

OUR BEST WISHES FOR YOUR
SWEET HOME!

2016

Foreword

It is a well-accepted fact in the world that the health status of mothers and children in Sri Lanka is at a high level. We have achieved this status due to the good health service delivery system which extends from pre-pregnancy period to childbirth, from post-partum period to infancy and childhood.

We are now in the process of working towards broadening our efficient Maternal and Child Health services further.

Steps have been taken to introduce a new service delivery component named “Health Care for Newly Wedded” targeting couples who are newly married. Our objective is to lay a strong foundation to ensure the couple’s happiness and all their expectations to materialize good health status to last throughout their married life.

Your area Public Health Midwife, Public Health Inspector and the Public Health Nursing Sister together with the Medical Officer of Health as a team, are dedicated to provide newly wedded couples with these services in the same spirit as their own family members.

Publishing this book titled “Our Best Wishes for Your Blissful Home” is an activity under the “Healthcare for Newly Wedded Programme”. The facts you should know for your health & well-being are included in this book using simple language. This book will help you to understand leisurely, the facts told to you by your health care workers in further detail and also how to meet them again if necessary.

We extend our gratitude to Dr. Anoma Jayathilaka, Consultant Community Physician who was very much committed to compile this book, to the World Health Organization for their sponsorship and to all those who contributed to this publication

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for Your Blissful Home

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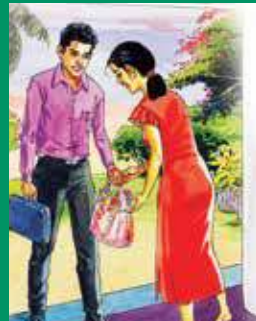
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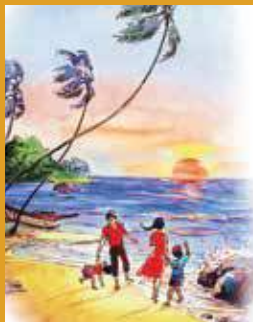
Well planned Family



Get Appropriate Nutrition



Good Living & Mutual
Understanding



Family free of violence



Before Conception



Male participation
and parenthood

Action Committee



OUR BEST WISHES FOR YOUR BLISSFUL HOME

You have started a new life as husband and wife and stepped into a new home. This is the happiest period of your married life. The two of you are together under one roof with lot of expectations and hopes. We extend our very best wishes for your married life!

You should not forget that this is the period you need to acquire the knowledge necessary to plan your future to lead a successful happy married life. This effort of ours is to provide you with a guide to fulfill this expectation of yours.

This book has been designed with the expectation of giving you the knowledge, understanding and skills required to enrich your future. Therefore we have included some very essential information on themes that will be useful to both of you.

Some of the themes addressed here are, sexuality and related aspects which will help to strengthen the bonding between husband & wife, the awareness and understanding both of you should have about pregnancy, nutrition of the family and healthy living. Here we explain about the duties & responsibilities of husband and wife, responsibilities of parents, misunderstanding and conflicts of opinion that may occur occasionally between the husband & wife, ways and means to minimize anger and advantages of being violence free. Our objective by providing this information is to contribute to the success, happiness and well-being of your married life.

Further, the contents of this book will help both of you to enjoy your married life peacefully and cordially with the required health awareness. There is no doubt what so ever that this book will be useful to both of you to exchange your ideas successfully and to come to decisions which influence you individually and as a couple too. Therefore we kindly and affectionately request you to read this book carefully and use what you learn to enrich the future of your family.

Sometimes you may think that we have given only a brief introduction to certain subjects and wish to know further details. If you need further information please contact your Public Health Midwife (PHM) who will be visiting you and always be ready to work with you closely.



2. Sexuality & Sexual Relationship

There are many factors which influence the success of your married life. Your unchanged love & affection for each other throughout life is of paramount importance. Another important factor is the sexual relationship between the husband and wife. Therefore it is necessary for you to have an understanding of each other's sexual organs and their functioning, act of sexual intercourse, sexuality as well as about your sexual health.

What is sexuality?

Sexuality is a broader concept which is not limited to sexual intercourse only. This concept which is closely linked to life from birth to old age keeps on changing from time to time with age and from society to society, and from society to society.

The intention of a man & a woman getting married perhaps is to be parents and bring up children. Yet, having sexual relationship and sexual satisfaction strengthens the bonding between husband and wife. As there are many misconceptions regarding sex related matters, it is important to have an understanding of your sexual organs first.

What is the structure of the female reproductive system?

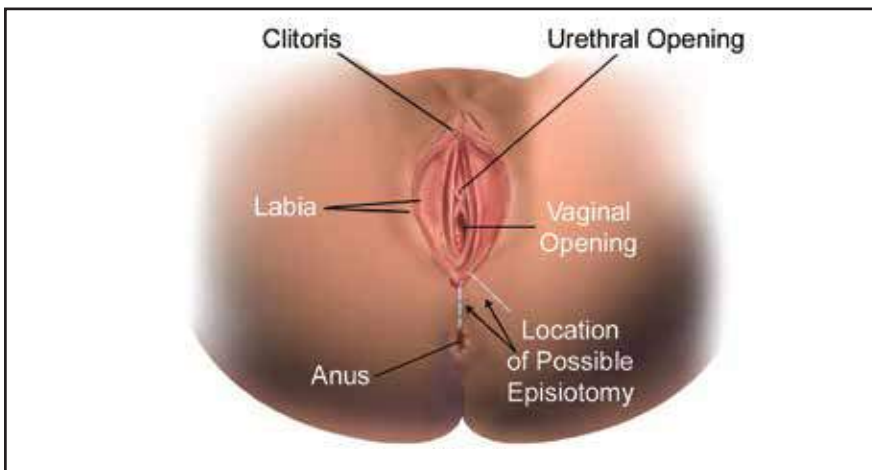
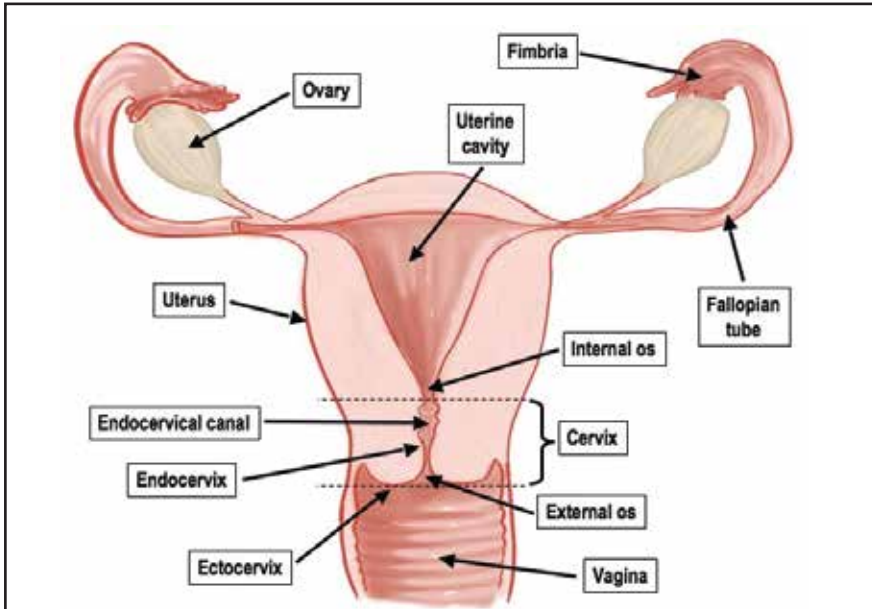
Our body consists of many organs. Several organs performing a particular function form a system in the body.

The only system which is different between females and males is the reproductive system. If you look at the pictures given below you will see that the female reproductive system is also formed of several organs.

The female reproductive system consists of two parts, internal & external.

The external genitalia (vulva) or the part which can be seen from outside consists of two pairs of lips. The two outer lips with hair (Labia majora) and two inner lips (Labia minora) consisting of soft skin folds. The inner lips join upwards forming a structure called the clitoris which is extremely sensitive.

Female Reproductive System



English terms for figure 1- ovary, fallopian tube, inner wall of the uterus, cervix, vagina, vaginal opening to the exterior

English terms for figure 2- inner lips, outer lips, hair, clitoris, tip of clitoris, urethral opening, vulva, vaginal opening, perineum, anus

The main parts of the internal female reproductive system are vagina, uterus, fallopian tubes and the pair of ovaries.

Vagina is the canal which runs from the external opening to the uterus and is about 7.5cm in length & is formed of muscles. During sexual intercourse the male penis enters into this canal through the vaginal opening.

The vagina & the uterus are connected by the structure known as the cervix.

The secretions of the glandular cells in the cervix keep the vagina wet. The amount of secretions increases on the days that the ovum is likely to be released from the ovary (fertile period). Similarly when there is sexual arousal and sexual feelings more of this is secreted from glandular cells and the two glands known as Bartholin glands situated in the labia majora on either side.

Uterus is about 7.5 cm in length and is a pear shaped organ with a cavity inside. Its main function is to bear & provide nourishment for the growing foetus. Two fallopian tubes each of 10 cm in length enter the cavity of the uterus on either side of its upper part of uterus. The distal ends of these tubes end near the ovaries taking the shape of a funnel with thin finger like projections. This is to bring the ovum which is released regularly from the ovaries once a month towards the uterus. These fallopian tubes are also known as uterine tubes.

On either side of the distal ends of each fallopian tube there is an ovary having the shape of a local olive (veralu). The functions of the ovaries are, to store the female germinal cells already present in a female baby at birth and initiate production of ova necessary for reproduction, cause menarche in a girl and production of estrogen & progesterone which are two hormones important for female characteristics and reproduction. Maturation of the ovum takes place in the ovary after menarche. Menarche is the first vaginal bleeding following maturation and release of the first ovum from the ovary.

Menarche occurs due to the influence of certain hormones released from the pituitary gland in the brain and the female sex hormones oestrogen & progesterone produced in the ovary.

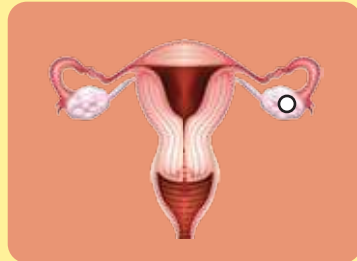
What is menstruation?

Menstruation is one of the key reproductive functions taking place in a female. Some people call this a monthly period/menses and believe it to be purification of the body. But nothing of this nature happens. What really happens is the shedding of the inner wall of the uterus which had been prepared to receive the unfertilized ovum or the fertilized ovum. It is very important for every woman to have a good understanding of this process which takes place from menarche to cessation of menstruation (menopause) and this is how it happens.

The course of events in menstruation

Figs.1-3

1. Due to the hormonal influence of the pituitary gland on the ovary a few germinal epithelial cells in the ovary starts growing and maturing
-



2. i) One of the mature ova gets released from the ovary. This is known as ovulation.
ii) The ovum thus released enters the fallopian tube and starts travelling towards the uterus.



3 i) The ovum travels through the fallopian tube with the hope of meeting a male cell (sperm) to form a fertilized ovum (zygote). At this time if sperms enter the fallopian tube, one of those will unite with the ovum and fertilization takes place to form a zygote. This is known as conception.

ii. Due to the influence of sex hormones secreted by the ovary during maturation of an ovum, new cells are formed in the inner wall of the uterus.

iii. This is the tissue layer on which implantation of the zygote formed following fertilization of ovum takes place.



- With this, new tissues are formed in the uterus and also blood supply to the uterus is increased to nourish the zygote. The fertilized ovum implanted in the uterus starts growing in the uterine tissue to form the embryo.

- Even if the ovum does not unite with a sperm the ovum enters the uterus. As fertilization has not taken place the newly formed inner wall of the uterus starts breaking down with blood vessels and the unfertilized ovum also comes out with these products through the vagina as menstrual blood.

This course of action is known as menstruation. This cycle of events takes place in the following month too.

Figures 4-5



Does menstruation take place in a cyclic manner?

You may have heard about the menstrual cycle already. The period from the first day of one menstruation to the day before the first day of the next menstruation is known as the menstrual cycle.

The number of days of the menstrual cycle may differ from woman to woman and also from menstrual cycle to cycle in the same woman. In most women this cycle length is from 26-32 days. On the average the length of the menstrual cycle is said to be about 28 days.

Could menstruation be irregular?

