



Caring for Children
Through Improved Nutrition
Leader Guidebook—Child Nutrition Effort

Introduction for Leaders

“No humanitarian effort is more foundational to Christ’s Church than feeding the hungry. ... As we serve together, we extend the reach of Christ’s loving arms.”

Relief Society General President, Camille N. Johnson

“The Church of Jesus Christ Is Helping Alleviate Global Malnutrition,” Aug. 11, 2023,
newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org

WHY NUTRITION MATTERS

Healthy nutrition is essential for children, especially from conception to age five. During this time, the foundations of the brain, body, and immune system are being rapidly developed.

ABOUT MALNUTRITION

Many children around the world, including children of Church members, are malnourished. Without having the right kinds and amount of nutrients the body needs, they do not develop mentally and physically as well as they should.

HOW THIS GUIDEBOOK CAN HELP

As a leader, you can have a positive impact on child nutrition in your ward or branch. This book is a collection of information sheets on topics related to nutrition—such as healthy eating and preventing disease. You can focus on the topics that will be most helpful for your ward or for specific families. For each topic, there is a leader guide and a family guide.

- Leader guides are designed for ward councils. They offer practical ideas for helping families and promoting good practices.
- Family guides teach basic nutrition and health practices. Leaders can use them to plan lessons or activities. Ministering brothers and sisters can share them with families. The guides could be a mini-lesson, a reminder, or a tool to help solve a problem.

This book contains the leader and family guides. A separate book with only the family guides is available for families.

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Leader Guides

Brain Development for Children

Early life experiences have a great impact on children's brain development. Our goal as leaders is to help parents use simple interactions with their children to build a healthy brain.

KEY POINTS

- **The most important period for a child's brain development is from the time of conception to ages 2-3.** In this period, the brain develops faster than at any other time. These early years are when it's most important to help the child's brain develop properly so he or she can have a strong foundation for success in life.
- **The brain develops by making many physical connections,** or pathways, between the cells in the brain. These connections make the brain work. Brain connections are developed through children's senses—as they see, touch, hear, play, and interact with people.
- **For strong brain development, children need to have good nutrition.** They also need loving, responsive relationships, back-and-forth interactions with people, and chances to play and explore their world. Parents can do “brain-building” activities such as these:



LOVE AND ATTENTION

- Show interest in your child. Make eye contact and smile often.
- Hold, cuddle, and kiss your child.
- Notice and help when your child is hungry, tired, hurt, or sad.
- Show your love often.

TALK

- Talk to your child starting at birth.
- Have two-way interaction with your baby by repeating sounds he or she makes.
- Speak slowly and with expression.
- Talk about what your child is seeing or doing. Name things.
- Read books or show pictures.

PLAY

- Give your child safe and interesting things to play with and explore.
 - Safe, clean household items such as cups, spoons, and containers can be used for play.
 - Play games together with back-and-forth interaction, such as “peek-a-boo” or rolling a ball.
 - Let the child follow his or her own curiosity and interests in play.
 - Find safe places to play outside.
- **Brain-building activities can be done during the regular routines of the day**— for instance, while getting the child dressed, at mealtime, when going places, and at bedtime. An extra benefit to these activities is that bonds of support, trust, and love are strengthened.

Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- Who in my unit may be especially good at sharing these ideas with others?
- Are there families under stress or affected by depression who could use some support as they interact with their children? How could we help?



Inspiration from the Scriptures

In Alma 37:6 we learn that “by small and simple things are great things brought to pass.” In early childhood, parents help children’s developing minds grow through simple acts such as giving affection and playing together. This is a great way to be build a foundation for life.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

Leaders

- Organize a **class or activity for families** with young children. For example, give ideas for inexpensive or no-cost toys or games to play. Parents also learn by noticing good things other parents do.
- When **assigning ministering brothers and sisters**, keep in mind who might be most helpful to a family with young children.
- Make sure the Primary nursery has a variety of safe, colorful toys. Let children hear and sing good, uplifting music.
- Look for **additional information** on child development to share with parents who are interested. Government or educational agencies and doctors may be good sources. See examples at the bottom of this page.

Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- If you feel it is appropriate, **share the tip sheet “Brain Development”** with families who may be interested.

Share the **“Healthy Brain Development”** handout with members.

Healthy Brain Development for Children

The most important period for a child’s brain development is from the time of conception to ages 3-5. A child’s relationships and everyday experiences help shape the brain’s development. Responsive parenting, two-way interactions, and chances to learn through play are key.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO:



LOVE

- Show interest in your child.
- Make eye contact and smile often.
- Hold, cuddle, and kiss your child.
- Notice and help when your child is hungry, tired, hurt, or sad.
- Show your love often.



TALK

- Talk to your child starting at birth.
- Have two-way interaction with your baby by repeating sounds he or she makes.
- Speak slowly and with expression.
- Talk about what your child is seeing or doing. Name things.
- Read books or show pictures.



PLAY

- Give your child safe and interesting things for play and exploration.
- Safe, clean household items like cups, spoons, and containers can be used for play.
- Play games together with back-and-forth interaction, like covering and then uncovering your face (“peek-a-boo”) or rolling a ball.
- Let the child follow their own curiosity and interests in play.
- Find safe places to play outside.

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LEARN MORE

Learn more about brain development and other ways to improve child nutrition: ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding has numerous benefits for mothers and babies. Breast milk is a natural and nutritious source of food that supports babies' development. Our goal as leaders is to teach families about the importance of breastfeeding.

KEY POINTS

- **Breast milk is a natural food source** that contains nutrients essential for brain development and growth, as well as antibodies that protect infants from various illnesses and infections.¹
- **Breastfeeding helps create a strong bond** between mother and baby.³
- **It is recommended to start breastfeeding within one hour of birth.** This helps the baby start the natural sucking reflex and provides the baby the first milk produced by the mother's breast.²
- **The first milk produced by the mother's breast**, called colostrum, lasts during the first few days after birth and is rich in nutrients and antibodies that help protect babies from diseases.²
- **It is recommended to exclusively breastfeed babies until six months old.** Enough breast milk will keep a baby hydrated, even in hot climates. Giving water to a baby under six months old increases the risk of diarrhea and malnutrition. Proper hydration of breastfeeding mothers is essential for milk production.¹
- **A health professional can guide** a mother about the particularities she needs to know about breastfeeding, the difficulties she can find in the process, and how to correctly administer instant formula when needed.
- **When mothers need to pump milk to feed their babies**, they should always wash their hands and store the milk in a clean container covered with a lid. It can be kept at room temperature for 4–6 hours and refrigerated for 24 hours.²
- **Fathers and loved ones can play a vital role by supporting and encouraging mothers.** When the mother is not able to breastfeed, they can help feed the baby with breast milk that the mother has pumped out or with infant formula.
- **If possible, mothers should continue breastfeeding until the child is at least one year old.** There are additional health benefits for continuing to breastfeed up to the age of two and beyond.¹
- **Every mother's experience is unique.** Despite their loving and caring efforts and desires, some mothers are not able to breastfeed. There are other ways to bond with and nurture their babies, such as skin-to-skin contact.
- **Although it does not contain all the benefits of breast milk, infant formula can be used as a substitute when needed.** It should be prepared with clean drinking water, following the instructions on the package.²
- **Other solid nutritious foods should be added to the baby's diet starting at six months old.** At this age, breast milk alone does not meet all the baby's nutritional requirements.^{1,2}



References

- 1 "All Your Questions on Breastfeeding Answered," UNICEF China, accessed Apr. 17, 2023, <https://www.unicef.cn/en/parenting-site/all-your-questions-breastfeeding-answered>.
- 2 Kalpana Upadhyay Subedi, "What New Parents Need to Know about Breastfeeding," UNICEF South Asia, accessed Apr. 17, 2023, <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/stories/what-new-parents-need-know-about-breast-feeding>.
- 3 "Skin-to-Skin Contact," UNICEF UK, accessed Apr. 17, 2023, <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/implementing-standards-resources/skin-to-skin-contact/>.

Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- Do members in our area understand the importance and benefits of breastfeeding?
- What can I do to support members with healthy breastfeeding and formula-feeding practices?
- How important is it for our area to focus on this topic?
- What can we do to show love and support our sisters as they breastfeed?



Inspiration from the Scriptures

1 Nephi 17:2: *“And so great were the blessings of the Lord upon us, that ... our women did give plenty of suck for their children, and were strong.”*

THINGS WE CAN DO

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

Leaders

- Leaders can encourage the natural practice of breastfeeding, answer questions, introduce resources, and support parents with time and space to feed their babies in Church settings.
- Some mothers experience challenges with breastfeeding. Leaders can help mothers feel loved and supported. It is vital to avoid comparisons and not judge. No one should make any woman feel guilty or inadequate regarding her breastfeeding experience.
- Relief Society leaders can sensitively and respectfully work with sisters who may have questions or need encouragement. Working toward creating a connection and showing love could help leaders understand what can make it difficult for a woman to breastfeed.
- Relief Society leaders can learn about local resources that help mothers breastfeed successfully.
- Relief Society and Primary presidencies may choose to organize breastfeeding classes for pregnant and new mothers. They can offer support, help mothers learn from each other, and offer practical and accurate information about breastfeeding.
- Leaders can help provide comfortable spaces for mothers and fathers to feed their infants.

Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- When appropriate, ministering sisters may offer practical information and resources about breastfeeding as they visit expectant parents and their families.
- Ministering sisters may encourage the sisters they serve to learn about the health benefits of breastfeeding children until they are between the ages of 1 and 2 years old.
- Ministering brothers may encourage husbands to provide loving support and encouragement for breastfeeding and take on other duties that help the family.

Share the **“Breastfeeding”** handout with members of your stake and ward.



LEARN MORE

Learn more about breastfeeding and other ways to improve child nutrition: ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



Healthy Eating for Children

Eating the right types of food is essential for young children. As leaders, our goal is to help parents know what types of foods are needed and find ways to provide them.

This document presents simple ways to improve nutrition. It addresses common causes of malnutrition and does not intend to explain all nutritional needs in detail.



KEY POINTS

- **The first five years of a child's life are the most important** for growth and brain development. A variety of foods is needed to support the child's rapid growth. Good nutrition in these early years helps develop a strong foundation and avoid lifelong health problems.
- **The best food for babies is breastmilk.** There are many advantages to breastfeeding (if possible) for the first one to two years. (See the "Breastfeeding" unit leader guide.) Other foods should be added after six months.
- **Many children don't get enough fruits, vegetables, and protein foods.** One of the best ways to improve children's health is to feed them more of these foods. Parents can help by providing them at least once a day. When possible, there should be a protein food and a fruit or vegetable at every meal.

Fruits and vegetables , such as bananas, oranges, carrots, leafy greens	To support many body functions and prevent disease
Protein foods , such as fish, nuts, eggs, poultry, meat, dry beans	To help the body grow and repair itself
Grains and starches , such as rice, noodles, bread, potatoes (sometimes called "main foods")	To provide energy

- **Children should not eat a lot of salty or sugary foods and packaged snacks.** A good diet is low in salt and sugar.
- **Certified specialists can help.** Nutrition screening events can identify any children who have inadequate nutrition (malnutrition). A doctor or certified nutritionist can tell a child's nutrition status by measuring height and weight. If a child is not well-nourished, the specialist can advise on how to help the child recover. If adequate foods are not available, the specialist may recommend supplements.

Share the "Healthy Eating for Children" handout with members.



Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- Who in our area may need our support to provide nutritious foods for children?
- What would help most to improve the nutrition of our members?
- What community or Church resources are available?



Inspiration from the Scriptures

The Word of Wisdom counsels us to eat a variety of nutritious foods that God has provided. Those who follow these truths are promised special blessings of health, energy, wisdom, and treasures of knowledge (see Doctrine and Covenants 89).

THINGS WE CAN DO

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

Leaders

- **Address the immediate need** if a family cannot provide needed foods for a malnourished child. Also plan how to help the family increase their self-reliance.
- **Prayerfully choose people who can best minister** to families with a malnourished child.
- **If your stake organizes a nutrition screening for children**, encourage families to attend and help them come if needed.
- **Locate health clinics in the community** that could assess and treat malnutrition.
- **Encourage and support breastfeeding.** See the “Breastfeeding” unit leader guide.
- **The Relief Society and elders quorum may:**
 - Hold a recipe exchange.
 - Have an activity preparing fruits, vegetables, and protein foods in new ways. Show how to make low-cost nutritious meals.
 - Teach about planning ahead to have nutritious foods in the home.
 - Use vegetables, fruits, or protein foods for refreshments at Church activities.
- **Prepare a list of local foods** that belong in each of these categories: fruits and vegetables, protein foods, and grains and starches. Or use your country’s published dietary guidelines. Provide this information to families as needed.
- **Explore ways gardening could be used** in your area. See the “Gardening” unit leader guide.

Ministering Brothers and Sisters

If you are helping a family with a malnourished child:

- **Counsel with the Relief Society or elders quorum about ways you can help.** For example, you may be able to help the family connect with resources.
- **Let the family take the lead in their plans.** Have a conversation about what they would like to do. Help them think of actions to take. Focus on small steps, and celebrate success.
- **Help the family learn about the types of food children need.**
- **Be understanding and not judgmental.** Listen to understand the challenges parents may have in trying to provide more nutritious foods. Encourage them in all their efforts. Help them have hope.
- **Pray with them and for their children by name.**

LEARN MORE

Learn more about healthy eating and other ways to improve child nutrition: ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



Gardening

Growing food in a garden is one way to improve nutrition for children and families. Our goal as leaders is to help families grow nutritious food.

KEY POINTS

- **Growing food in a garden can help improve children’s nutrition.** Some children lack many important nutrients, such as those that come from fruits and vegetables. Gardening can be an inexpensive way to provide nutritious food and help prevent malnutrition.
- **There are many ways to grow food.** For example, small pots or other containers may be used where large garden spaces are not available. Where available, community gardens are also an option.
- **Parents can help children learn to enjoy eating nutrient-rich foods.** At first, children may resist eating certain healthy foods, such as fruits and dark-green leafy vegetables. Parents can help children get used to these foods by offering them regularly and preparing these foods in different ways. Children will be more likely to eat the food if they help grow it in the garden.
- **Gardening has other benefits besides nutrition.** It can help family members learn self-reliance, cooperation, and the value of work. It can also be good exercise.



Gardening
Children need to eat fruits and vegetables every day. Growing some food for your family can improve your children's health.

