).

## B

**Bacteria** Tiny germs that can only be seen with a microscope and that cause many different infectious diseases.

**Bag of waters** The sac inside the womb that holds the baby; amniotic sac. When it breaks, releasing its fluid, this usually means that labor has begun.

**Bed sores** Chronic open sores that appear in people who are so ill they do not roll over or change position in bed.

**Bewitchment** The act of casting a spell or influencing by witchcraft; hexing. Some people believe that they get sick because a witch has bewitched them or given them the 'evil eye'.

**Bile** A bitter, green liquid made by the liver and stored in the gallbladder. It helps digest fat.

**Birth defects** See **Defects**.

**Blackhead** A small plug or 'head' of dirt blocking a pore in the skin of the face, chest, or back. A kind of pimple.

**Bladder stones** See **kidney stones**.

**Blood pressure** The force or pressure of the blood upon the walls of the blood vessels (arteries and veins); it varies with the age and health of the person.

**Boil** A swollen, inflamed lump with a pocket of pus under the skin. A kind of abscess.

**Booster** A repeat vaccination to renew the effect of an earlier series of vaccinations.

**Bowel movement** To have a bowel movement is to defecate; to shit; the way of passing solid waste out of the body.

**Brand name** Trade name. The name a company gives to its product. A brand-name medicine is sold under a special name and is often more expensive than the same generic medicine.

**Breast abscess** See **Mastitis**.

**Breech delivery** A birth in which the baby comes out buttocks or legs first.

**Broad-spectrum antibiotic** A medicine that works against many kinds of micro-organisms. Compare with a narrow-spectrum antibiotic, which works against only a few.

**Bronchi** The tubes leading to the lungs, through which air passes when a person breathes.

**Bronchitis** An infection of the bronchi.

**Bubo** A very swollen lymph node. **Bubos** is a common name for lymphogranuloma venereum.

**Buttocks** The part of the body a person sits on; ass, arse, rump, behind, backside, butt.

## C

**Cancer** A tumor or lump that grows and may keep growing until it finally causes death.

**Carbohydrates** Starches and sugars. Foods that provide energy.

**Cassava (manioc, yucca)** A starchy root grown in the tropics.

**Cast** A stiff bandage of gauze and plaster that holds a broken bone in place until it heals.

**Cataract** An eye problem in which the lens of the eye becomes cloudy, making it more and more difficult for the person to see. The pupil looks gray or white when you shine a light into it.

**Catheter** A rubber tube used to drain urine from the bladder.

**Cavity** A hole or spot of decay in a tooth where bacteria have got in and destroyed part of the tooth.

**Centigrade (C)** A measure or scale of heat and cold. A healthy person's temperature (normal temperature) is 37° C. Water freezes at 0° C and boils at 100° C.

**Cerebro-vascular accident, CVA** See **Stroke**.

**Cervix** The opening or neck of the womb at the back of the vagina.

**Chancre** A painless sore or ulcer on the genitals, finger, or lip that is one of the first signs of syphilis.

**Chigger** A tiny, crawling spider or tick like animal that buries its head under the skin and sucks blood.

**Child Health Chart** A monthly record of a child's weight that shows whether the child is gaining weight normally.

**Childbirth fever** (This is also called childbed fever, womb infection, postpartum infection, or puerperal infection.) The fever and infection that mothers sometimes develop after childbirth.

**Chronic** Long-term or frequently recurring (compare with acute). A chronic disease is one that lasts a long time.

**Circulation** The flow of blood through the arteries and veins by the pumping of the heart.

**Cleft** Divided, separated. A child born with a cleft palate has a separation or abnormal opening in the roof of his mouth.

**Climacteric** Menopause.

**Colic** Sharp abdominal pains caused by spasms or cramps in the gut.

**Colostrum** The first milk a mother's breasts produce. It looks watery but is rich in protein and helps protect the baby against infection.