Yes, sometimes it can be irregular. Some situations where menstruation may be irregular are given below:

- ii) Till about 2 years after menarche
- iii) In extreme happiness, in mentally disturbed situations, when frightened, stressed or having mental worries
- iv) Climatic and environmental changes.

Sometimes menstrual cycle may get disturbed while using hormone containing contraceptives such as oral pills, family planning injections.

Some physical illnesses also could cause menstrual cycle disturbances. Medical advice should be sought at such instances.

Could menstruation stop temporarily?

The main reason for temporary cessation of menstruation in a young girl or a young woman is conception

In addition menstruation can stop temporarily

- During lactation
- While using hormone containing contraceptives (oral pills, injections, implants)

There are many other causes for temporary cessation of menstruation. Therefore if you have any such problem you should seek advice from your PHM or consult a doctor.

How many days does menstrual bleeding last?

The number of days of menstrual bleeding varies from woman to woman. Generally it lasts 2-7 days. If it lasts more than the usual number of days of bleeding or for more than 8 days it is advisable to meet the PHM or consult a doctor.

What is the amount of bleeding that occurs during menstruation?

Menstrual fluid contains blood and tissues of the wall of the uterus. The quantity of menstrual blood also differs from woman to woman.

How could one know that there is excessive menstrual bleeding?

A woman has to have a general idea about the amount of bleeding during her menstruation. If a woman has to change more than 7-8 soaked pads a day that could be considered as excessive bleeding. Excessive bleeding could cause anaemia. If there is excessive bleeding or passing of blood clots it is advisable to seek advice from your PHM.

Why do woman experience discomfort related to menstruation?

Some women experience changes in mood, heaviness in breasts, headache, backache, remorse, detest, tiredness about a week before menstruation. These are known as premenstrual symptoms.

During menstruation some women complain of lower abdominal pain, backache, pain in the knees & legs, nausea, vomiting, distention of abdomen, severe tiredness. Often they tend to complain of headache.

These symptoms related to menstruation are due to secretion of hormones and contraction of the uterus. You do not have to consider these as illnesses and neglect your day to day work. Some analgesic (pain killer) could be taken to ease off these symptoms.

You should seek medical advice only if these discomforts are severe and affect your usual work at every menstruation.

Is bathing during menstruation bad? No



During the days of menstrual bleeding you should think of the cleanliness of your genitalia as much as your general cleanliness. During menstruation bathing, washing the body should be done daily. Due to menstrual blood which collects in the vulva & excessive sweating during menstruation there can be growth of bacteria and infection might set in. Therefore it is very important to keep the body, in particular the vulva and surrounding area very clean during menstruation.

There is no truth in the belief or misconception that there are bad effects due to bathing during menstruation. However it is important to wipe and keep the genital area dry after a body wash and bathing.

By maintaining cleanliness of genitalia you could prevent itching in the groin and fungal infections.

Using cotton underwear will also help you to maintain cleanliness. As cotton clothes absorb sweat easily they reduce chances for growth of fungus which cause infections.

Is it alright to have sexual intercourse during menstrual periods?

There are no health related problems for a woman not to have sexual intercourse during periods. However, most couples tend to avoid sexual intercourse during menstruation. The advantage is that there is no chance of conception during menstruation.

Is it necessary to wear sanitary pads during menstruation?

Yes, it is necessary to wear suitable sanitary towels to absorb the menstrual blood during menstruation. You can make these towels yourself using clean cotton material. As these get soaked with menstrual blood it is necessary to change towels 3-5 times a day. The number of towels to be changed depends on the amount of blood these towels can absorb. The sanitary towels made by you could be reused. If reused, they have to be washed well with soap and water and dried in the hot sun. Use of unclean sanitary towels may cause infections in the vulva, vagina and urinary tract too.

You could buy readymade sanitary towels from the pharmacy or super market. Those should not be reused. Used blood soaked towels should be discarded carefully. You could either bury those, burn or wrapped properly and dropped into a dustbin to keep out of reach of animals. You should never put them in toilet pits, squatting pans or commodes.

When could a woman conceive?

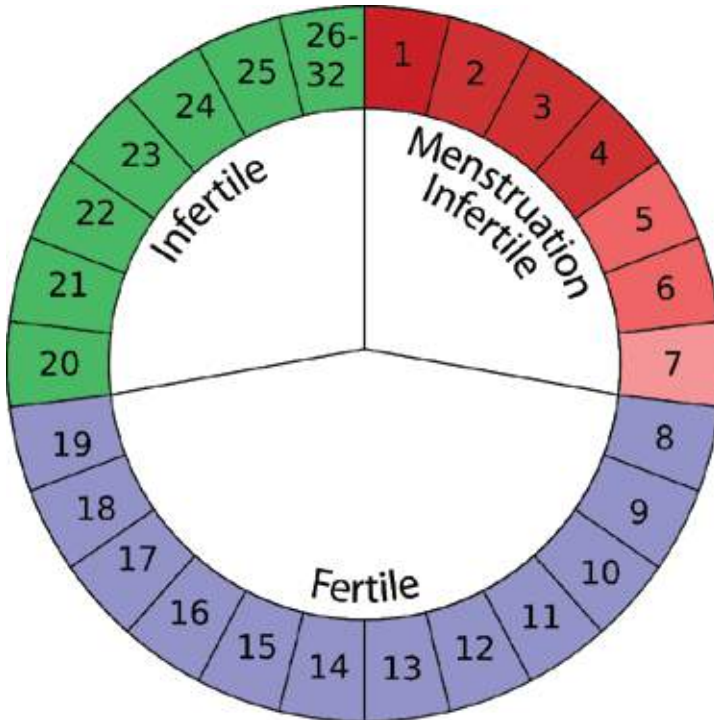
If a couple has unprotected sexual intercourse (without using a family planning method) during the woman's fertile period, it is possible for an ovum released from the ovary to meet a sperm in the fallopian tube and conceive. This union of the ovum & the sperm is known as fertilization.

Although an ovum is released every month from the ovary of a woman, it is difficult to say the exact day on which this could happen. However in a woman having a menstrual cycle of 26-32 days the fertile period is considered to be between 8th to the 19th day of the menstrual cycle (The fertile period is explained in detail on page..... in the section on calendar method under the chapter on Family Planning).

Although millions of sperms are discharged in the seminal fluid only a small percentage of these sperms enter the fallopian tube. Out of this only one sperm could fertilize an ovum. For conception to take place, when a sperm enters the fallopian tube passing through the vagina, cervix and uterine cavity, an ovum too should travel through the fallopian tube at the same time.

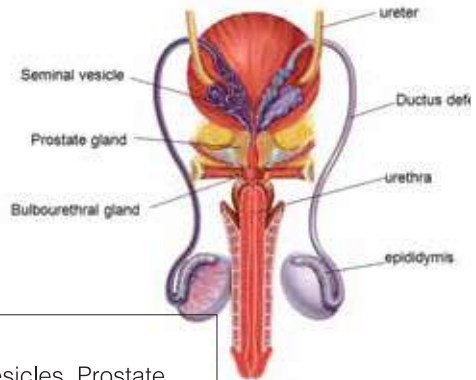
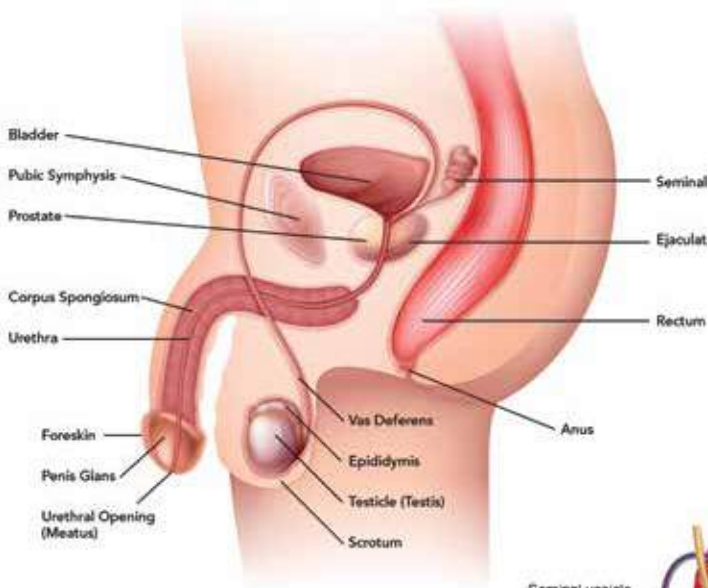
The days of the menstrual cycle of a woman having chances for conception are known as "fertile period" and the days having no chances for conception are known as "safe period"

Calendar method



What is the structure of the male reproductive system?

Although the main reproductive organs of a female are situated inside the pelvic cavity, in the case of a male, the main reproductive organs are situated outside the pelvic cavity. Penis and the testes are the two main reproductive organs. The testes are placed inside the scrotal sacs and they produce sperms. As the production of sperms need a temperature less than what are inside the body testes are situated outside the pelvic cavity of a male.



1st picture

Male Reproductive system Bladder, Seminal vesicles, Prostate gland, penis, urethral canal, vas deference, scrotum, testes

2nd picture-

Seminal vesicles, Prostate gland , Cowper's gland, urethral canal, epididymis, , testes, penis

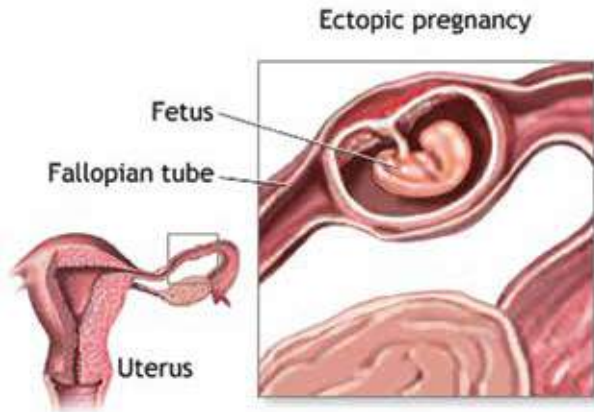
The secretions (semen) containing the sperms produced in the testes is transported via the vas deference, seminal vesicles and prostate glands to enter the urethra at the base of the penis. Semen is discharged through the urethral opening.

What is a tubal/ectopic pregnancy? Does it need immediate treatment?

The fertilized egg that is formed by the union of the ovum and the sperm sometimes grows inside the fallopian tube without entering the uterus

The fallopian tube is a small muscular tube which is not designed for the growth of the embryo and therefore when a fertilized ovum starts growing there, the tube bursts and causes profuse bleeding inside. This blood may collect inside the pelvic cavity and not be visible from outside. Sometimes it may cause vaginal bleeding in the form of clots or spotting.

- *Embryo growing in the fallopian tube
- * Ovary
- *Uterus



This situation poses a great threat to the mother's life. At such a situation the products of conception should be removed surgically. The main symptom of a tubal pregnancy is severe abdominal pain. Every woman in the reproductive age who experiences continuous severe abdominal pain should seek medical advice without delay. The other signs & symptoms would be headache, faintish feeling, pallor, rapid pulse, lowering of blood pressure. It is important to note that such situations may arise with the delay of menstruation even by 2 days or so. Position of embryo in an ectopic pregnancy

What is the contribution of the male in conception?

At an act of sexual intercourse about 2-6 ml of seminal fluid is discharged by the male. One ml of seminal fluid contains several millions of sperms. If at least 60% of these sperms of a male are alive and actively motile, then he could contribute to a conception.

Does sexual intercourse of a married couple take place only for the purpose of conception?

According to human sexuality it should not be so. Sexual relationship which involves feeling of love, affection, touch extending towards intercourse is not limited to the purpose of conception. It is a method of communicating love, affection and attachment. A healthy satisfying sexual life helps achieve fruitful bonding in a family unit. In a sexual relationship it is important to work towards the desires, expectations, happiness and satisfaction of each other. A woman takes time to get sexually aroused while a man gets sexual arousal quickly. Therefore it is the responsibility of the male to spend more time for sexual arousal of his spouse by way of friendly communication, stimulation and prior preparation for the act.

How should sexual intercourse take place?

Sexual relationship or sexual intercourse must be something that should be for mutual understanding, affection and satisfaction. This satisfaction should be felt not only by their sexual organs but also psychologically. The act or the process of sexual intercourse consists of 4 phases.

Phase of arousal or excitement (Foreplay)

The first phase of sexual response is the phase of excitement or arousal. Caressing, touching each other kissing and cuddling, cooing (love chats) should be shared by both male and female partners.