HERE ARE SOME STEPS YOU CAN FOLLOW:

- 1. LEARN HOW TO GROW FOOD SUCCESSFULLY IN YOUR AREA**
 - It helps to know the best way to grow food in your climate and type of soil.
 - Government agriculture specialists are a good resource. Local Church leaders may also suggest resources.
 - Friends, neighbors, or Church members with gardening experience may be helpful.
- 2. CHOOSE WHAT TO GROW**
 - Choose plants that grow well in your climate and soil, and in the space you have.
 - Choose foods your family will eat.
- 3. FIND A GOOD PLACE**
 - Find a sunny place. Vegetable plants need about 6 hours of sunlight a day.
 - Choose a place you can get water to.
 - You can also plant in containers such as buckets, pots, or large cans. Make sure there is a way for water to drain out.
- 4. PREPARE THE SOIL BEFORE PLANTING**
 - Dig to break up chunks of soil.
 - Add fertilizer or other materials to your soil if needed.
- 5. WATER IS KEY**
 - Make sure your plants get enough water.
 - Learn how to tell when your plants need more water.

What is a first step you could take to grow some fruits or vegetables?

Gardening Handout

Share this handout with members of your stake and ward. It provides useful information and suggestions for families.

Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- How common is gardening in my area? Are people in the area successfully growing fruits and vegetables?
- What spaces do members have available for growing food?
- What can we do to teach and support members who want to grow food?



Inspiration from the Scriptures

“Yea, all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man ... ; yea for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul” (Doctrine and Covenants 59:18–19).

THINGS WE CAN DO

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

Leaders

- **Teach members how to garden.** For example, hold a Relief Society, quorum, or class meeting where people can learn gardening skills. (Topics might include choosing a good location, preparing soil, choosing what to plant, choosing seeds, planting, applying fertilizer, watering and draining, and controlling weeds, insects, and diseases.) Members who have successful gardens could be invited to teach others. They could offer to visit members’ gardens and help them solve problems.
- **Look for local resources that can provide information about gardening, teach gardening skills, and provide technical support.** Find and share resources that can answer questions like these:
 - What crops grow best in my local climate and soil?
 - Where is a good place to plant?
 - What fertilizer or other materials could be added to soil to increase plant growth? (Note: It is not safe to use human feces as fertilizer.)
 - What are the available water sources for a garden? How much water do my plants need?
 - Which foods grow in a short amount of time?
- **Help arrange for community or individual garden spaces.** For those who don’t have land available, help them get information on growing in containers or small spaces.
- **Help members get basic gardening supplies and seeds.** This is especially important for families who would have difficulty getting supplies themselves. For families with special needs, consider with your council using fast offerings or humanitarian resources.
- **Invite community friends to join in.**

Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- If you have experience gardening, teach your ministering families how to garden.
- Share garden produce and recipes with your ministering families.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about gardening and other ways to improve child nutrition: ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



Safe Drinking Water

Safe drinking water is an essential part of good health and nutrition. Our goal as leaders is to help children and families find and use safe water.

KEY POINTS

- **Drinking clean water helps with nutrition and keeps our bodies healthy and working properly.** Our bodies need water for everything we do. But not all water is safe for drinking.
- **Unclean water can cause disease.** Unclean water can contain dirt and germs that we can't see with our eyes. It can cause diarrhea, dehydration, and stomach pain. It can also cause diseases (such as cholera, hepatitis B, typhoid fever, and polio) that can sometimes lead to death.
- **Unclean water can come from unclean sources or from storing clean water improperly.** Clean water can become unclean if it is kept in unsanitary containers or if it is not stored properly.
- **Clean water should be used for everything that goes into our mouth or touches our food.** We should use clean water for brushing teeth, making infant formula or juice, washing fruits and vegetables, and washing dishes.



Safe Drinking Water

Clean drinking water is important because it helps keep our bodies healthy and working properly. Unclean water can cause stomach pain, diarrhea, and other diseases.


Check your water supply to see if it is clean and safe to drink.
If it's not, here are some things you can do to make sure you have safe water:

- ASK OTHERS**
 - Community and Church leaders can help you find safe water.
- PURIFY WATER**
 - You can purify water by boiling, filtering, disinfecting, or evaporating.
 - You can also collect clean rainwater or use solar purification.
- USE SAFE BOTTLED WATER**
 - Bottled water is usually safe if the seal on the lid has not been broken.
 - Bottled water is unsafe if the bottle has been refilled with unclean water.
- USE SAFE WELL WATER**

Well water is usually safe if the well:

 - Is deep, covered, and cleaned often.
 - Does not have any damage or leaks.
- STORE WATER SAFELY**
 - Use clean containers with a lid that can close tightly.
 - Don't store water in sunlight.
- USE CLEAN WATER FOR EVERYTHING THAT ENTERS YOUR BODY OR TOUCHES YOUR FOOD**
 - Brushing teeth
 - Making juice or infant formula
 - Washing food or dishes
- SEE A DOCTOR**

If you think your drinking water is making you sick, see a doctor.



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Safe Drinking Water Handout

Share this handout with members of your stake and ward. It provides useful information and suggestions for families.

Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- In my area, which families might not have safe drinking water? Is this a widespread problem?
- What are the best ways to teach members in my area about the importance of clean water?
- Where can families in my area find clean water?
- What government, nonprofit, and Church resources are available to help with safe drinking water?



Inspiration from the Scriptures

When Moses and the children of Israel were wandering in the desert, the Lord helped them find clean water (Exodus 15:22–27). The Lord cares about our well-being and will help us find safe, clean water.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

Leaders

- **Address immediate needs and look for long-term solutions.** If a family is unable to access clean water, consider how to help with immediate needs. Also work with them to find long-term solutions.
- **Identify or develop sources of clean water.** Work with community leaders to identify or develop sources of clean water. Let families know about these sources.
- **Teach members how to purify and store water.** For example, you could hold a Relief Society meeting where you share practical methods for purifying water and storing clean water properly.

Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- Learn about and share sources of clean water and methods for treating water.
- If a home environment shows signs of unsafe drinking water, counsel with the family about ways to improve their situation. Be understanding and not judgmental. Listen to understand the challenges the parents may be facing.
- Counsel with the Relief Society or elders quorum about ways you can help.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about safe drinking water and other ways to improve child nutrition: ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



Dental Health

Healthy teeth are important for children's nutrition and overall health. Our goal as leaders is to help parents use and teach good dental health practices with their children.

KEY POINTS

- **Dental health affects nutrition.** If teeth are damaged by poor hygiene, it is more difficult to eat. In addition, tooth decay can create infections that cause pain, swelling, and fevers. These infections can spread to other parts of the body.
- **Baby teeth are important to care for.** They keep space in the mouth so adult teeth won't grow too close to each other.
- **Babies should not fall asleep drinking from a bottle.** Baby bottle tooth decay is a big problem, and falling asleep with a bottle in the mouth is the leading cause.
- **Parents should start brushing their child's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears.** Use a small amount of toothpaste with fluoride if possible—for 2 years old and younger, toothpaste used should be the size of a grain of rice; for 3 years old and older, the size of a pea.
- **Start flossing early.** When a child has teeth close enough to touch each other, it is good to start using dental floss if available. Flossing helps remove small pieces of food that brushes can't reach.
- **Avoid sugary snacks and drinks, including sports drinks.** Frequent snacking on sugary foods can cause tooth decay. If decayed teeth are not treated, they can cause pain and serious infections.
- **Where possible, children should have regular checkups with a dentist.** A dentist can find and treat small problems before they become bigger problems. Some areas may have free or reduced-cost dental clinics.



Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- Could members in my area use additional help with dental hygiene?
- What are the best ways to teach dental hygiene to members in my area?
- Where can families take their children to get dental care?