**Coma** A state of unconsciousness from which a person cannot be wakened. It is caused by disease, injury, or poison, and often ends in death.

**Community** A group of people living in the same village or area who have similar living conditions, interests, and problems.

**\*Complications** Secondary health problems that sometimes develop in the course of a disease. For example, meningitis may result as a dangerous complication of measles.

**Compost** A mixture of plant and animal waste that is allowed to rot for use as a fertilizer. Hay, dead leaves, vegetable waste, animal droppings, and manure all make good compost.

**Compress** A folded cloth or pad put on a part of the body. It may be soaked in hot or cold water.

**Conjunctiva** A thin, protective layer that covers the white of the eye and inner side of the eyelids.

**Consciousness** See **Loss of consciousness**.

**Constipation** Dry, hard, difficult stools (bowel movements) that do not come often.

**Consumption** An old name for tuberculosis.

**Contact** Touch. Contagious diseases can be spread by a sick person coming in contact with (touching or being close to) another person.

**Contagious disease** A sickness that can be spread easily from one person to another.

**Contaminate** To dirty, stain, or infect by contact. A syringe that has not been boiled is often contaminated and can cause infections, even though it looks clean.

**Contraceptive** Any method of preventing pregnancy.

**Contractions** Tightening or shortening of muscles. The strong contractions of the womb when a woman is in labor help to push the baby out of the womb.

**Contractures** Shortened or tight muscles in a joint that limit movement.

**\*Contraindication** A situation or condition when a particular medicine should not be taken. (Many medicines are contraindicated in pregnancy.)

**Convulsions** An uncontrolled seizure, or fit. A sudden jerking of part or all of the person's body, as in meningitis or epilepsy.

**Cornea** The clear outer layer or 'window' of the eye, covering the iris and pupil.

**Corns** Hard, thick, painful parts of the skin formed where sandals or shoes push against the skin or one toe presses against another.

**Cramp** A painful tightening or contraction of a muscle.

**Cupping** A home remedy that consists of drawing blood to the surface of the body by use of a glass or cup with a flame under it.

**Cyst** An abnormal, sac-like, liquid-filled growth developing in the body.

## D

**Dandruff** Oily white or grayish flakes or scales that appear in the hair. Seborrhea of the scalp.

**Decongestant** A medicine that helps relieve swelling or stuffiness of the nose or sinuses.

**Defects** Birth defects are physical or mental problems a child is born with, such as a hare lip, club foot, or an extra finger or toe.

**Deficiency** Not having enough of something; a lack.

**Deformed** Abnormally formed, not having the right shape.

**Dehydration** A condition in which the body loses more liquid than it takes in. This lack of water is especially dangerous in babies.

**Delirium** A state of mental confusion with strange movements and speech; it may come with high fever or severe illness.

**\*Dermal** Of the skin.

**Dermatitis** An infection or irritation of the skin.

**Diaper rash** Reddish, irritated patches between a baby's legs caused by urine in his diapers (nappy) or bedding.

**Diarrhea** Frequent runny or liquid stools.

**Diet** The kinds and amounts of foods that a person should eat or avoid eating.

**Discharge** A release or flowing out of fluid, mucus, or pus.

**Dislocations** Bones that have slipped out of place at a joint.

**Douche** A way to wash out the vagina by squirting a stream of water up into it.

**Down syndrome** A disease in which a child is born mentally slow with slanted eyes, a round dull face, and wide hands with short fingers.

**Drowning** When a person stops breathing (suffocates) from being under water.

**Dysentery** Diarrhea with mucus and blood. It is usually caused by an infection.

## E

**Eclampsia** Sudden seizures, especially during pregnancy or childbirth, very dangerous for both mother and baby.

**Embryo** The beginnings of an unborn baby when it is still very small.

**Emergency** A sudden sickness or injury that calls for immediate attention.

**\*Emetic** A medicine or drink that makes people vomit. Used when poisons have been swallowed.

**Enema** A solution of water put up the anus to cause a bowel movement.

**Epidemic** An outbreak of disease affecting many persons in a community or region at the same time.

**Evaluation** A study to find out the worth or value of something, or how much has been accomplished. Often done by comparing different factors or conditions before and after a project or activity is underway.

