



Some Guidance in Home-Visiting

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HOME-visiting occupies a very significant place in the work of the Health Visitor. In fact it is the pivot on which all her other services revolve. The Health Visitor pays frequent and regular visits to the prenatal and postnatal patients and children up to the age of 5 years. Her home visits are invaluable to the people in the homes, particularly the young mothers, in the care of children. It is a joy to see in Welfare Centres some of the mothers with their healthy, happy and contented children, eagerly looking forward to what they have to learn and do next. On the other hand, there are some mothers who are indifferent and dissatisfied with miserable looking children who may be suffering from nutritional deficiencies of various types. They aspire everything to their fate with the least thought that their effort and co-operation is essential in the attainment of positive health. The price of health is more valued only when it is lost.

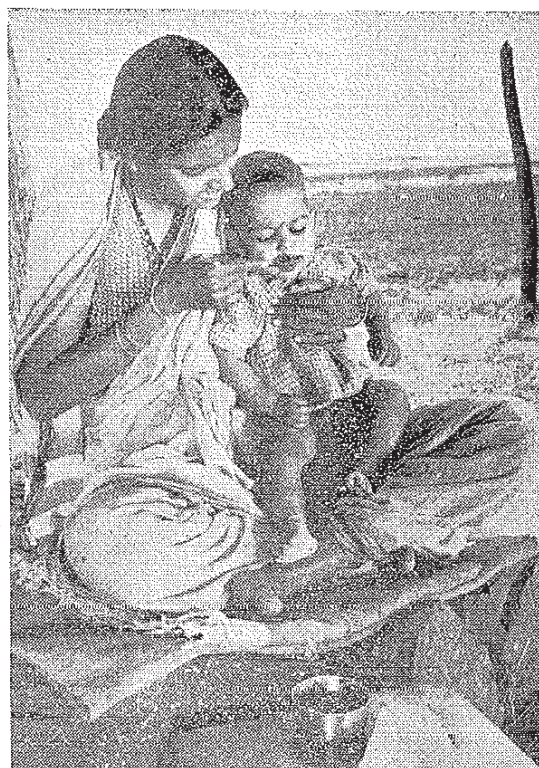
Since Home-visiting is an important aspect of the work of the Health Visitor, many a time she is confronted with the problem of what and how to go about her home visits. Teaching in the home is never restricted to any one particular aspect. Teaching and guidance are to be given to suit individual and circumstances which vary from house to house but the fundamental principles for maintaining a healthy and happy life remain the same everywhere.

Here are some guidance to Health Visitors in their home-visiting services to the expectant and nursing mothers, and children up to five years of age.

A. Prenatal

Expectant mothers of the primigravida, should be reassured of the changes that are taking place in her. It must be explained that pregnancy is normal,

natural and physiological ; nevertheless young women often become unduly worried over the changes that are taking place in them. The cycle of pregnancy is divided into 3 periods for matter of convenience.



GOOD NOURISHMENT is essential for good health.

Topics for Discussion

1st Period

1st Trimester

1-3 calendar months.

2nd Period

Diet mostly in any form of pulses, gram etc. to combat the excessive salivation of the early months; sweetened drinks such as sugar-cane juice, lime-juice, tea and a well balanced diet should be kept in view. Hygiene; avoidance of lifting heavy weights, strenuous and rough journey etc., importance of attending ante-natal clinic in Health Centres, hospitals or maternity homes, wherever one exists.

Diet with special emphasis on the needs of protein, mineral salts, and vitamins etc., for the growth of the baby as well as for herself.

3-6 months.

3rd Period

3rd Trimester.

B. Post-Partial

Practice of hygienic living, signs of any abnormality and resources to secure medical help and advice when necessary.

Plans for delivery. Factors in preparing for home or hospital delivery. Personnel to attend to the delivery. Signs of complications. Resources for delivery, medical care, diet.

Registration of birth. Care and management of the new born. Post partal hygiene. Nutrition of the mother, need for post-natal examination. Family Planning.

Visit to 0-5 Year Age Group

This guide is intended to help in the application of knowledge on several subjects as maternity and child welfare, child health, nutrition, child psychology etc. This is not overloaded with details and actual points of advice, but the Health Visitor has to use her initiative in adopting her knowledge to the needs of the family. Where unexpected problems arise in the

course of visiting, they should supersede the routine advice. The child should be considered as an individual as well as a member of the family. Guidance includes the selection of a number of topics which may be usefully discussed with parents at certain stages in the child's first five years of life. These suggestions are not exhaustive but to ensure that some teaching in essential health subjects is given in every home, and given at a time when it will prove beneficial.

<i>Age of child</i>	<i>Observation on child</i>	<i>Health Education</i>
1st visit and subsequent visit in the 1st month	General physical condition. Eyes, nose, mouth, umbilicus skin any physical deformity. Feeding, general management and protection from infection. Sleep	Information regarding social services available. Encourage and build up the mother's confidence in herself as a mother particularly primipara. Management of regular self demand breast feeding. General health of the mother.
1 month	General physical condition, amount of sleep, feeding, and suitability of cot.	General routine and management. Feeding and vitamins. Adequate rest, mother's post-natal examination.
2 months	General growth and development. Feeding and vitamins. Sleep	Protection from catarrh and infections; vaccination.
3 months	Growth. Physical and mental development.	Household hygiene. Importance of toys. Vitamins.
4 months	General development. Exercise.	Preparation for weaning. Fresh air and sunlight.
5 months	Diet and vitamins observation for rickets, teething. Importance of medical examination at Centre.	Introduction of solids. Habit training.
6 months	Mixed feeding. Physical and mental progress. Clothing.	Discussion of diet in general.
7 months	General development. Sleep. Eruption of teeth.	Prevention from accidents. Prophylaxis.
8 months	Weaning. Meals and meal-times	Family relationship.
9 months	Posture (Erect position) Foot-wear (where it is possible and necessary.	Types of play material. Habit training.

<i>Age of Child</i>	<i>Observation on Child</i>	<i>Health Education</i>
10-12 months	General condition. Dental carries. Diet and vitamins.	Confirm immunization. Dental Hygiene. Child's need to be "messy".
1 year	Sleep and sleeping arrangements.	Meals to correspond with the family. Child's need to explore. Protection from health hazards. e.g. fire, water, stairs etc.
14 months	Gait, speech and vocabulary. Diet and vitamins. Play material.	Planning of child's (Day Toilet, meals, rest and sleep, exercise etc.).
18 months	Feeding (self-management). Fontanelle. Mouth breathing. Vocabulary Day-time rest.	Importance of milk in diet. Precautions against infection.
	Importance of medical examination at Centre.	
2 years	General development. Vocabulary. Clothing (self-management) Medical examination at Centre.	Adjustment of child to family. Self-reliance and self-confidence. Importance of the right preparation of child for the coming of new-baby, where the mother is expecting.
3 years	General physical development. Posture, Avoidance of fatigue. Teeth. Relationship with other children.	Social development and mother's part as a teacher. Attitudes to questions and avoidance of unnecessary prohibitions.
4 years	Physical development. Mental development. Avoidance of over excitement. Sleep.	Social relationship. Play material. Regularity of meals and habits. Prevention of infections.
5 years	General physical and mental development. Cleanliness and good habits, attitudes towards other children.	Information regarding social services available. Preparation for school.

What is an accident ?

There are still arguments about the definition of the term "accident". An advisory group convened by the World Health Organization considered it to be "an unpremeditated event resulting in a recognizable injury". The American National Safety Council expands this definition : "An accident is the occurrence in a sequence of events which usually produces unintended injury, death or property damage".