Inspiration from the Scriptures

God has provided us with “the good things which come of the earth ... for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul” (Doctrine and Covenants 59:17, 19). One way we can enjoy and benefit from the food we eat is by protecting our dental health with good hygiene.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

Leaders

- **Consider which families may not be able to get proper dental care or supplies.** Counsel together to find ways to help families meet their children’s dental needs.
- **Organize workshops to encourage good dental hygiene.** For example, there could be a joint Primary and Relief Society activity including children and mothers. This could include things like a demonstration and letting children practice brushing their teeth.
- **Let parents share ideas** for how to brush young children’s teeth even when the child resists. Here are a few:
 - Make toothbrushing a routine.
 - For children too young to brush their own teeth, try letting them lie with their head in your lap. Let them hold an extra toothbrush while the parent brushes for them.
 - Make brushing and flossing fun with a game or a song.

Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- When you feel it would be helpful, share the “Healthy Teeth” flyer.
- Be open to discuss dental needs the family may want to share.

Share the “**Healthy Teeth**” handout with members.



LEARN MORE

Learn more about dental health and other ways to improve child nutrition: ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



Handwashing

Keeping yourself and your family healthy is crucial, and preventing infections is key to achieving that goal. Proper handwashing with soap can help reduce germs on the hands, which can help prevent infections. As leaders and ministering brothers and sisters, our goal is to teach families how to wash their hands properly and support their efforts to do so.

KEY POINTS

Although we cannot see them, germs can be everywhere, and under certain conditions, they can cause diseases.

Proper handwashing reduces the spread of germs and diseases, including those that produce diarrhea, hand and mouth disease, colds, and so forth, and that can affect a child's nutritional health.

Proper handwashing before and after certain activities is vital.

- Before, during, and after preparing food.
- Before and after handling raw meat.
- Before eating.
- After cleaning.
- After using the bathroom or defecating.
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet.
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste.
- After playing or swimming.
- Whenever your hands are dirty.

Washing hands properly can help reduce the spread of infectious diseases.

Use these steps to teach families how to wash their hands.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water.
2. Apply soap.
3. Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds. Make sure to wash the front and back of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
4. Rinse all the soap off with clean water.
5. Air-dry your hands or use a clean towel.

If clean water and soap are not available, try to use hand sanitizer. Cover hands with the sanitizer and rub together briskly until it dries.

Consider that wiping your hands with unclean objects, including your own clothes, could contaminate your hands again.

See the one-page document for families called "Handwashing" for more information.



Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- How common is hand-washing in my area?
- What resources do families in my area have to promote handwashing?
- How can I better support handwashing practices?



Inspiration from the Scriptures

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: *“Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord’ (D&C 133:5). Thus has [the Lord] spoken to us in modern revelation. Be clean in body. Be clean in mind. Be clean in language. Be clean in dress and manner” (“Be Ye Clean,” Ensign, May 1996, 48).*

THINGS WE CAN DO

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

Leaders

Teach members how to properly wash their hands. For example:

- Organize personal hygiene and handwashing workshops. Consider including pictures and demonstrations. Participants could practice the motions of proper handwashing.
- Consider teaching handwashing with a brief demonstration that could be added to a Primary activity or other appropriate meetings.
- Make up a rhyme or song for children that mentions all the steps of handwashing.

Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- Teach handwashing practices while visiting families.
- Consider if families have access to clean water and supplies for washing hands.
- Discuss these needs with the Relief Society or elders quorum president.

Handwashing Handout

Share this handout with members of your stake and ward. It provides useful information and suggestions for families.

Handwashing

Proper handwashing helps reduce the spread of diseases

WASH HANDS:

- Before, during, and after preparing food.
- Before eating food.
- After using the toilet or evacuating waste.
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet.
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste.
- After playing or swimming.

1. **WET**
 - Wet hands with clean, running water.
2. **SOAP**
 - Apply soap.
3. **RUB**
 - Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds.
 - Make sure to rub soap on the front and back of your hands, between fingers, and under nails. (Count or sing a children’s song)
4. **RINSE**
 - Rinse all the soap off with clean water.
5. **DRY**
 - Air dry hands or use a clean towel.

If clean water and soap are not available, try to use hand sanitizer. Cover hands and rub together briskly until it dries.



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LEARN MORE

Learn more about handwashing and other ways to improve child nutrition: ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



Safe Human Waste Practices

Toilets come in all shapes and sizes; some may just be a hole in the ground. Regardless of what type we use, it's important to keep ourselves clean when using the toilet. If we don't, we might get sick. Our goal as leaders is to help families learn about and follow safe human waste practices.

KEY POINTS

- **Unclean practices when using the toilet can cause illness.** They can spread bacteria, parasites, and viruses that cause diarrhea and other diseases. Diarrhea can cause loss of body fluids, severe dehydration, and, in some cases, death. Recurring diarrhea can reduce a child's growth and brain development, making them vulnerable to other diseases.
- **When possible, use toilets and latrines.** This helps keep us clean. It also helps keep feces (poop) out of our drinking water supplies. Toilets and latrines should be cleaned regularly.
- **Following proper handwashing guidelines reduces the spread of disease.** After using a toilet or latrine, we should wash our hands with soap and clean water or hand sanitizer. Parents should wash their hands after helping their children use the toilet or cleaning their children's bottoms.
- **If no toilet or latrine is available,** defecate (poop) at least 30 meters away from any source of water, bury the feces, and wash your hands with soap and clean water or hand sanitizer.



Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- In my area, which families might be affected by unsafe human waste practices? Is this a widespread problem?
- What are the best ways to teach members about the importance of safe human waste practices?
- Do women and girls have appropriate access to supplies to manage menstruation?
- What government, nonprofit, and Church resources are available to help improve human waste practices and feminine hygiene?



Inspiration from Church Leaders

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: *“Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord’ (D&C 133:5). Thus has [the Lord] spoken to us in modern revelation. Be clean in body. Be clean in mind. Be clean in language. Be clean in dress and manner” (“Be Ye Clean,” Ensign, May 1996, 48).*

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

Leaders

- **Address immediate needs and look for long-term solutions.** If a family is affected by unsafe human waste practices or does not have access to clean water, consider how to help with immediate needs. Then work with them to find long-term solutions.
- **Teach members safe human waste practices.** For example, you could hold a Relief Society, quorum, or class activity where you share practical methods for staying clean when using a toilet or latrine.
- **Mothers and Relief Society members can help young women** learn to manage their periods at school and home in safe and healthy ways.
- **Develop safe human waste practices in your area.** Work with community leaders to develop sanitary toilets and latrines. Let families know about these resources.

Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- Learn and share safe human waste practices.
- If a home shows signs of unsafe human waste practices, counsel with the family about ways to improve their situation. Be understanding and not judgmental. Listen to understand the challenges the parents may be facing.
- If needed, counsel with the Relief Society or elders quorum about ways you can help.

Safe Human Waste Practices Handout

Share this handout with members of your stake and ward. It provides useful information and suggestions for families.

Safe Human Waste Practices

Toilets come in all shapes and sizes. No matter what type of toilet you use, these practices will help your family avoid illnesses related to unsafe human waste disposal.

FLUSH TOILET

1. Try not to touch extra surfaces.
2. Sit on the toilet like a chair.
3. Use toilet paper to wipe yourself clean.
4. If possible, put the toilet paper in the toilet. Otherwise put it in the trash.
5. Always flush the toilet.
6. Throw away trash.
7. Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds.