**Evil eye** A glance or look from someone believed to have the power to bewitch or do harm to people.

**Exhaustion** Extreme fatigue and tiredness.

**\*Expectorant** A medicine that helps a person cough up mucus from the respiratory tract (lungs, bronchi, etc.); a cough-helper.

**Expiration date** The month and year marked on a medicine that tells when it will no longer be good. Throw away most medicines after this date.

## F

**Fahrenheit (F)** A measure or scale of heat and cold. A healthy person's temperature (normal temperature) is 98.6° F. Water freezes at 32° F and boils at 212° F.

**Family planning** Using birth control methods to plan when to have and not have children.

**Farsighted** Being able to see things at a distance better than things close at hand.

**Feces** Stools; shit; the waste from the body that is moved out through the bowels in a 'bowel movement'.

**Feces-to-mouth** Spread or transmitted from the stools of one person to his or another person's mouth, usually by food or drink, or on fingers.

**Fetoscope** An instrument or tool for listening to sounds made by the unborn baby (fetus) inside the womb.

**Fetus (foetus)** The developing baby inside the womb.

**Fever** A body temperature higher than normal.

**First aid** Emergency care or treatment for someone who is sick or injured.

**Flu** A bad cold, often with fever, pain in the joints, and sometimes diarrhea.

**Flukes** Worms that infect the liver or other parts of the body and cause different diseases. Blood flukes get into the blood and cause schistosomiasis.

**Foetus** See **Fetus**.

**Folic acid** A nutritious substance found in leafy green vegetables.

**Follicles** Small lumps.

**Fontanel** The 'soft spot' on the top of a young baby's head.

**Fracture** A broken bone.

**Fright** A great or sudden fear.

## G

**Gallbladder** A small, muscular sac attached to the liver. The gallbladder collects bile, a liquid that helps digest fatty foods.

**Gauze** Soft, loosely woven kind of cloth used for bandages.

**Generic name** The scientific name of a medicine, as distinct from the brand names given it by different companies that make it.

**Genitals** The organs of the reproductive system, especially the sex organs.

**Germs** Very small organisms that can grow in the body and cause some infectious diseases; micro-organisms.

**Giardia** A microscopic parasite that can infect the intestines, causing frothy yellow diarrhea.

**Glucose** A simple form of sugar that the body can use quickly and easily. It is found in fruits and honey, and can be bought as a white powder for use in Rehydration Drinks.

**Goiter** A swelling on the lower front of the neck (enlargement of the thyroid gland) caused by lack of iodine in the diet.

**Grain (gr)** A unit of weight based on the weight of a grain of wheat. 1 grain weighs 65 mg.

**Gram (g)** A metric unit of weight. There are about 28 grams in an ounce. There are 1000 g in 1 kilogram (kg).

**Groin** The front part of the body where the legs join. The genital area.

**Gut** Intestines.

**Gut thread or gut suture material** A special thread for sewing or stitching certain wounds, and especially tears from childbirth. The gut thread is slowly absorbed (disappears) so that the stitches do not need to be taken out.

**H**

**Hare lip** A split in the upper lip, going from the mouth up to the nose (like a hare, or rabbit). Some babies are born with a hare lip.

**Health worker** A person who takes part in making his community a healthier place to live.

**Heartburn** A burning feeling in the lower chest or upper part of the stomach.

**Hemorrhage** Severe or dangerous bleeding.

**Hemorrhoids (piles)** Small, painful bumps or lumps at the edge of the anus or inside it. These are actually swollen or varicose veins.

**Herb** A plant, especially one valued for its medicinal or healing qualities.

**Hereditary** Passed on from parent to child.

**Hernia (rupture)** An opening or tear in the muscles covering the belly that allows a loop of the gut to push through and form a ball or lump under the skin.