In this stage which increases sexual desire, the woman's nipples become erect. Due to the secretions from the inner wall of the vagina the wetness in the vaginal cavity increases.

In the case of the male there is increased blood flow to the penis causing erection and hardening of the penis. Also the scrotum gets tightened and his testes get drawn up towards the lower abdomen.

The time taken for this stage of sexual arousal or excitement depends on the success of the stimulation actions. Sometimes it may take 5-10 minutes or even 30-45 minutes or more in the case of some couples.

As stated earlier you may recall that a female takes more time to reach this stage successfully than a male. It is the responsibility of the male to act in a way that the pleasure of the sexual act is shared by both male & female.

Plateau phase

This is the next stage of the sexual act. As the sexual feelings increase in both partners, their heart beat, pulse rate & respiratory rate also rise up. Sexual excitement increases in both of them and the introduction of the penis into the vagina is initiated in this stage. As the vagina expands and contracts rhythmically the penis gets held in the vagina tightly.

Orgasm

This stage lasts a few seconds and the semen in the penis containing sperms is ejected into the vagina through the urethral opening. Due to the contraction of muscles of the penis the ejection of semen can take place several times. Then the penis and the scrotum shrink back. There is no such discharge or ejaculation taking place in the female. In the case of women intense pleasurable release of sexual tension is shown by her facial expression and words of affection. Therefore it is important to understand the feelings and expression of the female.

To make the woman reach orgasm successfully during intercourse, the couple especially the male partner should be well prepared for stimulation of the female before intercourse. However the woman may not reach orgasm during every act of intercourse. On the other hand although a male reaches orgasm and ejection only once during a single act of sexual intercourse a female may reach orgasm several times during one act of sexual intercourse. All these are determined by the type of stimulation she receives during sexual intercourse.

This is why it is important to have an affectionate chat (cooing) as a preparatory step prior to intercourse. .

Resolution phase

This being the last stage of sexual intercourse the sex organs of the male & female come back to the original size or state. Heartbeat, pulse rate and respiratory rate gradually come back to normal.

Should the woman be inactive during sexual act?

There is no truth in the fact that the woman should lie as the inactive partner while the man should be the active partner during the sexual act. For sexual intercourse to be successful and both partners to be sexually & mentally satisfied, it is important for the female partner also to take part in the process willingly, happily and actively.

How long should each sexual act last?

There is no time limit for a sexual act of a couple. It could differ from couple to couple as well as from one sexual act to another of the same couple. But by allowing more time for stimulation the entire act of sexual intercourse will give more pleasure to the couple. It is important to remember that satisfaction of the couple depends on their preparedness and desire to have sexual intercourse than on the time spent for the act.

Should there be any fear or hesitation regarding sexual intercourse? No

One or both partners may have the fear that on the very first day or the night of the wedding their sexual act may not be successful or give the desired satisfaction.

This fear that he will not be successful in the sexual act is mostly in the male. This may be due to experiences such as masturbation, nocturnal emission and premature ejaculation. These beliefs are baseless and once such negative attitudes are removed, the male partner could spend the first wedding night without fear, light headed and with confidence.

There are some men who think that due to the small size of the penis, that it will not be possible to have successful intercourse and satisfy a woman sexually. This again is a wrong belief.

The size of a man's penis does not affect sexual satisfaction of a woman because the most sensitive area of the vagina is located near the vaginal opening and also because sexual satisfaction is something one enjoys mentally rather than by any other organ.

The major fear of a woman to have sexual contact on the first wedding night is due to her being alone with a man for the first time. Therefore in order to overcome this problem it is important to have an affectionate friendly chat to understand and get to know each other well. Having good stimulation (foreplay) prior to sexual contact is also of utmost importance for successful sexual intercourse.

Sometimes the environment where the sexual act takes place may disturb the couple's pleasure, especially when the couple feels that there is disturbance to their privacy (e.g. unwanted noise, bad smells etc). Some women may be afraid to have sex due to the bad sexual problems experienced by a sister, mother or a female relative of hers.

Due to problems mentioned above the woman may resist sex and not allow the male partner to insert the penis into the vagina as it tends to tighten the muscles of the opening of the vagina. This condition is known as 'vaginismus' or vaginal muscle spasm. When the couple encounters problems like this, it is important that they meet their PHM and consult a doctor as required.

Yet another problem that inhibits sexual relationship and enjoyment between a married couple is the fear of conception. If the couple does not intend to have a baby they can use a modern contraceptive method and enjoy sex fully without any such fear.

Do people need love and sexual satisfaction only during young age?

The couple should never forget that sexual enjoyment and satisfaction throughout married life is an absolute requirement. It is also important to remember that couples must engage in “sex” voluntarily and willingly by both partners and never by force. As they get old and their children grow up, most couples tend to separate from each other and sleep in different places in the same household. Love, mental attachment, sexual contact & satisfaction are necessary at every stage of life.

Therefore it is important to make adjustments in the household and live together as husband & wife as much as possible throughout life. This will avoid family problems and social problems which are likely to occur later in life.

Does every woman experience bleeding at first sexual intercourse?

A virgin is a woman who has never had sexual intercourse with a man. Most people are of the notion that there should be bleeding when the hymen, a thin membrane situated about 1 cm interior to the vaginal opening breaks at the very 1st sexual intercourse of the woman. If there is no visible bleeding, the woman is branded as ‘not a virgin’ This is a wrong belief.

The membrane (hymen) with an orifice which covers the vaginal opening is situated differently from woman to woman. This membrane is absent from birth in some women. It varies in thickness too. In some women this membrane is very thin while in others it is thick. Women having very thin membranes may not experience bleeding at the first sexual intercourse. If the size of the orifice on the membrane is large it is not necessary to break the membrane for the penis to enter the vagina and in this situation there will be no bleeding at the first sexual intercourse on their wedding night. Therefore the belief that a woman who does not bleed at her first intercourse is ‘not a virgin’ is an absolute myth.

Attention should be paid to abstinence from premarital sex experience by both partners rather than to the concerns regarding the hymen. Both the male and the female should abstain from sexual intercourse before marriage. This is an important behaviour expected from a young man and a woman before marriage. It is of utmost importance that the couple even after marriage refrains from extra marital sexual relationships and safeguard chastity as well as prevent sexually transmitted diseases in order to lead a happy and successful married life.

Is it important to be concerned about the cleanliness of a man’s sex organs and disease conditions?

It is very important for a man to maintain cleanliness of the body as well as of his sex organs. Especially, removal of smegma (whitish stuff) collected in the prepuce of the penis by pulling the foreskin back while bathing or having a body wash is of great importance. After bathing or taking a body wash the genitalia and the surrounding skin too must be dried well. After passing urine the penis should be washed and dried.

Some fungal infections are commonly seen in the groins of men. This may result in itching of the groin and formation of demarcated whitish patches. This condition should be treated without delay as this person's spouse as well as other family members also may contract the fungal infection.

Fungal infections could be prevented by keeping the genitalia clean and wearing clean underwear. It is always better to use cotton underwear as they absorb sweat well.

Hydrocele (collection of fluid inside the scrotum) varicocele (enlargement of veins in the testes) are conditions which cause enlargement of the scrotum and these conditions need medical attention. It is important to make sure that both testes have descended into the scrotal sacs. This is a condition which should be examined right at the time of birth of a male child. It is important to seek medical advice for such conditions.

To prevent problems in the formation of sperms in the testes, it is necessary to avoid wearing tight underwear and exposure to radiation and hot temperature (x-ray and welding light etc.) Smoking and use of alcohol also reduces formation and quality of sperms.

Should the breasts of a woman be taken care of?

Although breasts are not considered as reproductive organs directly, yet they play an important role in reproductive function. Especially, in the process of sexual stimulation prior to sexual intercourse (foreplay) breasts play an important role. However the primary function of the breasts is to breast feed a baby.

Breast is composed of layers of different types of tissues mainly fat and glandular tissue. Glandular tissue which secretes milk is embedded in the fat. These glands are connected to the nipples through tubules known as milk ducts. The breasts start developing from the age of menarche and further enlarge during pregnancy to enable the woman to breast feed the newborn. The production of size or the shape of the breasts is not important for successful breast feeding.

This means that the amount of milk secreted does not depend on the size or the shape of the breasts. While learning about the breasts it is important to mention the importance of self breast examination. Appearance of a nodule, lump, dimpling, orange peel like texture of skin, change in the size or shape of the breast, change in the nipple or unusual discharge or blood stained

discharge need immediate medical advice. Although these symptoms may not be due to cancer of breast, yet it is important to confirm and be assured.

Self-breast examination helps you to identify these changes very early by yourself. Every woman should be able to do the breast self-exam and your area PHM will help you with this.

Steps in self-breast examination



- Select a suitable place with privacy for self-breast examination. Keeping the fingers together palpate the breasts well to examine whether any lumps or any induration is present under the skin of the breasts.

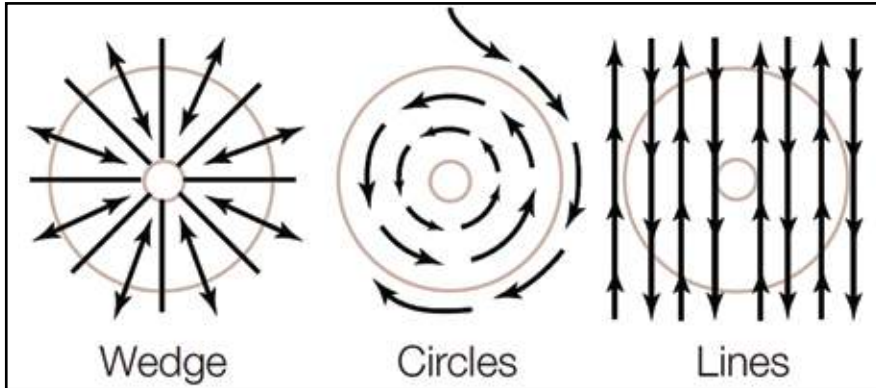


- Keeping the fingers together, examine each breast with the tips of the fingers clockwise as shown in the picture A starting from the outer margin and continue towards the nipple in a circular manner.



- Then as shown in B & C examine all parts of the breast by deep palpation

You should do self-examination of breasts every month on about the same day one week after menstruation



- Use the left hand to examine the right breast and the right hand to examine the left breast.
- After examining both breasts examine the axillae for lymph nodes
- Finally use the thumb and the index finger and gently squeeze the nipple to check for any discharge.

Well Women Clinic & Cervical Smear Examination At the well women clinics breasts are examined for any abnormalities and also

Next to breast cancer the commonest cancer among females is cervical cancer. But fortunately there are initial changes taking place in the cervix over a period of time before coming to the stage of cancer. These changes can be diagnosed early making it possible to prevent cervical cancer by early diagnosis.

Women of 35 yrs. and over should visit the well women clinic conducted

by Medical Officer of Health (MOH) office and field clinics. In these clinics cervix is examined and fluid smears from the cervix are taken for examination to detect early changes which later lead to carcinoma. This is known as Pap Smear examination



3. Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

While talking about sexuality and sexual relationships one should be well aware of sexually transmitted diseases too.

If you are able to maintain mutual trust, respect, love and affection both of you had at the time of marriage to be the same throughout life, it is not necessary to worry about sexually transmitted diseases.

As a married couple, both of you hold another important responsibility. Each one of you should take care not to put your spouse at risk of sexually transmitted infections due to any extra-marital sexual relationships of either of you. This type of infection could be prevented by being faithful to your spouse.

It is very useful for you to know about sexually transmitted diseases, their mode of transmission and symptoms.

How does one contract infections which spread through sexual contact?

These diseases spread from one person to another by unsafe sexual contact. These diseases are transmitted by having oral, vaginal or anal sex with an already infected person.

What are the commonest sexually transmitted diseases in Sri Lanka?

These diseases spread from one person to another by unsafe sexual contact. These diseases are transmitted by having oral, vaginal or anal sex with an already infected person.

What are the commonest sexually transmitted diseases in Sri Lanka?

Infections caused by bacteria

- Gonorrhea
- Syphilis
- Chlamydia
- Non-gonococcal arthritis

These infections could be treated with antibiotics.

Viral Infections

- Genital Herpes
- Venereal warts
- HIV

As these are viral infections there is no treatment or permanent cure but with proper treatment these could be controlled to some extent. Therefore it is very important to seek medical advice as and when you have any doubt about being infected.