SQUAT TOILET

1. Bunch your clothes around your knees.
2. Squat above the toilet without touching it.
3. Use toilet paper to wipe yourself clean.
4. If possible, put the toilet paper in the toilet. Otherwise put it in the trash.
5. If possible, flush the toilet.
6. Throw away trash.
7. Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds.

OPEN OR NO TOILET

1. Pick a site far from people, houses, and water.
2. Dig a hole 15 cm deep.
3. Squat over the hole.
4. Use toilet paper or soft leaves to wipe yourself clean.
5. Place paper or leaves in the hole. Fill with dirt, mud, and rocks.
6. Make sure there are no traces of waste.
7. Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds.



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LEARN MORE

Learn more about safe human waste practices and other ways to improve child nutrition: ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



Safe Food Preparation

Unsafe food causes many diseases and interferes with good nutrition. Our goal as leaders is to help families learn and use safe food preparation practices.

KEY POINTS

Food that is not prepared properly can be dangerous to our health.

It may contain bacteria, viruses, parasites, or chemicals that can lead to disease and even death. Young children are especially vulnerable.

Most foodborne illnesses can be prevented by using good habits of food preparation.

The World Health Organization gives five key actions to keep food safe:

- 1. Keep clean. Germs on hands and cooking utensils can get into food.**
 - Wash hands before, during, and after preparing food.
 - Always wash hands after using the toilet.
 - Wash work surfaces and cooking equipment.
 - Keep animals and insects from touching food and work surfaces.
- 2. Separate raw and cooked. Raw meat, poultry, and seafood can contain dangerous microorganisms.**
 - Keep raw meat, fish, and poultry separate from other foods.
 - Don't use the same knife or cutting surface for raw meats and other foods.
- 3. Cook thoroughly. Heat kills dangerous microorganisms.**
 - Cook foods thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, eggs, and seafood.
 - Let foods like soups and stews boil before eating.
- 4. Keep food at safe temperatures. Dangerous microorganisms multiply at room temperature.**
 - Keep cooked food hot until it is eaten (60°C or 140°F).
 - Don't keep cooked foods at room temperature for more than two hours.
- 5. Use safe water and foods. Spoiled foods and unclean water may contain dangerous microorganisms and chemicals.**
 - In cooking, use water that is safe to drink.
 - Wash raw vegetables and unpeeled fruits before eating.



Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- Which safe food preparation practices do our members need to learn the most?
- What are the best ways to help members develop safe food preparation habits?



Inspiration from the Scriptures

The body is a precious gift from God. It is compared to a temple that houses our spirit (see 1 Corinthians 3:16). As we do what we can to prevent disease, we keep our bodies strong and show appreciation for this gift.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

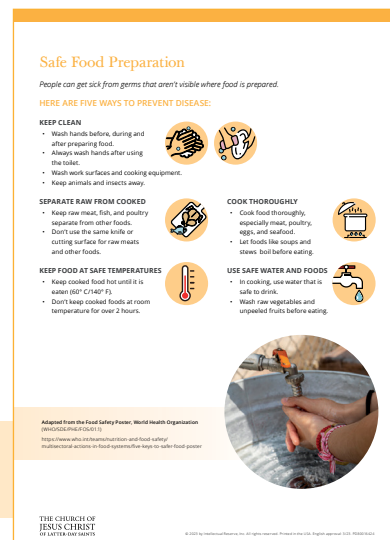
Leaders

- **Think about the different conditions in which your members live.** Is there safe drinking water nearby? Is there running water in the home? Is there a refrigerator or other means of cooling food? Think of ways to apply the key points in different circumstances.
 - For example, if families do not have a refrigerator, they could cook in smaller batches so there is no leftover food kept at room temperature until the next meal.
- **Hold a group activity.** Safe food preparation can be a good topic for a Relief Society activity mini-lesson. Here are a few ideas:
 - After presenting the key ideas, have a discussion. Ask the sisters for ideas about how to use the safe food preparation practices.
 - Demonstrate some of the good practices.
 - Encourage sisters to try one small improvement at a time.
- **Use safe food practices when preparing food together for a Church activity.**
- **Help members understand the importance of safe food preparation.** People may feel it's not necessary to change the way they have always done things. They may not realize that some illnesses they experience may be caused by food preparation habits.

Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- Learn and use safe food preparation practices at home. That will make you better able to help others.
- Food safety can be a sensitive topic. People are often doing the best they know how. If you observe serious unsafe food practices in a home, withhold judgment and prayerfully help where you can. Take care that the family doesn't feel criticized.

Share the "Safe Food Preparation" handout with members.



Adapted from the WHO publication *Five Keys To Safer Food Manual* (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241594639>). See the poster on the last page of the manual.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about safe food preparation and other ways to improve child nutrition: ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



What to Expect When Being Treated for Malnutrition at a Health Clinic

Malnutrition can impact a child's brain development and physical growth. Children who are severely malnourished should be taken to a health clinic as soon as possible so they can get food supplements and other appropriate care. Our goal as leaders is to help families identify the need to visit a clinic and, when appropriate, ensure that access to care is available.



KEY POINTS

- **Recognize when to take a child to a health clinic.** If a child is classified as severely malnourished at a screening, the mother or caretaker should be encouraged to take the child to a clinic for an assessment by a trained health worker, the same day if possible. Health workers will review the child's needs and make recommendations that can help the child recover.
- **Health workers may recommend food supplements.** Supplements can come in different forms, including cereals and other foods that have extra nutrients added to them, powdered supplements that are sprinkled on a child's food, or liquid supplements that treat dehydration from diarrhea.
- **Health workers may treat children for intestinal worms.** Children can sometimes be infected with intestinal worms that make it so they can't absorb nutrients from food. Health workers may give the child medicine to help prevent or eliminate these worms.
- **Health workers may recommend treatments for other conditions or diseases.** Health workers may identify other conditions or diseases that could be impacting a child's nutrition, such as malaria or respiratory or other infectious diseases. For example, if a child has a respiratory illness, has lost his or her appetite, and finds it hard to eat enough to stay healthy, a health worker may give the child an antibiotic to treat the illness. Health workers may also recommend immunizations to prevent common diseases that can impact a child's nutrition.

Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- In our area, which families might struggle with malnutrition? Is this a widespread problem?
- What are the best ways to teach members in our area about the importance of treating malnutrition?
- Where can families in our area attend a malnutrition screening?
- What health clinics are in our area? Which local health clinics offer resources to help combat malnutrition?
- Which local health clinics provide affordable care to families? Which families may have difficulty paying for health services?



Inspiration from Church Leaders

“Jesus has a tender heart for children. ... And He rejoices at even the smallest effort to help them” (Camille N. Johnson, in “The Church of Jesus Christ Gives US\$32 Million to the World Food Programme,” Sept. 14, 2022, newsroom. ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

Leaders

- **Identify common barriers.** Identify common barriers to getting malnutrition screenings and treatment at health clinics, such as affordability. Look for solutions to these barriers.
- **Identify health clinics in your area that offer malnutrition screenings and treatments.** Let families know about these resources.
- **Teach members about the importance of malnutrition screenings and treatment.** For example, you could hold a Relief Society meeting where you share information about the importance of malnutrition screenings and the treatment resources available at health clinics.

Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- If a child shows signs of malnutrition, sensitively counsel with the family about ways they can improve their situation.
- Identify health clinics in your area that offer malnutrition screenings and treatments. Let families know about these resources.

