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How to Feed Children with Disabilities

Instruction Booklet

Special thanks to



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How to use this book

This book and the accompanied videos on feeding and reflux aim to provide information on how to feed children with disabilities. Watch the videos first. If you need any information anytime, consult this book. If you have difficulty understanding something from the book, watch the videos again.

Feeding a child with cerebral palsy:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3263aJ3sjdI>

Reflux:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWUng9Mn-9g&t=7s>



FEEDING YOUR CHILD

Sometimes it becomes very difficult to feed children with disabilities. But if children do not eat, they will not grow and can get sick easily. If you know how to feed your child, you can help the child stay healthy.



1

WASHING YOUR HANDS

Wash your hands carefully before feeding the child. Otherwise, germs can get into the food from your hands.



2

FEEDING POT, BOWL AND SPOON

Make sure that the pots, bowls and spoons you are using to make the food or feed the child, are clean.



3

TYPE OF FOOD

The food should not be too fluid or too thick or hard. Prepare food that is in between.



4

FOOD OPTIONS

You can make fortified milk or some special formula and homogeneous food; also simple food like meshed banana with cow milk, fruit juice, liquid hotchpotch, semolina with egg, or any other food that the child likes.



5

THE CORRECT SITTING POSITION TO FEED CHILDREN

While feeding the child, make sure that his or her head is in upright position so that you can see the child's face. This close contact is very important as it gives children a feeling of security. And this way, they will be able to swallow the food without choking.



INCORRECT WAY OF SITTING

Don't make children sit this way. If the head is hanging backwards, they will not be able to eat or swallow properly. As a result, they can choke or, if the food gets in their lungs, they might even get pneumonia.



INCORRECT WAY OF SITTING

Don't let your child sit this way. If the head is hanging forward, they won't be able to eat and food would come out of the child's mouth.



6

HOW TO FEED THE CHILD

Let the child take small sips or feed them in small portions, and give enough time to swallow. Please pause after every 5 sips so that the child can breathe.



7

AFTER FEEDING

After feeding is complete, keep your child upright for a while so that the air in his or her stomach can come out.



8

IF IT TAKES LONGER TO FEED THE CHILD

If feeding is especially difficult and takes more than 30 minutes, children need more time to get rid of the extra air through burps, and to keep the food in their stomach.



9

IF FEEDING TAKES LONGER

If it's always difficult to feed your child, feeding takes more than 30 minutes, and your child does not get enough nutrition, consult a specialist or your community worker.

REFLUX

If your child cries a lot while eating, stops eating after having very little food, vomits shortly after or during feeding, then maybe your child has “REFLUX”.



1

IF CHILDREN SHOW THESE SYMPTOMS BELOW, THEN THEY MIGHT HAVE REFLUX.

- Sour, bad smell
- Restlessness, sudden crying, irritation
- Bad sleeping, not wanting to lie down
- Frequent ear infections
- Cramps, pulling legs up
- Stretching during or after feeding
- Painful face, a worried look
- Frequent vomiting
- Blood in vomit
- Food comes back in the mouth even more than one hour after feeding
- Frequent burping
- Very sensitive in mouth area
- Refusing food
- Coughing, choking



2

AS A RESULT OF REFLUX, CHILDREN MAY SUFFER FROM CERTAIN CONDITIONS LIKE:

- Astma
- Respiratory infections
- Drooling
- Dental problems
- Difficulty breathing
- Chronic cough
- Bad smell
- Obstipation, toileting difficulties
- A lot of stress while feeding and afterwards



3

THE MAIN PROBLEM CAUSED BY REFLUX IS MALNUTRITION WHICH ALSO LEADS TO -

- Very thin, bony
- Less muscles
- Cough weakly
- Weaker defence against diseases, e.g. cold
- Wounds do not heal well
- Lack of concentration and difficulty learning
- No energy
- Irritation



4

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOUR CHILD HAS REFLUX

A lot of children with cerebral palsy suffer from this problem. You must watch your child closely. The moment you detect these symptoms, if possible, consult a specialised doctor or ask your community worker for advice.



Besides, what you can do yourself is to feed the child in smaller portions, but a few times a day.



Give them thick liquid food like juice or milk with rice saline. This way the food will not come up easily and it will prevent the air getting in the stomach.



Give fibre-rich and liquid food to prevent constipation.



After feeding, keep the child upright for at least 30 minutes.



Make the child sleep on their left side. This position is better for keeping the food in the stomach. Sometimes sleeping on the belly can help.



5

MEDICINE FOR REFLUX

If the child's condition still does not improve, you can try a medicine called **LOSECTIL**.

USUAL PAEDIATRIC DOSE FOR GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX DISEASE

1 TO 16 YEARS

5 to less than 10 kg

5 mg orally once a day

10 to less than 20 kg

10 mg orally once a day

20 kg and greater

20 mg orally once a day

16 TO 18 YEARS

20 mg orally once a day



Add the right amount of powder in a spoonful of water or any other liquid. Stir it until it is diluted. Add it to rice saline if necessary. Feed the medicine to your child with a spoon after breakfast.



Give this medicine for 4 weeks and then stop. If the child is still not cured and the symptoms return, continue up to 3 months.



If you see no improvement after 3 months, try to consult a child specialist/paediatrician. Side effects of this medicine are usually not severe. If Losectil helps, you can use it up to 1 year. Then stop completely and see what happens.



WE HOPE THIS WILL HELP YOU FEED YOUR CHILD PROPERLY. PLEASE REMEMBER, YOU CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ENSURING A GOOD FUTURE FOR YOUR CHILD.