Apart from sexual contact these infections may be transmitted by infected blood transfusion, use of syringes contaminated with infected blood, contaminated needles or any other sharp item and also from an infected pregnant woman to her foetus.

What are the common characteristics of sexually transmitted diseases?

Most sexually transmitted diseases do not show symptoms. Therefore it is not possible to identify whether a person has contracted these diseases. However if one gets the following symptoms after unsafe sexual intercourse it is important to seek medical advice without any delay.

- rashes, wounds, ulcers, blisters or nodules on genitalia
- Purulent, offensive discharge from vagina or penis
- Unusual itching in genital area
- Lower abdominal pain in females
- Burning sensation or pain when passing urine
- Appearance of warts in genitalia
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Swelling and pain in scrotum

However it is important to remember that these symptoms may sometimes arise due to diseases which are not sexually transmitted. Therefore it is of utmost importance to exclude sexually transmitted diseases by proper contact history, examination and investigations.

What are the complications that can result from sexually transmitted diseases?

- Mental distress
- Conflicts within the family
- Social stigma and blame
- Infertility
- These may affect heart, lungs, brain and the nervous system etc.
- Mental illnesses
- Premature deaths
- Due to the foetus being affected by these diseases in the mother, there can be abortion, stillbirth, premature delivery or various congenital deformities and blindness in the baby

What are the steps that could be taken to prevent sexually transmitted diseases?

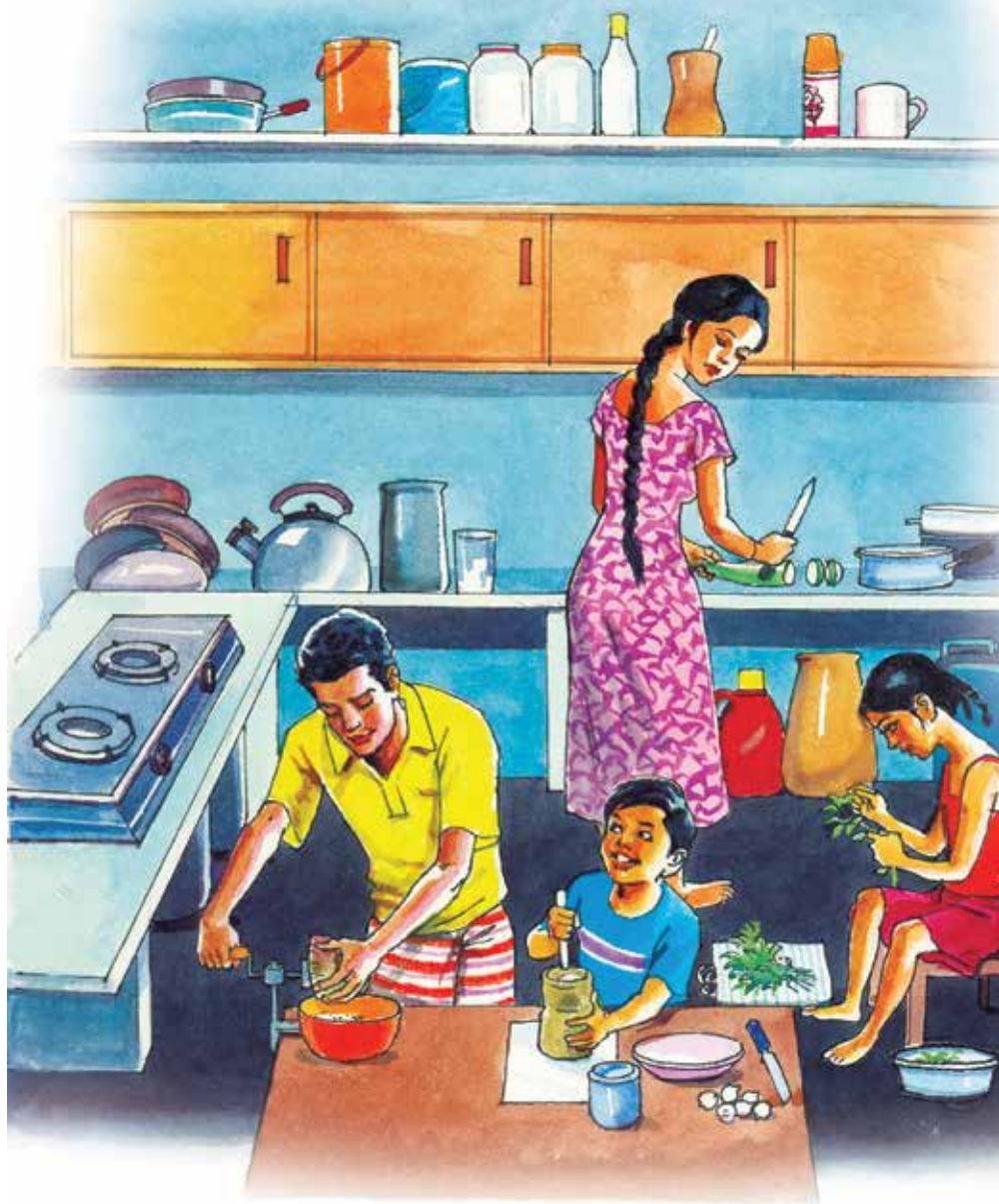
By following Sri Lanka's traditional culture and social norms and customs and also by understanding the importance of a good family life you could prevent such sexually transmitted diseases. It is important to remember that having sex before marriage and extra marital sexual relationships are taboos in our culture. Therefore following the steps mentioned below you will be able to prevent sexually transmitted diseases.

- Refrain from sexual intercourse until after marriage.
- After marriage to have mutual trust and restrict sexual relationship only between husband and wife.
- Never to have sex with commercial sex workers and those you meet casually.
- In case of an extra-marital sexual relationship to use a condom properly from the beginning to the end of the sexual act (we do not encourage this but this is the only way to prevent the risk from such sexual relationships). To learn how to use a condom correctly, please refer pages -----of chapter on Family Planning.

It is risky for a woman having a sexually transmitted disease to get pregnant. If this happens the baby can get infected while in the uterus. This may result in various congenital abnormalities or complications in the foetus. Especially if a pregnant mother is infected with syphilis the foetus can get infected and have congenital syphilis. Therefore during pregnancy every woman should undergo the VDRL test. If the disease is diagnosed early, foetus getting affected could be controlled by treatment.

We have no doubt that as a newly married couple, the two of you should understand the importance of your determination to secure mutual respect, trust and affection you have throughout your married life.

However if you ever have the slightest suspicion of having contracted a sexually transmitted disease, you should refrain having sexual contact with your spouse and consult a doctor without delay. Following the advice and complying with the treatment of the doctor is of utmost importance to both of you. The investigations, advice, counseling and treatment given on sexually transmitted diseases at the government clinics are free of charge and there is assurance of confidentiality and credibility. Sexually transmitted disease control clinics are conducted in all the major hospitals in Sri Lanka including all teaching hospitals.



4. A well planned Family!

Having a good plan is the basis for the success of any activity. As much as you need a good plan to build a house, having a good plan is very important for the future well-being of the family unit you have now established.

What are the benefits of planning and organizing your family?

- As there is adequate spacing (at least 2 yrs.) between children it is possible to improve the nutritional status of the mother and the living children.
- By taking a joint decision regarding the number of children you wish to have in the family, proper care and attention could be given to the children. .
- Helps delaying the first child for reasons such as, the need to construct a house or seek better employment after marriage.
- To enjoy sex without having any fear of an unwanted conception.
- Be able to give adequate love, care and stimulation for to the children during their childhood.

Are there any Family Planning Methods to delay the first child?

Yes of course. After marriage it is better for the couple to decide and have children and complete their family before the wife reaches 35 years. It is not advisable to bear children before the wife is 20 yrs due to health reasons. Looking after the child will also be a problem when the mother is too young. To care for a child, both husband and wife should be physically and mentally grown up and mature too. If a couple wants to delay the first baby there are two successful methods which could be recommended.

- Oral pills (for female)
- Condoms (for male)

(1) How to use the method of oral contraceptive pills

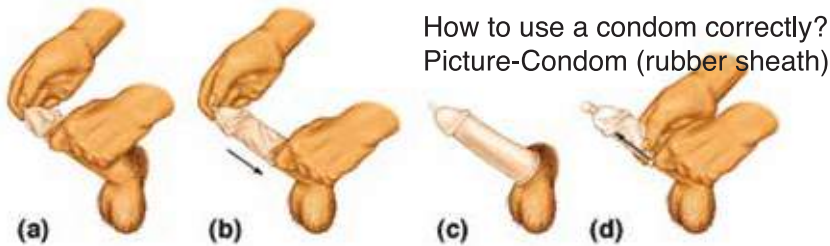


- As shown in the picture you receive this method in the form of a blister pack of 28 tablets. The first 21 pills of the pack are yellow or white and contain hormones known as oestrogen and progesterone. The other seven tablets contain iron, a mineral which helps to prevent anaemia.
- The first tablet should be taken within the first 5 days of menstrual bleeding.
- There after one pill should be taken daily at about the same time. You have to take all the pills according to the direction given by the little arrows on the back side of the pack. By getting used to taking the pills daily at the same time you can avoid missing pills.

- A woman who takes the pill for the first time may experience minor discomfort. Taking the pill after dinner will reduce this discomfort. However when you get used to taking pills the discomfort will pass off in a few days.
- When the pill is taken daily it will prevent the release of the ovum from the ovary and prevent chances of conception. Therefore contraceptive pill is considered to be a successful family planning method.
- When one forgets to take the pill for one or two days you must take the pill (normal pill) as soon as you remember that you have missed your pill.
- Then from there onwards you can take the pill due for that day as usual at the same time as earlier.
- If you forget to take the pill for 3 days or more then you must meet your PHM and get necessary advice.
- Once you finish the last pill (brown pill) of the pack you must start with a new packet again starting with the first pill containing hormones & proceed in the direction of arrows.
- When you take the brown tablets you are likely to start menstrual bleeding.
- Before you start taking pills for the 1st time you should not forget to meet your PHM or a doctor for necessary advice.
- When you decide to have a child you can stop taking the pill at any time. Your fertility will return immediately and you will be able to fulfill your desire to have a child.
- Oral contraceptive pills could be obtained from Family Planning clinics or from the PHM. These can be purchased from pharmacies too.

How to use a condom?

- This is a method used by the man.
- One condom could be used only once.
- This is a very thin rubber sheath which should be worn at every sexual intercourse to cover the erect penis fully from the beginning to the end of the sexual act
- Using a condom not only prevents pregnancy but also protects from spread of sexually transmitted diseases from an infected person to another.



- Open the condom packet carefully & take the condom out
 - Hold the tip of the condom with the index finger and thumb to expel the air in the tip. You must hold the rim of the condom upwards as shown in the picture (you should hold the condom correctly to be able to roll it out on the erect penis to cover it fully).
 - Unfold the condom fully on the erect penis while holding the tip with the two fingers.
 - After ejaculation hold the rim of the condom with the fingers and remove the penis from the vagina completely with the condom while the penis is still erect.
 - Remove the condom carefully and discard properly
-
- By wearing the condom properly (refer to the picture) sperm entering into the vagina can be prevented.
 - The penis should not come in contact with the vagina before wearing the condom. Also after intercourse the penis should be removed from the vagina while it is still erect.
 - The used condom should be wrapped in a piece of paper and dumped into a
 - The condom should be removed from the penis only after taking it out fully. This will prevent semen touching the vagina and also vaginal secretions touching the penis.
 - The used condom should be wrapped in a piece of paper and dumped into a dustbin or burnt or buried. This should never be put into a squatting pan or a commode.

Are there any natural methods for temporary cotraception?

There are several natural methods. Due to certain difficulties in using these scientific methods there are not very successful, as scientific methods.

Out of these the safe period (calendar method) is a method which you could use easily.

This method is based on the menstrual cycle. The days of the cycle on which conception can take place (fertile period) and the days on which conception is unlikely to take place (safe period) are calculated and used by the couple to have sexual relationship avoiding conception. This method could be used by women who have menstrual cycles of 26 to 32 days.

The days starting from the 8th to the 19th day of the menstrual cycle could be considered as the unsafe or the fertile period. If the couple has sexual intercourse during these days the male should wear a condom. Starting from the 1st day to the 7th day of the menstrual cycle and from the 20th day to the 1st day of the next menstrual cycle are considered to be safe or a period during which sexual intercourse may not result in a pregnancy.

What are the Family Planning methods a couple could use for purposes other than delaying the 1st child?