Handout: What to Expect When Being Treated for Malnutrition at a Health Clinic

Share this handout with families in your stake and ward. It provides useful information and suggestions.

Treatment is essential for a child with malnutrition

What to Expect When Being Treated for Malnutrition at a Health Clinic

Malnutrition can impact a child's brain development and physical growth. A child who is severely malnourished should be seen as soon as possible in a health clinic so they can get food supplements and other treatments.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE TREATMENTS YOU CAN EXPECT:

- FOOD SUPPLEMENTS**
 - These are usually cereals, porridge, or other foods that have extra nutrients added to them.
 - They might also be powdered supplements that you sprinkle on your child's food.
 - On average, children eat these once a day for two to three months.
- LIQUID SUPPLEMENTS**
 - If your child is experiencing dehydration caused by diarrhea, health workers may recommend a supplement in liquid form.
- MEDICINE FOR INTESTINAL WORMS**
 - Children can sometimes be infected with intestinal worms that make it so they can't absorb nutrients from food.
 - Health workers may give your child medicine to prevent or eliminate these worms.
- MEDICINE FOR OTHER CONDITIONS OR DISEASES**
 - Health workers may identify other conditions or diseases that could be impacting your child's nutrition, such as a respiratory illness, malaria, or other infectious disease.
 - Health workers may recommend medicines or shots to treat these diseases.
 - Health workers may also recommend immunizations to prevent common diseases that can impact a child's nutrition.

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LEARN MORE

Learn more about malnutrition treatments and other ways to improve child nutrition: ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



Recognizing Signs of Malnutrition

Malnutrition is a serious condition that can keep a child from developing properly and reaching his or her full potential. Our goal as leaders and ministering brothers and sisters is to teach families how to know if their child is malnourished and how to identify steps they can take to help their child.

KEY POINTS

- **Malnutrition can have severe consequences** on children's health, physical and mental development, and overall well-being. In severe cases, malnutrition can become a life-threatening condition.
- **Detecting and addressing signs of malnutrition** can save a child's life and enhance his or her potential.
- **It is not always obvious when a child is malnourished.** In some places, the symptoms of malnutrition are so common that they may seem normal. Learning common signs of malnutrition can help discover it.
- **Parents are key in helping a child who is malnourished.** Once they become informed, they can take the necessary steps to improve their child's nutrition. Others may assist and teach parents in these efforts.
- **Professionals and volunteers can use measurements** to determine if the child's growth and weight are normal for his or her age and height. Professionals can also use other assessments to determine level of malnutrition.
- **A child who shows signs of malnutrition should be seen by a health professional** who can determine if the child is malnourished and inform parents about what the child needs to recover.
- **It is also important to consider that a malnourished child will have a weakened immune system** that will make him or her more prone to diseases. These diseases can also affect how his or her body absorbs and uses nutrients, making malnutrition worse. Treating malnutrition will help end this vicious cycle.
- **Stunting** is caused by chronic or persistent malnutrition that slows normal growth and development, especially during the first years of life, resulting in stunted growth and reduced mental ability. These children are too short for their age.
- **Wasting** is an acute malnutrition or a sudden weight loss that leads the body to break down its own muscle for energy. A wasted child is too thin for his or her height. This form of malnutrition is associated with increased risk of death. Treatment is required immediately.



Become familiar with the information in the "Recognizing Signs of Malnutrition" one-page handout for families.

Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- How prevalent is malnutrition in my area?
- If I notice that a child has signs of malnutrition, how can I help?
- If parents in my area have a child with signs of malnutrition, where can they go to get help from a medical professional or certified nutritionist?



Inspiration from Church Leaders

“Jesus was perceptive, and so are you. We can only know the true needs of our children if we perceive them. We must listen, observe and see” (Rebecca L. Craven, in “Child Nutrition Program Helps Hundreds of Children and Mothers in the Philippines,” Sept. 21, 2022, newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

THINGS WE CAN DO

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

Leaders

- Be mindful of what parents may be facing. They may feel hopeless about getting the right food or not having the resources to feed their children. Be sensitive to those feelings, and show love, kindness, compassion, and a sincere desire to support them. Always look for the guidance of the Holy Ghost to guide these efforts.
- Organize workshops to teach parents how to recognize common signs of malnutrition in children. Be careful not to embarrass or point out a certain child or family in front of others.
- Identify nutrition or health screenings available locally.
- Help parents get the medical attention needed for their child. Every malnourished child should receive medical attention. If a family cannot afford it, the bishop may consider using fast offering funds.
- Where medical professionals are not available locally, counsel with stake and area leaders to see what resources may be available through the Church.
- The Relief Society presidency may consider hosting lessons for parents in their ward on what children should eat to prevent malnutrition. See the Unit Leader Guide “Healthy Eating for Children”.
- If you have a serious concern about a child, pray and counsel with other leaders in your ward or stake to know what to do to help him or her.



Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- When appropriate, teach the signs of malnutrition while ministering to families.
- Observe circumstances to learn the needs of families. Report needs to elders quorum and Relief Society presidents.
- Share other resources with parents, such as the “Healthy Eating for Children” handout.

Recognizing Signs of Malnutrition

- Malnutrition can severely affect your child's health and development.
- Detecting and addressing signs of malnutrition can save a child's life and enhance his or her potential.
- This document addresses two forms of malnutrition: wasting and stunting.

SIGNS OF MALNUTRITION:
Review the signs of malnutrition below to become familiar with what to watch for in your child. These signs do not represent every sign that may occur, and different children could present different signs.

<p>ENERGY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of energy • Dizziness • Weakness 	 <p>APPEARANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry, breakable hair; lightening of color, hair loss • Sunken eyes, hollow cheeks • Swollen, bleeding gums; bleeding teeth • Swollen abdomen, small legs, and arms • Numbness and swelling in hands and feet • Dry, scaly skin, bruising easily, swelling under the skin (edema)
<p>BODY'S DEFENSE SYSTEM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently ill • Frequent diarrhea • Slow wound healing • Long recovery times 	 <p>CONCENTRATION AND MOOD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty concentrating • Slow to react • Easily irritated
<p>Take the Next Steps</p> <p>It is not always easy to detect if a child is malnourished. They can look like other children in the area. If you believe your child could be malnourished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with a health professional. A professional can determine your child's nutritional status and provide additional guidance. • Meet with your Relief Society or Elders Quorum president to ask for guidance and help if needed. They can support you and help you find resources from the community and the Church to meet the nutritional needs of your child. 	

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Recognizing Signs of Malnutrition

Share this handout with members of your stake and ward. It provides useful information and suggestions for families.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about recognizing signs of malnutrition and other ways to improve child nutrition:
ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



Introduction for Families

Jesus welcomed children to come to Him, blessed them, and prayed for them. He said to the Nephites, "Behold your little ones" (3 Nephi 17:23). In our efforts to help our children grow up healthy, we follow Christ's example of tender care.

GOOD NUTRITION HELPS CHILDREN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

As children grow, they need the right type and amount of food for their bodies and brains to develop properly. This is especially crucial from the start of the mother's pregnancy until the child is five years old. Good nutrition makes it possible for children to think clearly, do well in school, and fight off disease. These benefits last a lifetime.

YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD HAVE GOOD NUTRITION AND HEALTH

To help parents raise healthy children, the Church has prepared the short information sheets in this book. These guides cover topics such as food for children and preventing disease. They offer practical ways you as a parent can help your child grow up with a healthy foundation.