**Hex** A magic spell or jinx said to be caused by a witch.

**History (medical history)** What you can learn through asking questions about a person's sickness—how it began, when it gets better or worse, what seems to help, whether others in the family or village have it, etc.

**HIV (Human Immune-deficiency Virus)** The virus that causes AIDS.

**Hives** Hard, thick, raised spots on the skin that itch severely. They may come and go all at once or move from one place to another. A form of allergic reaction.

**Hormones** Chemicals made in parts of the body to do a special job. For example, estrogen and progesterone are hormones that regulate a woman's period and chance of pregnancy.

**Hygiene** Actions or practices of personal cleanliness that lead to good health.

**\*Hypertension** High blood pressure.

**Hyperventilation** Very rapid, deep breathing in a person who is frightened.

**\*Hypochondria** Extreme worry or concern over an imagined sickness.

**Hypothyroidism** A condition in which a child is born mentally slow and often deaf. It is usually due to lack of iodine in the mother's diet.

**Hysteria** (1) In common language, a condition of great nervousness, fear, and emotional distress. (2) In medical terms, signs of sickness caused by fear or the power of belief.

**I**

**Immunizations (vaccinations)** Medicines that give protection against specific diseases, for example: diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, and measles.

**Infection** A sickness caused by bacteria or other germs. Infections may affect part of the body only (such as an infected finger) or all of it (such as measles).

**Infectious disease** A disease that is easily spread or communicated (passed from one person to another); contagious.

**Inflammation** An area that is red, hot, and painful, often because of infection.

**Insecticide** A poison that kills insects. DDT and lindane are insecticides.

**\*Insomnia** A condition in which a person is not able to sleep, even though he wants and needs to.

**Insulin** A substance (enzyme) produced by the pancreas, which controls the amount of sugar in the blood. Injections of insulin are sometimes needed by persons with diabetes.

**Intestinal parasites** Worms and tiny animals that get in people's intestines and cause diseases.

**Intestines** The guts or tube-like part of the food canal that carries food and finally waste from the stomach to the anus.

**Intramuscular (IM) injection** An injection put into a muscle, usually of the arm or the buttock—different from an intravenous (IV) injection, put directly into a vein.

**Intussusception** The slipping of one portion of the gut into one nearby, usually causing a dangerous obstruction or blocking of the gut.

**Iris** The colored or dark part of the eye around the pupil.

**J**

**Jaundice** A yellow color of the eyes and skin. It is a sign of disease in the liver, gallbladder, pancreas, or blood.

## K

**\*Keratomalacia** A dullness and softening of the eye, ending in blindness. It is caused by a lack of vitamin A.

**Kidneys** Large, bean-shaped organs in the lower back that filter waste from the blood, forming urine.

**Kidney stones** Small stones that form in the kidneys and pass down to the urinary tube. They can cause a sharp pain in the lower back, side, urinary tube, or lower belly. In the bladder they may block the urinary tube and make urination painful or impossible.

**Kilogram (kg)** One thousand grams. A 'kilo' is equal to a little over 2 pounds.

**Kwashiorkor (wet malnutrition)** Severe malnutrition. A child with kwashiorkor has swollen feet, hands, and face, and peeling sores.

## L

**Labor** The sudden tightening or contractions of the womb that mean the baby will soon be born.

**Larva (larvae)** The young worm-like form that comes from the egg of many insects or parasites. It changes form when it becomes an adult.

**Latrine** An outhouse; privy; a hole or pit in the ground to use as a toilet.

**Laxative** A medicine used for constipation that makes stools softer and more frequent.

**Ligaments** Tough cords in a person's joints that help hold them in place.

**\*Lingual** Of or relating to the tongue.

**Liter (l)** A metric measure equal to about one quart. A liter of water weighs one kilogram.

**Liver** A large organ under the lower right ribs that helps clean the blood and get rid of poisons.

**Loss of consciousness** The condition of a sick or injured person who seems to be asleep and cannot be wakened. Unconsciousness.