This chart below describes the different types of Family Planning methods.

Should you need further information on FP methods you may obtain such details from your Public Health Midwife. She will provide you with necessary counseling to select a Family Planning method of your choice.

FP Method	What is it?	How to use?	How does it act?	What is the success	What are the advantages?
Condom	It is a thin rubber sheath worn to cover the erect penis fully	It should be worn on the erect penis to cover it fully before coming into contact and entering into the vagina	As the semen containing sperms get collected in the condom it prevents the meeting of sperms with the ovum.	If used correctly the success rate is over 99%	No need of medical advice. Could be obtained easily. Prevents spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases as well.
Oral Pills	Oral pills contain hormonal preparations similar to female hormones Oestrogen and Progesterone in the body	The 28 tablets in the pack should be taken 1 daily without fail. After all 28 tablets have been taken a new pack of pills should be started from the very next day and continued daily.	The mode of action is prevention of release of the ovum from the ovary. There is no chance for a pregnancy as there is no ovum in the fallopian tube to be fertilized by sperm.	If used correctly without missing pills, the success rate is over 99%	When the couple wishes to have a baby pills could be stopped and pregnancy will occur within a few months. Pills will help reduce the amount of menstrual blood, regularize menstrual cycle and other symptoms like dysmenorrhea, prevent cervical carcinoma and infections.
FP Injections	Contains a hormonal preparation similar to the natural female hormone Progesterone	One injection should be taken once in three months (every 80-90 days) without fail.	This method also prevents release of the ovum from the ovary. There is no chance for a pregnancy as there is no ovum in the fallopian tube to be fertilized by sperms	If taken regularly within 80-90 days, the success rate is over 99%	Easy to use as an injection which has to be taken only once in 3 months. When a baby is needed conception will take place within a few months after stopping the method.

FP Method	What is it?	How to use?	How does it act?	What is the success	What are the advantages?
Implant	Thin capsules containing a hormonal preparation similar to natural hormone progesterone in the body. The number of capsules (1,2,or 5) depends on the type of implant used. Progesterone in the body	Depending on the type of product one or two capsules are inserted under the skin of the medial aspect of the upper arm of a woman	As it prevents maturation and release of ova from the ovary sperms cannot meet the ovum	Success rate is about 99%	Prevents pregnancy for 3 years. If the couple wishes to have a child, implants could be removed by a trained doctor at any time.
Intra Uterine Contraceptive Device (IUCD)	A small T shaped plastic device with copper bands on the stem and the two arms of the T	It is introduced into the uterine cavity by a trained doctor	It inhibits the mobility of the sperms and prevents fertilization	Success rate is about 98%	IUCD prevents pregnancy for 10 years. This can be removed any time the couple wishes to have a baby.
Safe period or calendar method.	It is a natural method of FP. By calculating the days that the ovum is likely to be released the fertile period is identified. Intercourse is avoided during this period.	By noting the length of the past 6 menstrual cycles of a woman the fertile period is calculated. In a woman having a menstrual cycle between 26-32 days her unsafe period (fertile period) is considered to be from 8th day to 19th day of her menstrual cycle.	As intercourse is avoided or a condom is used during the unsafe or fertile period pregnancy is prevented.	Success rate is low.	This method can be used by couples who do not like to use modern methods for any reason.

FP Method	What is it?	How to use?	How does it act?	What is the success	What are the advantages?
Female sterilization (LRT). It is a permanent method	It is a surgical method. The tubes which carry the ovum released from the ovary are resected and cut ends tied so that the ovum and the sperm cannot meet.	The skin of the abdomen below the umbilicus is infiltrated with local anesthesia and a small incision is made to reach the fallopian tubes	As the fallopian tube is obstructed it is not possible for the ovum and the sperm to meet.	Success rate is about 99.5%	As this is a permanent method There is no fear of getting pregnant again. Therefore sex is more enjoyable.
Male sterilization or vasectomy. It is a permanent method	The ducts (vas deference) which carry sperms from the testes to the seminal vesicles are resected and tied so that the sperms do not enter the seminal fluid ejaculated into the vagina.	Two small incisions are made on the scrotum and the vas deference on either side is reached and resected and the cut ends closed.	As the vas deference on the two sides are blocked, sperms do not enter the seminal fluid. Therefore, the semen which enters the vagina has no sperms.	Success rate is about 99%	A permanent method. Therefore sex is more enjoyable without fear of getting pregnant

What are emergency contraception pills?

This is not a family planning method and also it is not a suitable method to use frequently. Emergency contraception is a method which is used when an unprotected sexual relationship has taken place or when a family planning method has failed and possibility of a pregnancy is suspected.

This should be used only when

- Sexual intercourse takes place during the fertile period without using a family planning method.
- The condom bursts or gets displaced during intercourse, gets displaced, intercourse has taken place after missing the contraceptive pills for more than 2 days, there is doubt whether spill of seminal fluid occurred during withdrawal method (This is not a successful family planning method at all and also this method disrupts the pleasure during intercourse) or there is doubt of any family planning method failure.
- There is a possibility of pregnancy following sexual abuse, rape or incest. Soon after use of emergency contraception, steps should be taken to follow a proper temporary or permanent method of contraception as required.

Emergency contraception pills

Pills to prevent unexpected pregnancies



- The success rate of this method is highest only when it is taken soon after the act of sexual intercourse.
- For best results two emergency contraceptive pills must be taken at once within 72 hrs following sexual intercourse.
- When you do not have access to emergency contraceptive pills you may take 4 hormone containing pills of a packet of oral contraceptives at once followed by another 4 tablets after 12 hrs. This also should be started within 72 hrs. following intercourse.

Is it all right to remove an embryo after conception?

By using a modern temporary contraceptive method you may space out a pregnancy by 2 years or more. Some couples tend to resort to abortion if unexpected pregnancy occurs following sexual intercourse.

This is a very dangerous step. Abortion can result in the death of a pregnant woman. Sometimes this may cause permanent infertility too.

While abortion is an immoral act, it is illegal in Sri Lanka. Both, seeking abortion services and performing abortion are legal offenses. The couple may also suffer for life from the feeling of guilt of destroying the life of a baby who otherwise would have been born to them.

If another child is a burden to the family and bringing up a child is economically not feasible, all what you should do is to follow a proper modern contraceptive method to prevent pregnancy.

If by chance a mother dies due to an abortion, her living children will lose their beloved mother and also the husband will lose his wife.

It has been shown that induced abortion accounts for 10% of annual maternal deaths in Sri Lanka.

Why do some couples not have children?

When married couples fail to have children it is known as sub-fertility. About one in every seven of married couples (15%) suffer from sub-fertility. The causes of sub-fertility may be due to conditions in the woman or in the man or both. Sometimes this may be because of problems in the process of the sexual act due to lack of awareness.

When should a couple seek medical advice for sub-fertility?

If a married couple engages in sexual intercourse 2-3 times per week with the expectation of a baby for more than 1 year but still the woman does not get pregnant, then they should seek medical advice. Sometimes it is necessary for those who are having the risk of sub-fertility to seek medical advice much earlier without waiting for one year.

Such situations are as follows:

- If the woman's age is over 35 yrs.
- If her menstrual periods are irregular
- If the woman or the man has been treated for any disease in the reproductive organs or undergone surgery in the reproductive organs.

The success of treatment for sub-fertility declines with the increase of age of the woman and therefore it is important for them to seek medical advice early. Sub-fertility should be managed with simple treatment first, and specialized treatment should be taken only after that. However, changing doctors to get quick results will not be of much use.



5. Good Nutrition

Is nutrition important for a healthy life?

Nutrition is an important factor which influences the health and well-being of individuals throughout life.

To maintain good nutrition we have to get all the nutrients we need from the food we consume. In case we have nutritional deficiencies our meals have to be adjusted to include those nutrients we lack.

There are several ways to know that both of you have good nutritional status. One of those is having the weight appropriate to your height. Now there is an easy way to check whether you have the correct weight for your height. That is by calculating your body mass index (BMI)

How to measure the Body Mass Index?

You can do this by yourself. First get your correct weight in kilograms. Then measure your height in meters.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Wt. (in kg)}}{\text{Ht} \times \text{Ht (in meters)}}$$

If the answer you get for B.M.I. is within 18.5 – 24.9 your nutritional status is good. If it is less than 18.5 then you are suffering from malnutrition and if it is more than 24.9 you are obese or overweight. If it is less than 18.5 you may have to increase it by taking an extra meal or nutritious food. If it is more than 25 it is important to reduce it by physical activity and exercise, walking as well as by cutting down starchy food, sugar and fats.

1. <18.5 – malnourished
2. 18.5-24.9 - good nutrition
3. >25- obese

As both 1 and 3 are health risks, it is important to discuss with your PHM and take appropriate action.

How should your meals be organized to get good nutrition?

In order to maintain good nutritional status your meals should contain all the nutrients required by the body daily.

What are these nutrients and of what use are they?

Carbohydrates and sugar– provide energy

Fats– provide energy

Proteins– to build cells and tissues.

Vitamin & minerals – protect the body from illnesses.

It is vital for your daily meal to contain all these nutrients. This is known as a mixed meal.

What are the foods which provide these nutrients?

Carbohydrates – Carbohydrates are provided mainly by cereals, rice, bread and other food items made out of rice and wheat flour.

Unpolished rice (boiled red/country rice) and bran bread made out of wheat flour rich in fiber are good for health. Locally cultivated food items such as jack fruit, bread fruit, potato, sweet potato and other types of yams are rich in carbohydrates.

Fats – This is the other nutrient which provides energy to the body. Fat containing foods are coconut, coconut oil, other oils, butter, cheese and margarine etc.

Proteins – Foods containing proteins are divided into two types. Animal proteins and vegetable proteins. Animal proteins – meat, fish, milk, eggs etc. Vegetable Proteins – cowpea, dhal, chick pea, green gram, long beans, beans etc.

Proteins are essential for growth of cells and tissues and therefore at least one type of protein must be available daily from our meals.

Vitamins and minerals known as micronutrients are also very important to maintain our health.

Vitamins - There are several types of vitamins namely Vitamin A, B complex, C, D, E, & K etc

By including green leaves, vegetables specially red and yellow fruits and vegetables e.g. tomatoes, papaya, mangos, pine apple, local olives, guava, plantains, carrot, and pumpkin in your meal you can get adequate vitamins. These local fruits are better than imported fruits such as apple, grapes & oranges etc.

These could be taken divided into the 3 meals of the day. About 5 types of vegetables, 3 types of fruits per day and you will have adequate supply of vitamins. It is important to remember that taking vitamins from natural foods is much better than taking vitamin tablets.

Minerals

Though there are many types of minerals the most important ones are iron, calcium, iodine, zinc etc. calcium is rich in milk and milk products, sprats, small fish, dry fish, seeds, green leaves, wood apple etc.

Iron – There are two types of iron, haem iron and non-haem iron. Haem iron is absorbed by the body easily. Haem iron could be obtained by eating meat & fish etc. Non-haem iron is present in green leaves, fruits but cannot be readily absorbed. To facilitate absorption of non-haem iron the following steps would help.

- Adding lime juice (acid) to vegetables, green leaves (tamarind, bilin, goraka, tomato, vinegar also contain acids).
- Taking some fruits rich in vitamin C such as mangoes, nelli, guava, papaya, and pineapple and orange.
- Adding some Maldives-fish, dry sprats, piece of dry fish to vegetables while cooking.

To facilitate absorption of non-haem iron in lentils such as green gram, cowpea, chick pea urud dhal, the following steps can be followed

- Soaking lentils over night
- Allowing to germinate
- Allowing to ferment

Iodine-By using iodized salt you could enrich your diet with the essential mineral, iodine.

In what quantities should the following food items be consumed?

By following the food pyramid you could maintain a good nutritional status

Food Pyramid

In what quantities should the following food items be consumed?