You don't have to use all this information at once. Focus on what matters most to you and work one step at a time. Remember that Heavenly Father loves your children as you do, and He will guide your efforts.

Family Guides

Healthy Brain Development for Children

The most important period for a child's brain development is from the time of conception to ages 2-3. A child's relationships and everyday experiences help shape the brain's development. Responsive parenting, two-way interactions, and chances to learn through play are key.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO:



LOVE

- Show interest in your child.
- Make eye contact and smile often.
- Hold, cuddle, and kiss your child.
- Notice and help when your child is hungry, tired, hurt, or sad.
- Show your love often.



TALK

- Talk to your child starting at birth.
- Have two-way interaction with your baby by repeating sounds he or she makes.
- Speak slowly and with expression.
- Talk about what your child is seeing or doing. Name things.
- Read books or show pictures.



PLAY

- Give your child safe and interesting things for play and exploration.
- Safe, clean household items like cups, spoons, and containers can be used for play.
- Play games together with back-and-forth interaction, like covering and then uncovering your face ("peek-a-boo") or rolling a ball.
- Let the child follow their own curiosity and interests in play.
- Find safe places to play outside.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding has benefits for children and mothers. Some of the benefits for children are:

- Breast milk contains all the essential nutrients your baby needs until 6 months of age.
- It provides enough hydration until the baby is 6 months old.
- It supports healthy brain development.



WHEN SHOULD I START BREASTFEEDING?

- Start Breastfeeding within an hour of birth.
- This first milk provides protection to your baby against infectious diseases.
- Consider that each mother's experience is unique and does not always go perfectly.
- Breastfeeding is a learned process. It can take some time for you and your baby to adjust to it.



HOW LONG SHOULD I BREASTFEED?

- If possible, breastfeed your baby for at least the first year of life. Continuing until the child is 2 brings added health benefits.



SHOULD I GIVE WATER TO A BABY YOUNGER THAN 6 MONTHS OLD?

- No. Adding water before this age increases the risk of diarrhea and malnutrition.



WHEN SHOULD I START GIVING OTHER FOODS TO MY BABY BESIDES BREASTMILK?

- Starting at six months, other foods should be added.
- If possible, exclusively breastfeed during the first six months.



WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM NOT ABLE TO BREASTFEED?

- If you find that you are not able to breastfeed, there are still ways you can bond with and nurture your baby.
- Although it does not contain all the benefits of breast milk, infant formula can be used as a substitute when needed.
- Prepare it with clean drinking water and follow the instructions in the package.
- Contact your clinical provider.



WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING?

- You can see and hear the baby swallowing.
- There is a rhythmic suck.
- Baby's arms and hands are relaxed.
- Diapers are regularly soaked.
- Stool changes from dark to light brown by day 3.



Healthy Eating for Children

To develop well, young children need the right types of foods.
 Different foods help the body in different ways.
 It's not enough just to have a full belly.

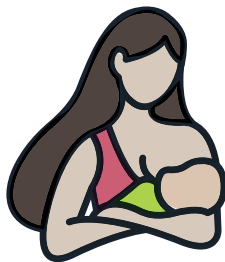


4 GOOD WAYS TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S NUTRITION:

1

BREASTFEED BABIES (IF POSSIBLE) FOR AT LEAST A YEAR

- Two years is even better.
- Add other foods starting at 6 months.



2

GIVE YOUR CHILD SOME FRUITS AND VEGETABLES EACH DAY

- Fruits and vegetables help with many body processes and help prevent disease.

Foods like:



green leafy vegetables



banana



tomato



mango

3

GIVE YOUR CHILD SOME PROTEIN FOOD EACH DAY

- Protein helps the body grow and repair itself.

Foods like:



dry beans



fish



nuts



eggs



poultry

4

DON'T GIVE CHILDREN LOTS OF SALTY OR SUGARY FOODS AND PACKAGED SNACKS

- These foods don't have the nutrients children need.
- Eating too much of them can also damage children's health.

Foods like:



cookies



chips



candy



sugary drinks

Grains and Starchy Foods

Grains and starchy foods like rice noodles, bread, tortillas, and potatoes are often eaten at every meal. They give the body energy. But they don't give all the nutrition that is needed.

Fruits and vegetables and protein foods need to be added.



pasta



bread



rice



potatoes, sweet potatoes

Also follow any recommendations you have received from a health professional.

Healthy Eating for Children

Small changes in eating can make a big difference to a child's health.

Fruits and Vegetables

To start, try to give your child a fruit or vegetable once a day.
(A portion is about the size of your child's fist.)

What are some fruits and vegetables you could use?

How could you get them?

When you can, give your child fruits or vegetables at every meal. It is good if a child can get 5 portions of fruits or vegetables a day.

Protein Foods

To start, try to give your child a protein food once a day.
(A portion is about the size of your child's fist.)

What are some protein foods you could use?

How could you get them?

When you can, give your child a protein food at every meal.

Other ideas or questions

If your family is having problems getting these foods, please talk with your ministering brothers or sisters.

Food Journal

Child's Name _____ Child's Age _____

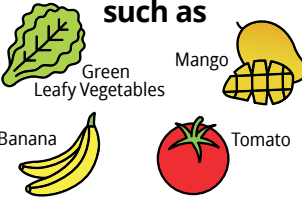
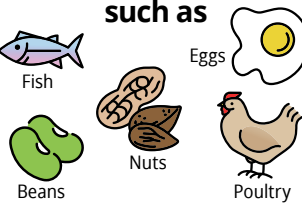
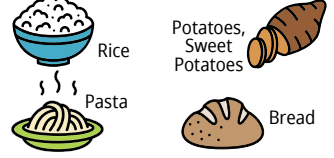
This is a place for you to record the foods your child eats. If you like, you can use it to see your progress toward better nutrition for your child. You can get extra copies from your Relief Society.

FOR EACH DAY, THERE IS ONE ROW

Starting with day 1, write down each food your child ate that day. Write the food in the correct space to show what type of food your child ate.

The yellow row is an example showing how to mark the chart

- A child ate some rice in the morning. Rice is a **grain**. The parent wrote "rice" under the **Grains and Starchy Foods** column for that day.
- Later that day the child ate some banana and an egg. The parent wrote "banana" under **Fruits and Vegetables** for that day. They also wrote "egg" under **Protein Foods**.
- The child ate rice for dinner. The parent wrote "rice" again under **Grains and Starchy Foods**.

	Fruits and Vegetables such as 	Fish and Other Proteins such as 	Grains and Starchy Foods such as 
Example day	banana	egg	rice rice
Day 1 date:			
Day 2 date:			
Day 3 date:			
Day 4 date:			

How many days did your child eat a fruit or vegetable?
 How many days did your child eat a protein food?
 What would you like to do next to improve your child's nutrition?

Gardening

Children need to eat fruits and vegetables every day. Growing some food for your family can improve your children's health.

HERE ARE SOME STEPS YOU CAN FOLLOW:



1

▶ 1. LEARN HOW TO GROW FOOD SUCCESSFULLY IN YOUR AREA

- It helps to know the best way to grow food in your climate and type of soil.
- Government agriculture specialists are a good resource. Local Church leaders may also suggest resources.
- Friends, neighbors, or Church members with gardening experience may be helpful.



2

▶ 2. CHOOSE WHAT TO GROW

- Choose plants that grow well in your climate and soil, and in the space you have.
- Choose foods your family will eat.