**\*Lubricant** An oil or cream used to make surfaces slippery.

**Lymph nodes** Small lumps under the skin in different parts of the body that are traps for germs. They become painful and swollen when they get infected. In tuberculosis and cancer they are often swollen but not painful.

**Lyophilized** Powdered; a way of preparing injectable medicine so that it does not have to be kept cold.

## M

**Malnutrition** Health problems caused by not eating enough of the foods that the body needs.

**Marasmus (dry malnutrition)** A condition caused by not eating enough. Starvation. The person is very thin and underweight, often with a pot belly.

**Mask of pregnancy** Dark, olive-colored areas on face, breasts, or middle of the belly that are normal in a pregnant woman.

**Mastitis (breast abscess)** An infection of the breast, usually in the first weeks or months of nursing a baby. It causes part of the breast to become hot, red, and swollen.

**Membrane** A thin, soft sheet or layer that lines or protects some part of an animal or plant.

**Menopause (climacteric)** The time when a woman naturally stops having monthly bleeding, usually between the ages of 40 and 50.

**Menstrual period, menstruation** Monthly bleeding in women.

**Mental** Of or relating to the mind (thinking, brain).

**Micro-organism** A tiny plant or animal so small it can only be seen with the aid of microscope.

**Microscope** An instrument with lenses that make very tiny objects look larger.

**Microscopic** Something so small that it can only be seen with a microscope.

**Migraine** A severe, throbbing headache, sometimes on one side of the head only. It often causes vomiting.

**Milligram (mg)** One thousandth of a gram.

**Milliliter (ml)** One thousandth of a liter.

**Minerals** Simple metals or other things the body needs, such as iron, calcium, and iodine.

**Miscarriage (spontaneous abortion)** The death of the developing baby or fetus in the womb, sometimes followed by heavy bleeding with blood clots.

**Morning sickness** Nausea and vomiting that occur especially in the morning in the early months of pregnancy.

**Mouth-to-mouth breathing** Artificial respiration. A method of helping a person who has stopped breathing to start breathing again.

**Mucus** A thick, slippery liquid that moistens and protects the linings of the nose, throat, stomach, guts, and vagina.



## N

**Narrow-spectrum antibiotic** A medicine that works against a limited number of different kinds of bacteria.

**\*Nasal** Of or relating to the nose.

**Nausea** Stomach distress or upset; feeling like you need to vomit.

**Navel** Belly button; umbilicus; the place in the middle of the belly where the umbilical cord was attached.

**Nerves** Thin threads or strings that run from the brain to every part of the body and carry messages for feeling and movement.

**Non-infectious disease** A disease that does not spread from person to person.

**Normal** Usual, natural, or average. Something that is normal has nothing wrong with it.

**Nutritious** Nourishing. Nutritious foods are those that have the things the body needs to grow, be healthy, and fight off disease.

## O

**Obstruction** A condition of being blocked or clogged. An obstructed gut is a medical emergency.

**Ointment** A salve or lotion to use on the skin.

**\*Ophthalmic** Of the eye.

**\*Oral** By mouth. An oral medicine is one taken by mouth.

**Organ** A part of the body that is more or less complete in itself and does a specific job. For example, the lungs are organs for breathing.

**Organisms** Living things (animals or plants).

**\*Otic** Having to do with the ears.

**Ounce** A measure of weight equal to about 28 grams. There are 16 ounces in one pound.

**Ovaries** Small sacs in a woman's belly next to her womb. They produce the eggs that join with a man's sperm to make a baby.

**Oxytocics** Dangerous medicines that cause the womb and blood vessels in it to contract. They should only be used to control a mother's heavy bleeding after her child is born.