By following the food pyramid you could maintain a good nutritional status

Food Pyramid



Less-fats, sugar
lentils, fish, meat, eggs daily 1- 2X
Milk ,Milk products 1-2X
Coconut-daily
Vegetables/fruits 2-3X
Rice, other cereals, yams, carbohydrates,
bread 6-12X Unit=50grams

How would one know the quantity of food to be included in one unit?
This chart will help you to understand the unit measurement

Food type	Quantity/unit
Cereals	- Rice (1/2 tea cup) - Bread (one slice) A loaf of bread weighing 950 gram should be cut into 9 slices. - Bun ½ - String hoppes 4 - Hoppers/Roti ¼ - Thosa ½ - Cream Cracker 1
Yams & Roots	Manioc, potato, sweet potato - ½ cup
Vegetables, green leaves, fruits	Cooked item ½ cup, 1 plantain, ½ mango, ½ orange, papaw small portion, ¼ avocado
Vegetables, green leaves, fruits	Milk 100 ml Yoghurt 1 cup Curd 75 ml
Milk & Milk foods	Piece of cooked fish, meat (size of a box of matches) Sprats – 6 Egg – 1 3 table spoons full of cooked dhal, green gram, cowpea etc.

What other factors should be considered when choosing food items?

You must try to use fresh food items as much as possible. Meat, fish, vegetables, green leaves you buy should be very fresh. It is much better if you can get vegetables & fruits which have not been grown using agrochemicals.

Ice cream, sherbet, fruit drinks, made with contaminated water may cause diseases. When you select canned food you have to avoid damaged/crushed/tarnished or rusted tins and those with past expiry dates.

If the lids of canned food or yoghurt containers are bulging or the lids are indented or gas is expelled when opened, those should not be consumed. It is always important to check expiry date & other instructions on these tins or bottles.

If you buy cooked food from outside, you have to be sure about the cleanliness and quality. Foods with excess salt, flavours and colouring agents should be avoided as they are harmful to health.

You should also be cautious about the water you drink. An adequate amount of water should be taken to improve digestion and prevent urinary infections. But this water should be free of contaminants.

What factors should be considered while cooking and consuming food?

- ★ You should inculcate the habit of washing your hands with soap & water always before cooking or preparing food and before eating.
- ★ The utensils used to prepare, cook and serve food should be washed well & cleaned. You should not use aluminum vessels to cook acidic food and instead clay pots should be used.
- ★ Food should not be cooked too long as it destroys the nutrients in the food. It is better to consume food as soon as they are prepared.
- ★ Before cooking eggs they should be well washed and cleaned. It is better to consume eggs well boiled
- ★ If the couple makes it a habit to have their meals together it will help increase the bonding, love & affection between the two as well as make the meals more enjoyable..

Are varieties of fish such as seer, trevally, tuna better than small fish?

The truth is that cheap, small varieties of fish are better than the costly varieties like seer, travelly and tuna. Small varieties of fish have a higher nutritional value.

Small fish like sprats & silver fish (salaya) provide proteins as well as minerals like calcium and iodine.

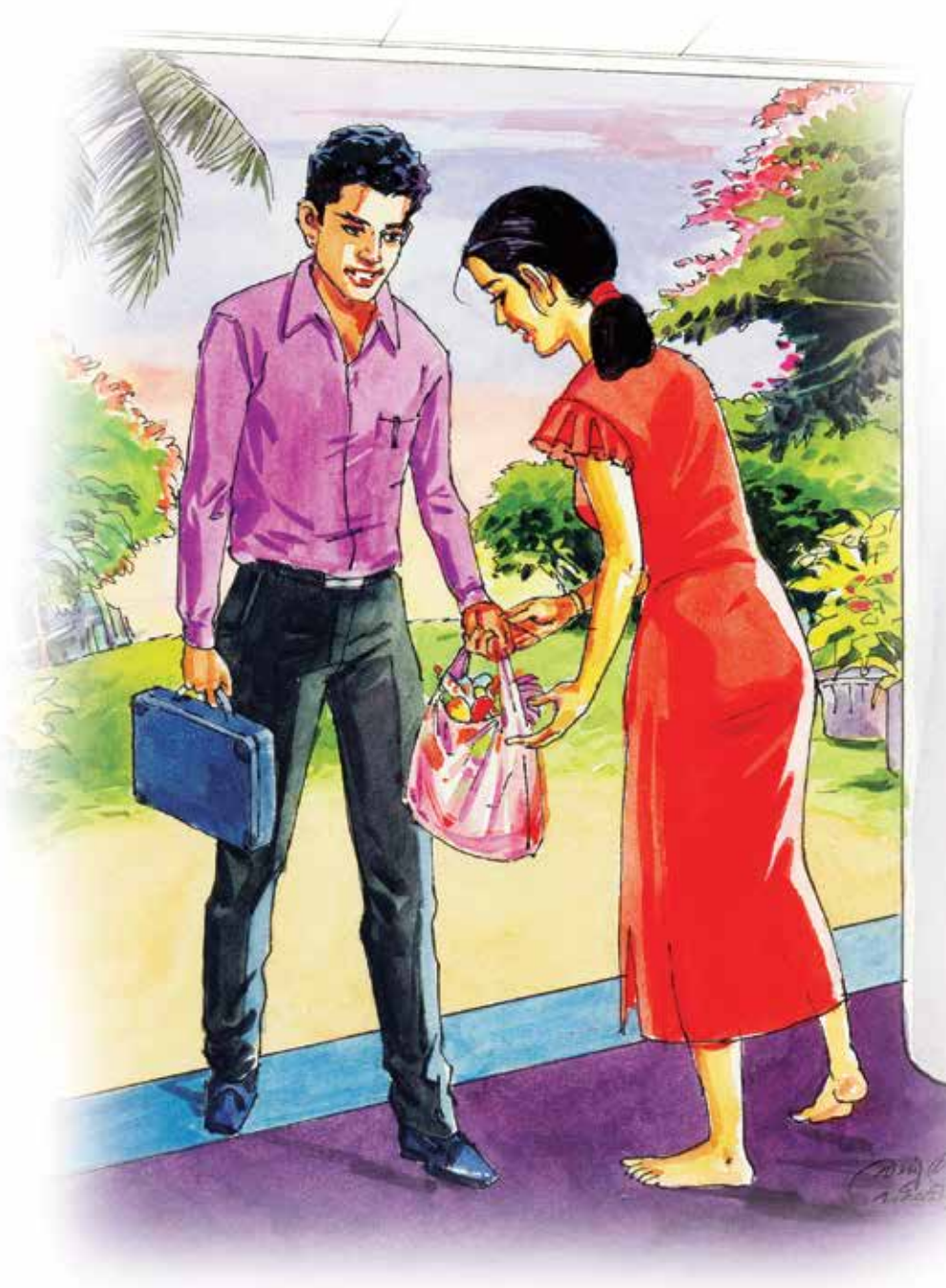
Why are some types of food said to be “hot” or “heaty”?

Some foods when consumed cause symptoms like itching, urticarial rashes, cough, wheezing etc. There are no foods categorized as “hot” “heaty” or “cool”.

Is it true that fresh cow milk cause more phlegm than powder milk?

Powdered milk is manufactured by drying fresh cow milk. Therefore if fresh milk has any phlegm causing effect then powdered milk also should have similar effect. Therefore the belief that fresh milk causes more phlegm and powdered milk causes less phlegm is an absolute myth.

Similarly the belief that one type of powdered milk causes more phlegm than some other type is also a myth. Infants should be breast fed exclusively for the first 6 months (180 days). Breast milk contains all the nutrients required by the infant for the first six months



6. Well-being and mutual understanding

Before you entered married life both of you would have exchanged many ideas of yours, you may have even come to the understanding that both of you match each other well. This should be maintained the same even after your marriage. This will ensure the future progress of your family. Especially the success, welfare and the closeness of the family depends on the strong bonding between the husband and wife. It is the responsibility of the married couple to develop a good relationship and maintain their mutual understanding and good living style, behavior and qualities which will help in making their home a pleasant place for the family.

Isn't good living important for success of married life?

In married life the couple has to face many challenges. However much they seem to be tallying it is very important for them to understand that they are two different individuals and that sometimes on certain matters their ideas may not tally. Therefore it is necessary for both husband and wife to have a firm determination to understand each other well and face the challenges in married life together successfully and to ensure their well-being.

that sometimes on certain matters their ideas may not tally. Therefore it is necessary for both husband and wife to have a firm determination to understand each other well and face the challenges in married life together successfully and to ensure their well-being.

Acting on sudden provocation, acting arrogantly and acting influenced by external influences may disturb your family life. Especially, when a person is angry he/she will not understand the true situation and therefore it is better to avoid taking hasty decisions at such times for the sake of family life.

When you get angry and when anger continues or when you are in an angry mood count from 1 to 10 slowly. When you finish counting up to 10 your anger would calm down to some extent.

Didn't both of you enter married life with pleasant expectations as a married couple? But, in this complicated society you will have to face unexpected challenges, influences and problems. Then you will understand that the world is not as pleasant as you expected. Therefore it is important for both of you to take decisions patiently and wisely in this complicated society. However your ability to listen and act patiently in such situations is very important.



What factors should be considered to maintain good living?

The day to day monotonous nature of married life should be changed and variety added to it by maintaining the couple's mutual good relationship. Leisure activities such as going on trips & pilgrimages, visiting relations, watching dramas or films once in a way could be selected depending on their common choice. At least one meal should be taken by the husband and wife together so that they could chat & enjoy their company while having the meal. This will help them to have more pleasure & good communication between them.

Similarly reading books, listening to pleasant music and engaging in a hobby you like will provide necessary rest and peace to your mind. Engaging in religious rituals will be a blessing to the family and it will help to ease out tension, stress and keep the mind calm.

The television has become a visible problem in every household today. It is true that television is a very useful media. While it provides enjoyment it is a source of information and education too. However imitating some of the characters on TV may cause problems and influence development of unfavourable habits. Therefore it is important to watch only selected good programmes on TV. In most of the households the TV has become an obstacle to good communication between the couple and also between parents and children too. Watching TV while having meals is a bad habit which has a negative influence on nutrition too. Also it disturbs the communication and interaction between family members while having meals.

When there is a problem it is important to discuss it openly between the husband and wife and come to a settlement rather than building up pressure & tension in your mind. When necessary the couple should seek advice of an elderly person or a knowledgeable person to discuss their problems and come to a peaceful settlement.

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Are habits such as smoking, drinking harmful to family life?

People who smoke have to face many harmful effects such as lung cancer, heart diseases etc. Sometimes these may cause long term suffering and premature death too.

If the husband is a smoker he should avoid smoking in the presence of his wife and children, because they will have to face similar problems due to passive smoking. If the wife is pregnant husband's smoking may affect the health of the baby growing in her womb. Smoking can affect the weight of the baby and result in the delivery of a low birth weight baby. It is harmful for a pregnant woman to inhale the smoke from a hearth or stove too while cooking. Therefore it has become a health requirement to construct the hearth with a chimney to avoid smoke coming into the house.

Inhaling the smoke generated from factories close to the house and also smoke emission from vehicles on the road is harmful to health. Therefore when constructing houses it is important to be aware of these effects and take measures to avoid or minimize them.

The harmful effects of alcohol consumption affect not only the person concerned. In many households quarrels, brawls & financial problems are due to husband's alcoholism. Sometimes these result in the disruption of family life, husband abandoning the wife or vice versa. When there is no peace at home the children may go astray and disrupt their education too.

It is also ridiculous to think that one has to smoke or consume liquor to be sociable and also to derive happiness, copewith sadnessand grievances.

Getting addicted to habits like smoking and consuming alcohol is harmful to health as well as a burden on the economy of the household. Therefore the couple should put their best effort to avoid smoking & alcohol consumption with mutual corporation and understanding. If at present you are addicted to any of these habits both of you should discuss and get rid of those for betterment of the family.

Do good health habits and practices facilitate success of family life?

Is there anyone who does not like to see a person very clean & properly dressed after a bath or a body wash? It is the same between husband & wife. When the husband & wife stay clean & properly dressed and pleasant looking they get attracted to each other.

Sometimes you may think that "it is alright to be carelessly dressed at home". But when you see those who lead successful family lives, you may realize that you need to stay clean & properly dressed at home too.

This is a dialogue between a husband and wife.

Wife-"The next door gentleman and lady are well dressed at home even on holidays, as if they are going somewhere" Husband-"So isn't it good"

Wife-"Yes of course, it is good. When I see those two I feel happy, they are always smiling and they are very happy and loving too"

When the husband & wife are cleanly dressed and with smiling faces they are attracted and strongly bonded to each other. It is a positive thing for the success and peace of the family. It is a pleasant sight for others too.

Does cleanliness of the household and the surrounding environment influence the success of family life?



When the furniture and other items in the house are well kept, it is evident that the husband & wife have mutual cooperation. Not only the verandah of the house, the bed rooms, kitchen and other places should be clean too. Clothes also should be kept well folded without carelessly throwing them here & there.

Wouldn't it be very pleasant to see the garden blooming with flowers as you come out of your house? There is no doubt that growing vegetables and flower plants in the garden would promote the cooperation between husband & wife & make them happy too

Keeping the garden and surroundings clean with proper disposal of garbage will help minimize breeding of mosquitoes, flies and other insects at bay and reduce the disease burden and provide many health benefits..

Love your spouse for her/him to feel and understand that you are concerned about family life.

Love is the string which binds the relationship of a marriage. What is special here is that the husband and wife should show their love and affection to each other frequently so that it will be felt well and reminded too.

There should be dialogues like this.

Wife- "Today you look like a prince. You are really handsome....."

"This is the shirt you bought for me. That is why I look handsome....."

Another example:

Husband - "Wow.... Food is very tasty. I know you can cook food very quickly & tasty too.

Wife- "Is it really tasty?"

Husband- "Yes of course" "it is your luck of hand"

Such dialogues may help promote love and affection. As praise and admiration strengthen mutual love & affection it should be encouraged & expressed openly by both husband & wife.

Touch is another way of expressing love.

When you tell your spouse something it should be accompanied with an affectionate touch. Holding hands, kissing each other when there is an appropriate opportunity, such as touching to say good bye etc. will encourage & strengthen love & affection between the husband & wife.

Working together and being like-minded.

A couple went on a trip during holidays. There was a nice lake bund in that area. On the other side there was a nice bird sanctuary. This is a dialogue between the two.

Husband – "What shall we do in the evening? Shall we go to the bird sanctuary?"

Wife-"No dear, I like to walk along the lake bund. We can view a nice sunset"

Husband-"We see the sunset daily in Colombo.... but bird sanctuary is not something we see daily like that"

Wife -"No.... I can't creep into the jungle"

Husband - "You don't have to creep dear. There is a good path leading to the bird sanctuary".

Wife-"No, No, I like to go to the lake bund"

Husband thought for a while. He realized the importance of avoiding a conflict having come on a trip to enjoy the holiday.

Husband – “OK....never mind. Let us go to the lake bund, so get ready please”

The wife thought that her husband really honoured her by agreeing to her idea.

Wife-“Thank you.....so much dearyou are very..... nice, we are staying here tomorrow too..... So, let us go to the bird sanctuary early morning tomorrow”

This avoided an unnecessary conflict between the husband and wife.

To stand for each other and be loyal to each other

Good features of a loving relationship are; considering themselves as one person, mutual respect, keeping their secrets very confidential, not divulging each other's faults & disputes in front of others, not criticizing each other and not letting down each other. If the husband & wife have any dispute inside the house they have to discuss and come to an amicable settlement and then both should abide by it.

Empathy

Husband - “ Oh! why is this?there is bleeding from your nail”

Wife -“I knocked it on a stone, it's a little painful”

Husband -“Oh, It must be painning a lot, just a minute please, let me clean your wound & apply some medicine”

Wife - “Please don't It will hurt....give it to me... I will clean it myself”

HuHusband- “Keep your leg here please.....let me do it”

“Wait let me clean the wound and put this plaster..... Then you will be all right”

“Has your pain stopped now?”

Wife-“Yes it is better now. I admire your caring”

Husband-“I was frightened. I though it is a big wound”

It is important to feel and consider your spouse's happiness, sadness, sorrow, thoughts & needs as those of your own. Having the skills to empathize at such times is important to confirm love & affection between the husband & wife.

Trusting each other and securing the trust

“I trust you and you trust me” It is important to have a theme like this in your family, by both husband & wife. The husband & wife should have mutual stable trust in each other. So it is important for both not to allow any room for suspicion. They must talk to each other about their experiences, people they meet in their day to day life.

Distrust and suspicion are enemies of married life. If there is any distrust or suspicion or doubt, speaking openly to each other without delay will help remove such suspicions & distrust. Honesty & mutual understanding will ensure the trust in their relationship.

Mutual Commitment

Wife-“Today I have lot of work in the office. I might get late to come. I am afraid to walk alone from the station. Do you have time to come to the station to pick me? Can you please come there at about 8.00 p.m.?”

Husband-Even if I have work, I will come to the station to pick you up. Nothing is more important to me than you”

This type of conversation to show commitment between the husband & wife is very important for peace and harmony in the family. There should not be anything that they cannot sacrifice on behalf of each other. Especially the husband has to be responsible for the safety of the wife.

To see and feel that the husband and wife are treating each other's parents and relatives equally well also helps increase the love and affection between the two.



Time Management

Wife- “I don't know how to do all the work in this house..... Clothes are scattered here & there. Some are still on the chair. Bed has not been arranged. Pots & pans are lying in the kitchen. I have to finish all these and prepare the dinner too. In addition I have brought some office files to complete at home.....”

We hear this type of lamentation from households due to lack of time management. If one could have an idea about the work to be done during the course of the day and line up those properly she/he will not have to face this type of problem. If she could wake up in the morning about ½ hour earlier couldn't she leave home after washing pots & pans? If one could complete the office work during working hours, there is no need to bring files home. Further if the husband & wife could share the workload between them and help each other, time management will not be a problem.

Finance Management

Husband-"What are you writing"

Wife-"Why.....don't you remember?Tomorrow is the salary day...."

I am preparing the list of expenditure for this month.... Please come & join me and check whether what I am writing is correct"

As you are aware of your monthly income, it is very important to know beforehand how you should spend it.This will help you to prepare a plan so that you try to purchase only essential items. Also it is important to save even a small amount for your future and unexpected expenditure. Money is something we need and at the same time craving to earn money may cause disturbance to the equilibrium of family life.

Patience

Husband-"My goodness what are you doing? This T-shirt is getting burnt under the iron. ... Oh! ... The best T-shirt I have"

Wife- "Please Please ...I am so very.....sorry. Do not get angry, I think the iron got heated too much"

Husband-"Never mind Never mind..... Do not think about it too much now...What is to be done.....?"After all you did not do it purposely.Well.... let us forget about it"

Sometimes in any family there will be minor problems and disputes. At such times they should have patience and avoid quarreling and being violent.

Anybody can get angry any time. When one person gets angry it is important for the other person to act with patience. When angry, you should count from 1 to 10 or move away from that place to ease out the anger.

Exchange of ideas (Communication)

When asked what helps a couple to maintain longtime wellbeing the best answer one could give is the 'friendly exchange of ideas between the husband and wife'

Wife-"I was waiting for you to tell you something"



Husband-“Oh what is this important thing you want to tell me”

Wife-“Today..... Seetha came here”

Husband-“That girl who was in our class ...SeethaSeetha Perera”

Wife-“Yes.....she is the oneDo you know why she came?”

Husband-“Why ... for What?”

Wife-“She wants me to join a chit fund. One thousand rupees a month”

Husband-“Sowhat did you say.....?”

Wife-“ Well.....I didn't tell anything. She was very hopeful. I told her that I have to discuss with you and decide.

Husband-“A deposit of one thousand rupees a month in the bank means that we can get an interest too. Besides there no risk also. But if we say 'no' to this, Seetha might get angry with us”

Wife-“I also thought as much, she is a friend and both of us know her from those days’

Husband-“Never mindWell it is all rightyou may join her chit fund”

At instances like this, the problem should be discussed between the two openly and ideas exchanged to seek a solution. For good exchange of ideas one should listen without disrupting. At times, it is not only the words you speak that matters. You have to be careful about your facial expressions as well as your gestures or the body language.

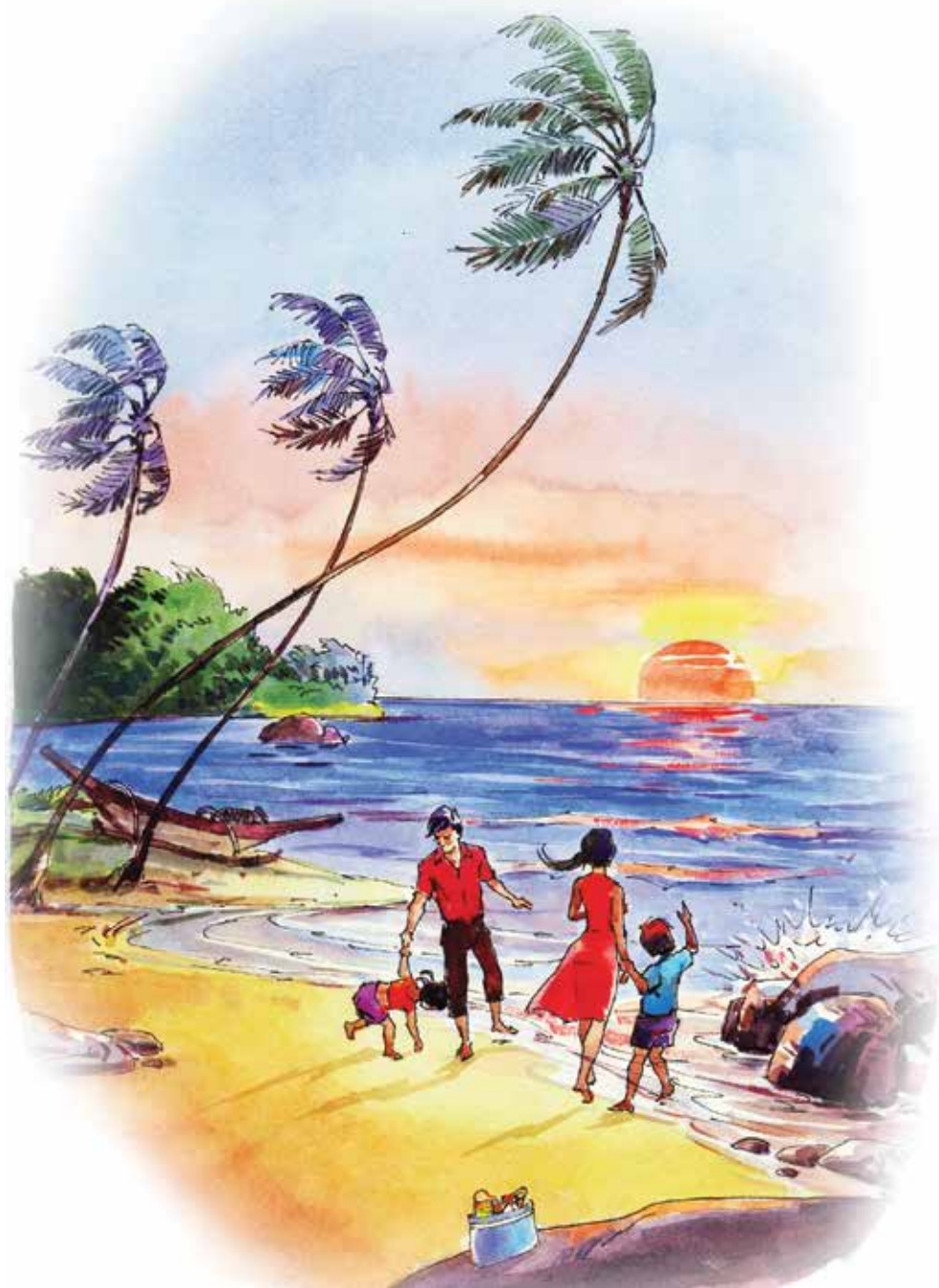
Exchange of ideas should be well balanced and carefully done without hurting anybody.

It should be kept in mind that although males express their ideas in a very straight forward manner and directly, females tend to express their ideas by gestures or indirectly. The husband should be able to understand this.

While exchanging ideas each person should have a good understanding about the other person's qualities, feelings, likes, dislikes, good and bad. Also both should respect each other's independence and religion too.

Any common decisions which affect the family should be taken by the couple together and both should hold responsibility for the decisions taken.

There is no chance what so ever for disunity or family split between a husband and wife who engage in discussions with empathy, patience, trust, praise and appreciation. There is no doubt that mutual understanding and good living will bind the couple together strongly with happiness and affection throughout their lives.



7. Family without Violence

Both of you entered married life with smiling faces and great happiness. On that day both of you would have had the expectation and determination to lead your married life with affection and mutual respect. Why does this change after sometime in some families? Why does the woman have to face violence?

Why do people engage in violence?

They give various excuses for this. Some of the reasons are as follows

- Sudden anger and inability to control it.
- Alcohol consumption
- To correct wife & children
- Feeling that as the head of the household he has the right to control others and use violence to do that.