## P

**Palate** The roof or top part of the mouth.

**Pancreas** An organ below the stomach, on the left side, that produces insulin.

**Pannus** Tiny blood vessels that appear in the top edge of the cornea in certain eye diseases, like trachoma.

**Paralysis** Loss of the ability to move part or all of the body.

**Parasites** Worms and tiny animals that live in or on another animal or person and cause harm. Fleas, intestinal worms, and amebas are parasites.

**\*Parenteral** Not by mouth but by injection.

**Pasteurization** The process of heating milk or other liquids to a certain temperature (60° C) for about 30 minutes in order to kill harmful bacteria.

**Pelvis** Hip bones.

**Peritoneum** The thin lining between the guts and body wall. The bag that holds the guts.

**Peritonitis** A very dangerous inflammation of the peritoneum. The belly gets hard like a board, and the person is in great pain, especially when he tries to lie with his legs straight.

**Pernicious anemia** A rare kind of anemia caused by a lack of vitamin B<sub>12</sub>. Pernicious means harmful.

**Petroleum jelly (petrolatum, Vaseline)** A grease-like jelly used in preparing skin ointments.

**Pharmacy** A store that sells medicines and health care supplies.

**Phlegm** Mucus with pus that forms in abnormal amounts in the lungs and must be coughed out.

**Piles** See **Hemorrhoids**.

**Pimples** See **Acne**.

**Placenta (afterbirth)** The dark and spongy lining inside the womb where the fetus joins the mother's body. The placenta normally comes out 15 minutes to half an hour after the baby is born.

**Placenta previa** A condition in which the placenta is too low in the womb and blocks the mouth of the womb. The risk of dangerous bleeding is high. Women who have bleeding late in pregnancy—a possible sign of placenta previa—should go to a hospital at once.

**Plantain** A kind of banana with a lot of starch and fiber. It is often cooked and eaten when green.

## R

**Pollen** The fine dust made in the flower of a seed plant. People who are **allergic** to pollen often have hay fever at times of the year when plants put a lot of this dust into the air.

**Postpartum** After childbirth.

**Postpartum hemorrhaging** Heavy bleeding of the mother following childbirth.

**Power of suggestion or power of belief** The influence of belief or strong ideas. For example, sick people can feel better because they have faith in a remedy, even if the remedy does not have any medical effect.

**Precaution** Care taken in advance to prevent harm or prepare for emergencies before they happen.

**Pre-eclampsia** A dangerous condition during pregnancy, which can lead to seizures.

**Pregnancy** The period (normally 9 months) when a woman carries a child inside her.

**Premature baby** A baby born before the full 9 months of pregnancy and weighing less than 2 kilos.

**Presentation of an arm** An abnormal position of delivery in which the baby's hand comes out first during the birth. This is an emergency needing a doctor.

**Prevention** Action taken to stop sickness before it starts.

**Prolapse** The slipping or falling down of a part of the body from its normal position; for example, a prolapsed rectum or womb.

**Prophylactic** The word prophylactic means preventive, but condoms are sometimes called prophylactics.

**Prostate gland** A firm, muscular gland at the base of the man's urinary tube, or urethra. Often in older men the prostate becomes enlarged, causing difficulty in urinating.

**Protective foods** Foods that are rich in vitamins and minerals. They help build healthy bodies and make people more able to resist or fight diseases.

**Proteins** Body-building foods necessary for proper growth and strength.

**Pterygium** A fleshy growth that slowly extends from the edge of the eye onto the cornea.

**Pulse** The number of times a person's heart beats in one minute.

**Pupil** The round opening or black center in the iris of the eye. It gets smaller in bright light and larger in the dark.

**Purge** A very strong laxative that causes diarrhea.

**Rate** The number of times something happens in a given amount of time.

**Rebound pain** A very sharp pain in the abdomen that occurs after the belly is pressed firmly and slowly, when the hand is removed suddenly. This pain is a sign of an acute abdomen.