None of these reasons are valid to justify violence. The people who subject others to violence are those who are unable to control and bear other people's ideas, opinions and actions. It is not a secret that they are mentally deranged people who are unable to understand others, respect others or accept others as equal to them.

What are the unfavorable effects of violence?

Those who are subjected to violence may suffer from various mental disturbances and illnesses. If the mother develops such a condition it may affect the children and the entire family. When there is physical abuse (assault) or internal injury due to violence (fractures, damage to organs) the victim may suffer permanent disability or even end up in untimely death.

Children do not have anybody else who are close to them as their father & mother. To them father is a hero and they have lot of respect for him. When the father abuses and assaults their mother whom they love so much they develop animosity & hatred in their little minds towards the hero in their hearts. Then their hero turns out to be a devil and a rival.

Research has shown that the children who have been subjected to abuse or experienced abuse have a tendency for them also to behave violently later in life. Therefore children have to learn to respect & love others from their childhood itself.



Parents who do not wish to see their children behaving violently when they are adults, should never allow violence in their homes. Violence has a very negative effect on the education of children. When they have an abusive home environment and atmosphere children's education may get disrupted.

Does absence of violence help in the wellbeing of the family?

Yes, a family without violence is very lucky. Such a family is a good example to the society. Families without violence exhibit happiness, love & affection and mental comfort among parents and children too.

The physical health and mental happiness of the mother helps to maintain good health of the children & husband. Whatever the social status of the family, if there is mutual understanding & mutual respect between the husband & wife, there is no chance for violence in the family.

Recent research has shown that interest and personal involvement of the father in the studies of the children help in achievement of more success in their education. Further, studies have shown that the closeness and friendliness of the father towards the children help in the personality development, especially of male children.

A family devoid of violence is a healthy family, full of happiness and peace. It is economically sound and socially well placed too. We know that such a family is well accepted in the society.



8. before conception

Is health assessment of a married couple necessary before conception?

The most pleasant expectation of your married life is to enjoy the birth of a child. Be it a girl or a boy, you may be craving to feel the tender body of a little one, to get his/her sweet smell, listen to the soft voice and to see the child running around. Now you are ready to fulfill this expectation of yours.

Let us see whether the two of you meet the basic requirements for this. If you have any health or health related problems we can correct them and help you to prepare for parenthood.

If your expectation is a healthy, strong baby, then before you conceive it is necessary to check both the husband and wife. This is because parents in particular the mother's health & habits may affect the health and well-being of the baby directly.

Mother's malnutrition, some illnesses and infections, medicines used by her, habits such as smoking, alcohol consumption etc. could affect the health & growth and development of the baby.

This assessment before conception should include a checkup of physical health, nutritional status & mental health status of the couple. Already the PHM of your village would have visited you and inquired about the health status of both of you.

The PHM would have inquired about illnesses you may have had during your childhood, illnesses your family members had in the past as well as illnesses they have at present. This is to check whether you are at risk of contracting any of those diseases.

The PHM would have focused more on medical history of the wife. She may have asked details about the heart diseases you had in the past or you are having at present. It is important to know whether you have any unidentified problems present from birth such as hole in the heart, defects in heart valves etc. Sometimes due to rheumatic fever which is a disease in childhood, you may have developed heart valve defects without your knowledge. If you have any such condition it is possible to intervene now and correct them. If you have undergone heart surgery it is important to check on those before a pregnancy occurs.

The medical check-up done in the clinic will check the blood pressure of both of you. If the female has high blood pressure it is important to correct it beforehand.

Knowing whether both of you and your family members and close relatives have diabetes also is also important. Blood & urine samples of both of you would be checked to diagnose this condition. Diabetes should be controlled before conception.

This medical check-up includes checking of any other physical health problems too. Any medical conditions you have should be controlled before pregnancy.

importance of having good oral health prior to conception

Studies have shown that mother's gum diseases may result in premature deliveries and low birth weight babies. Gum diseases may also cause offensive smell in the mouth, pain, bleeding from gums, loosening of teeth which may be subject you to social stigma.

The main cause of gum diseases is poor oral hygiene. Due to improper brushing and poor cleaning, plaques may collect in the gums and cause disease. When these plaques get hardened

It is difficult to remove with a brush. Sometimes it is necessary to treat gum diseases with antibiotics. Therefore it is necessary to consult a dental surgeon to remove these plaques. By cleaning the plaques and brushing teeth carefully and properly you can control gum diseases. This will help prevent bad effects on the baby too.

Decaying of teeth is also a contagious disease. A child gets infected with bacteria causing decaying of teeth from people who are closest to them, especially from the father or mother. No parents wish to see the children suffering from diseases contracted from parents. Therefore it is important for a couple expecting a baby to check for oral disease and take treatment before getting pregnant.

What are the other health conditions which need attention?

Apart from the above, your nutritional status, especially your Body Mass Index (BMI) and whether you have anaemia (haemoglobin level) should be checked without fail. (The chapter on "Importance of Nutrition" contains more information on this). Mother's anaemia during pregnancy can have many unfavourable health effects on the baby. Therefore if the mother suffers from anaemia or poor nutrition those have to be corrected before she gets pregnant.

Another problem to note in the history of a woman is her allergic conditions. Certain foods (prawns, pine apple etc.) as well as medicines when taken cause itching of the body and eruption of rashes. This is known as urticaria. It is important to know this condition early so that such medicines and foods to which the woman is allergic could be avoided during pregnancy & delivery.

The next point to be checked by the doctor is whether she has taken rubella immunization. If she contracts rubella during pregnancy it is very much likely to cause defects in the foetus. Therefore if the woman has not taken rubella vaccine she should be given it at least 3 months before a pregnancy.

Folic acid a vitamin which is essential for the baby's brain development should be started 3 months before conception and 1 tablet taken daily. This will be prescribed by your PHM or the doctor. Further, in this health checkup details about any injections, medicines you are taking now and any other treatment you are receiving will be asked from you. It is important for you to tell the PHM or the doctor about all the diseases you have had during your childhood (e.g. Epilepsy, thalassemia, fits, asthma etc.) and illnesses you are having at present without hiding any information. It is also important to tell about all the chronic illnesses in the family. These facts are very important for your health as well as for the health baby in your womb.

Both husband and wife should read and understand the booklets, leaflets on conception, pregnancy, delivery, breast feeding, caring for the child etc. given to you by the PHM and at the clinic. It is the responsibility of the husband to help the wife to follow the advice and other instructions given in those reading material.



For a healthy conception the mother should have a happy mental health status and also high spiritual health status. Engaging in religious activities and following religious rituals are useful for being mentally & spiritually happy. The doctor in the clinic will also inquire about these aspects related to your health. If there are any problems the doctor will suggest steps that you need to take.

It is important for the husband also to be examined by the doctor who will inquire about his family illnesses, his own illnesses during childhood & young age, habits such as smoking and alcohol consumption. The doctor will also check his scrotum to be sure that the testes have descended to the scrotal sacs. Descent of testes is important to form adequate sperms (see chapter on sexuality)

As soon as conception takes place the PHM has to be informed. Visiting the clinic as per instructions given by the midwife, receiving tetanus immunization, testing blood and urine & undergoing medical examination are mandatory.





9. Male participation and parenthood

Having lived as single persons all these years, now both of you have entered married life as a couple. Before long you will achieve another new position in life that is noble parenthood as a mother & a father.

A well known Sri Lankan Catholic Priest 'Father, Mercelline Jayakody' who was a great musician & an artist in his book titled "Mother's Virtue" has written as follows:

"Both myself and my mother were born on the same day. Before I was born there was no one called mother. There was no one called son. On the day I was born a woman became a mother. I became a son. Both of us were born on the same day. A woman is a human daughter while a mother is a goddess"

According to Father Mercelline Jayakody, if on the day the first child is born a woman became a mother, then on the same day a man became a father too.

For a child his/her very first treasure and the closest relations are the parents. Therefore the parents have to be ready to fulfill their responsibilities and duties towards their child.

Is it necessary to prepare for parenthood?

Yes, both husband and wife should prepare themselves for parenthood. The husband should be aware of his responsibilities, especially before the wife gets pregnant, during her pregnancy, at the time of delivery and after delivery and also during the growth development of the child.

Sharing the workload of cooking, cleaning & arranging the house, growing flowers and gardening, from the time you start your married life will enable the mutual relationship and understanding between the husband and wife to be at a very high level. Commending and praising the wife for the role played by her is a good quality of a husband.

Today the food is very tasty. Although I helped you, it is you who prepared it, it is the luck of your hand". "Your cup of tea is very tasty" are some of the commendations the husband can make for the wife to feel happy and satisfied. Providing nutritious food during pregnancy and allowing her time to rest by sharing her workload are equally important responsibilities of a husband.

Accompanying the wife to clinics, meeting her doctors during pregnancy should not be neglected by the husband. By accompanying her, she will get mental comfort and also it helps her to follow the instructions given to her at the clinics. By reading the booklets and leaflets given in the clinic, the husband will be able to fulfill the needs of the pregnant wife and remind her of important instructions she should follow. This also will enable the husband to understand his "paternal responsibility" right from the pregnancy stage. It is the husband's duty to take necessary action to keep his wife happy throughout her pregnancy.

It is a great strength for the wife to know that her husband is close by at the time of delivery. It is the responsibility of the father to help the mother to look after and care for their child after birth. By sharing the household work he can allow the mother to have time for rest and relaxation. It is important to commend and encourage the mother to breast feed the baby

How do parents work for the wellbeing of children?

Your child is an innocent little human being. It is the sole responsibility of the two of you to bring up this child properly and provide guidance to become a good person in the society one day. Therefore as parents you have to always work towards the child's welfare. You have to remember that 'example is more important than advice'. Careless irresponsible parents directly or indirectly inculcate bad qualities in their children.

You will be able to get the guidance of the PHM to bring up your child with high quality care. Both of you should read the written instructions given to you on Early Childhood Development and work accordingly to support his/her high quality growth and development.

Parent's love is very special and valuable for children. This love should be given in such a way for the children to feel secure and confident. Talking with the child, showing affection, petting the child and playing with the child should be done by both mother & father irrespective of their busy schedules.

How to develop good parenthood?

Good parenthood develops through favorable relationship between parents and children. Good parenthood means bringing up children to be happy, confident and useful adults to the society. For this to happen the children should have a childhood which is happy and their basic needs fulfilled. To give them such a childhood the parents should understand their thoughts, needs and actions at different stages of their life and be able to support them and work accordingly.

A child undergoes various changes from birth to adolescence. As they grow not only the body size, but changes are seen in the way they think too. Therefore it is very important for parents to be well aware of these. There are a few factors which help in good interaction between parents and children.

Following are some of those which need your attention:

Mutual Respect

As much as parents expect respect from children the children too expect their parents to respect them. "This is my son. He is good in studies and sports. He is a good orator too. He has been selected to the school junior debating team"..... This type of acceptance & commendations

depending on child's ability would help the child to develop self respect & self esteem. Parents should avoid making remarks or stating things which damage the self respect or make the child ashamed of him/her self in front of others.

Encouragement

Children look forward very eagerly to the praise and commendations of parents. By appreciating their abilities, skills & talents you will be able to encourage them more and help develop self respect and self esteem too.

For e.g.

It is the love & affection that you give the child to be felt that matters most to them. Your hidden love however enormous it is, may not be of much use to the child as the child cannot feel it. Loving a child doesn't mean buying books, pens, pencils, toys or food or giving everything that they ask for. They have to feel that their parents love them.

For e.g.

Father- "Now it is holidays.... Let us go to Kandy temple to worship the Tooth Relic. We shall go to the Peradeniya botanical gardens too".



Son- "Father are we taking the interc

Father- "Yes son"

Son- "Then I will sit with you father"

Daughter- "Why, what about me ?..... I will sit with father too"

Father- "Yes of course, both of you can sit with me. All of us, myself, mother, two of you will sit together"

Enjoying

Parents should be able to allocate time to play with their children, visit places, talk with children or else the words you call them such as "my honey" "my gem" "my treasure" would be just empty words to them.

This is another e.g.

Son- "Father..... Shall we go to the beach today?"

Father - "Let us go in the evening. Bring your big ball; we can play in the beach then. We can play volleyball like last Sunday"

Son- "Mother are you coming too?"

Mother- "Yes.... all four of us can play"

Son- "Thank youMy good father.....My good Mother "

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Mr. I. Liyanage	Senior Public Health Inspector	Family Health Bureau
Ms. W.A. Nalika	Public Health Nursing Sister	Palmadulla
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