**Rectum** The end of the large intestine close to the anus.

**Reflex** An automatic reaction or movement that happens without a person's trying to do it.

**Rehydration Drink** A drink to correct dehydration, which you can make with boiled water, salt, and sugar or powdered cereal.

**Resistance** The ability of something to defend itself against something that would normally harm or kill it. Many bacteria become resistant to the effects of certain antibiotics.

**Resource** What is needed or available for doing or making something. People, land, animals, money, skills, and plants are resources that can be used for improving health.

**Respiration** Breathing. The **respiratory system** includes the bronchi, lungs, and other organs used in breathing.

**Respiration rate** The number of times a person breathes in one minute.

**Retardation** Abnormal slowness of thought, action, or mental and emotional growth.

**Rhinitis** An inflammation of the lining of the nose, often caused by allergies. Hay fever.

**Risk** The possibility of injury, loss, or harm. Danger.

**Rotation of crops** To grow different crops one after the other in the same field, so that the soil becomes richer rather than weaker from year to year.

**Rupture** See **Hernia**.



**S**

**Sanitation** Public cleanliness involving community efforts in disease prevention, promoting hygiene, and keeping public places free of waste.

**Scrotum** The bag between a man's legs that holds his testicles or balls.

**Sedative** Medicine that causes drowsiness or sleep.

**Seizure** A sudden, violent attack of a disease, causing convulsions or spasms (jerking of the body that the person cannot control) and sometimes unconsciousness.

**Septicemia** An infection of the blood sometimes called 'blood poisoning'.

**Sexually transmitted infection (STI)** A disease spread by sexual contact.

**Shock** A dangerous condition with severe weakness or unconsciousness, cold sweat, and fast, weak pulse. It is caused by dehydration, hemorrhage, injury, burns, or a severe illness.

**Side effects** Problems caused by using a medicine.

**Signs** The things or conditions one looks for when examining a sick person, to find out what sickness he has. In this book symptoms, or the problems a person feels, are included with signs.

**Sinus trouble (sinusitis)** Sinuses are hollows in the bone that open into the nose. Sinusitis is inflammation causing pain above and below the eyes.

**Soft drinks** Fizzy, carbonated drinks like Coca-Cola.

**Soft spot** See **Fontanel**.

**Spasm** A sudden muscle contraction that a person cannot control. Spasms of the gut produce cramps, or colic. Spasms of the bronchi occur in asthma. Spasms of the jaw and other muscles occur in tetanus.

**Spastic** Having chronic abnormal muscle contraction due to brain damage. The legs of spastic children often cross like scissors.

**Spleen** An organ normally the size of a fist under the lower edge of the ribs on the left side. Its job is to help make and filter the blood.

**Spontaneous abortion** See **Miscarriage**.

**Sprain (strain)** Bruising, stretching, or tearing of ligaments or tendons in a twisted joint. A sprain is worse than a strain.

**Sputum** Mucus and pus (phlegm) coughed up from the lungs and bronchi of a sick person.

**Starches** Energy foods like maize, rice, wheat, cassava, potatoes, and squash.

**Sterile** (1) Completely clean and free from living micro-organisms. Things are usually sterilized by boiling or heating. (2) Sterile also means permanently unable to have children.

**Sterilization** (1) To sterilize instruments, bottles, and other things by boiling or heating in an oven. (2) Also a permanent way of making a man or a woman unable to reproduce (have children).

**Stethoscope** An instrument used to listen to sounds in the body, such as the heartbeat.

**Stomach** The sac-like organ in the belly where food is digested. In common language 'stomach' is often used to mean the whole belly or abdomen.

**Stools** Shit. Bowel movement. See **Feces**.

**Stroke (apoplexy, cerebro-vascular accident)** A sudden loss of consciousness, feeling, or ability to move, caused by bleeding or a clot inside the brain. Also see heat stroke (p. 81).

**Sty** A red, swollen lump on the eyelid, usually near the edge, caused by infection.

**Sucrose** The common sugar that comes from sugarcane or sugar beets. It is more complex and more difficult for the body to use than glucose.

**Sugars** Sweet foods like honey, sugar, or fruit that give energy.

**Suppository** A bullet-shaped tablet of medicine to put up the anus or vagina.

**\*Suppressant** A medicine that helps to check, hold back, or stop something, such as a medicine to stop coughing (cough suppressant).

**Suspension** A powder mixed in a liquid.

**Suture** A stitch made with needle and thread to sew up an opening or wound.

**Symptoms** The feelings or conditions a person reports about his sickness. In this book symptoms are included with signs.

**T**

**Tablespoon** A measuring spoon that holds 3 teaspoons or 15 ml.

**Taboo** Something that is avoided, banned, or not allowed because of a cultural belief.

**Teaspoon** A measuring spoon that holds 5 ml. Three teaspoons equal 1 tablespoon.

**Temperature** The degree of heat of a person's body.

**Tendons** Tough cords that join muscles to bones (distinct from ligaments, which join bones with bones at joints).

**\*Thalassemia** A form of hereditary anemia seen only in certain countries. A child may become very anemic by age 2, with a large liver and spleen.

**Thermometer** An instrument used to measure a person's body temperature.

**Tick** A crawling insect-like animal that buries its head under the skin and sucks blood.

**\*Topical** For the skin. A topical medicine is to be put on the skin.

**\*Toxemia** See **Pre-eclampsia**.

**Toxic** Poisonous.

**Tract** A system of body organs and parts that work together to do a special job; for example, the urinary tract cleans the blood and gets rid of urine.

**Traditions** Practices, beliefs, or customs handed down from one generation to another by example or word of mouth.

**Transmit** To pass on, transfer, or spread from one person to another.

**Tropical** Having to do with the tropics or hot regions of the world.

**Tumor** An abnormal mass of tissue without inflammation. Some tumors are due to cancer.

## U

**Ulcer** A break in the skin or mucus membrane; a chronic open sore of the skin, the surface of the eye, the stomach, or gut.

**Umbilical cord** The cord that connects a baby from its navel to the placenta on the inside of its mother's womb.

**Umbilical hernia** A large, outward bulge of the navel caused by a loop of intestine that has pushed through the sac holding the guts.

**Umbilicus** See **Navel**.

**Unconsciousness** See **Loss of consciousness**.

**Under-Fives Program** A plan that helps mothers learn about their children's health needs, make regular visits to a clinic for check-ups, and keep a record (Child Health Chart) of the growth of their children under five years old.

**Urethra** Urinary tube or canal. The tube that runs from the bladder to the hole a person urinates from.

**Urinary tract** The system of organs that form and get rid of urine—such as kidneys, bladder, and urinary tube (urethra).

**Urine** Liquid waste from the body; piss; pee.

**Uterus** Womb.

## V

**Vaccinations** See **Immunization**.

**Vagina** The tube or canal that goes from the opening of the woman's sex organs to the entrance of her womb.

**Vaginal** Of or relating to the vagina.

**Varicose veins** Abnormally swollen veins, often lumpy and winding, usually on the legs of older people, pregnant women, and women who have had a lot of children.

**Vaseline** See **Petroleum Jelly**.

**Venereal disease** A disease spread by sexual contact. Now called 'sexually transmitted infection' or 'STI'.

**Vessels** Tubes. Blood vessels are the veins and arteries that carry the blood through the body.

**Virus** Germs smaller than bacteria, which cause some infectious (easily spread) diseases.

**Vitamins** Protective foods that our bodies need to work properly.

**Vomiting** Throwing up the contents out of the stomach through the mouth.

## W

**Welts** Lumps or ridges raised on the body, usually caused by a blow or an allergy (hives).

**Womb** The organ inside a woman's belly where a baby is made. The uterus.

## X

**Xerophthalmia** Abnormal dryness of the eye due to lack of vitamin A.