3

▶ 3. FIND A GOOD PLACE

- Find a sunny place. Vegetable plants need about 6 hours of sunlight a day.
- Choose a place you can get water to.
- You can also plant in containers such as buckets, pots, or large cans. Make sure there is a way for water to drain out.



4

▶ 4. PREPARE THE SOIL BEFORE PLANTING

- Dig to break up chunks of soil.
- Add fertilizer or other materials to your soil if needed.



5

▶ 5. WATER IS KEY

- Make sure your plants get enough water.
- Learn how to tell when your plants need more water.

What is a first step you could take to grow some fruits or vegetables?



Safe Drinking Water

Clean drinking water is important because it helps keep our bodies healthy and working properly. Unclean water can cause stomach pain, diarrhea, and other diseases.

Check your water supply to see if it is clean and safe to drink.
If it's not, here are some things you can do to make sure you have safe water:



ASK OTHERS

- Community and Church leaders can help you find safe water.



PURIFY WATER

- You can purify water by boiling, filtering, disinfecting, or evaporating.
- You can also collect clean rainwater or use solar purification.



USE SAFE BOTTLED WATER

- Bottled water is usually safe if the seal on the lid has not been broken.
- Bottled water is unsafe if the bottle has been refilled with unclean water.



USE SAFE WELL WATER

Well water is usually safe if the well:

- Is deep, covered, and cleaned often.
- Does not have any damage or leaks.



STORE WATER SAFELY

- Use clean containers with a lid that can close tightly.
- Don't store water in sunlight.



USE CLEAN WATER FOR EVERYTHING THAT ENTERS YOUR BODY OR TOUCHES YOUR FOOD

- Brushing teeth
- Making juice or infant formula
- Washing food or dishes



SEE A DOCTOR

If you think your drinking water is making you sick, see a doctor.



Healthy Teeth

Healthy teeth are important for young children's overall development. Parents play a vital part in making sure their children's teeth are healthy.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO:



DON'T LET BABIES FALL ASLEEP WHILE DRINKING FROM A BOTTLE

- Falling asleep with a bottle containing juice or milk in the mouth is the leading cause of tooth decay in young children.
- Children should not go to bed with a bottle unless it's water.



START BRUSHING WHEN THE FIRST TOOTH APPEARS

- Dental disease can start at a young age, so start brushing your child's teeth as soon as they appear (usually around six months).
- Use a small amount of toothpaste with fluoride if possible. For children two years old and younger, use a dab of toothpaste the size of a grain of rice; for three years old and older, the size of a pea.



START FLOSSING EARLY

- When a child has teeth that touch each other (usually between two and six years old), it is good to start using dental floss, if available.
- Flossing helps remove little pieces of food from areas that brushes cannot reach.
- It is important that children get used to teeth flossing early in their lives.



AVOID SUGARY SNACKS AND DRINKS

- Snacking often on sugary foods damages the outer layer of teeth and causes cavities.
- If cavities are untreated, they can cause pain and serious infections.



GET CHECKUPS FROM A DENTIST

- Dentists can identify and treat small problems before they become more serious.
- If needed, look for low- or no-cost dental clinics in your area.



Handwashing

Proper handwashing helps reduce the spread of diseases

WASH HANDS:

- Before, during, and after preparing food.
- Before eating food.
- After using the toilet or evacuating waste.
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet.
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste.
- After playing or swimming.



1
wet

1. WET

- Wet hands with clean, running water.



2
soap

2. SOAP

- Apply soap.



3
rub

3. RUB

- Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds.
- Make sure to rub soap on the front and back of your hands, between fingers, and under nails. (Count or sing a children's song)



4
rinse

4. RINSE

- Rinse all the soap off with clean water.



5
dry

5. DRY

- Air dry hands or use a clean towel.

If clean water and soap are not available, try to use hand sanitizer. Cover hands and rub together briskly until it dries.



Safe Human Waste Practices

Toilets come in all shapes and sizes. No matter what type of toilet you use, these practices will help your family avoid illnesses related to unsafe human waste disposal.



FLUSH TOILET

1. Try not to touch extra surfaces.
2. Sit on the toilet like a chair.
3. Use toilet paper to wipe yourself clean.
4. If possible, put the toilet paper in the toilet. Otherwise put it in the trash.
5. Always flush the toilet.
6. Throw away trash.
7. Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds.



SQUAT TOILET

1. Bunch your clothes around your knees.
2. Squat above the toilet without touching it.
3. Use toilet paper to wipe yourself clean.
4. If possible, put the toilet paper in the toilet. Otherwise put it in the trash.
5. If possible, flush the toilet.
6. Throw away trash.
7. Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds.



OPEN OR NO TOILET

1. Pick a site far from people, houses, and water.
2. Dig a hole 15 cm deep.
3. Squat over the hole.
4. Use toilet paper or soft leaves to wipe yourself clean.
5. Place paper or leaves in the hole. Fill with dirt, mud, and rocks.
6. Make sure there are no traces of waste.
7. Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds.



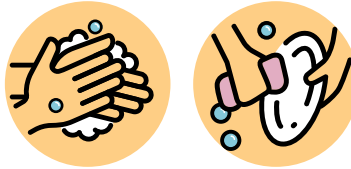
Safe Food Preparation

People can get sick from germs that aren't visible where food is prepared.

HERE ARE FIVE WAYS TO PREVENT DISEASE:

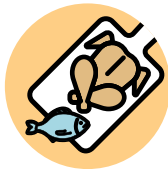
KEEP CLEAN

- Wash hands before, during and after preparing food.
- Always wash hands after using the toilet.
- Wash work surfaces and cooking equipment.
- Keep animals and insects away.



SEPARATE RAW FROM COOKED

- Keep raw meat, fish, and poultry separate from other foods.
- Don't use the same knife or cutting surface for raw meats and other foods.



COOK THOROUGHLY

- Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, eggs, and seafood.
- Let foods like soups and stews boil before eating.



KEEP FOOD AT SAFE TEMPERATURES

- Keep cooked food hot until it is eaten (60° C/140° F).
- Don't keep cooked foods at room temperature for over 2 hours.



USE SAFE WATER AND FOODS

- In cooking, use water that is safe to drink.
- Wash raw vegetables and unpeeled fruits before eating.



Adapted from the Food Safety Poster, World Health Organization (WHO/SDE/PHE/FOS/01.1)

<https://www.who.int/teams/nutrition-and-food-safety/multisectoral-actions-in-food-systems/five-keys-to-safer-food-poster>

Treatment is essential for a child with malnutrition

What to Expect When Being Treated for Malnutrition at a Health Clinic

Malnutrition can impact a child's brain development and physical growth. A child who is severely malnourished should be seen as soon as possible in a health clinic so they can get food supplements and other treatments.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE TREATMENTS YOU CAN EXPECT:



FOOD SUPPLEMENTS

- These are usually cereals, porridge, or other foods that have extra nutrients added to them.
- They might also be powdered supplements that you sprinkle on your child's food.
- On average, children eat these once a day for two to three months.



LIQUID SUPPLEMENTS

- If your child is experiencing dehydration caused by diarrhea, health workers may recommend a supplement in liquid form.



MEDICINE FOR INTESTINAL WORMS

- Children can sometimes be infected with intestinal worms that make it so they can't absorb nutrients from food.
- Health workers may give your child medicine to prevent or eliminate these worms.



MEDICINE FOR OTHER CONDITIONS OR DISEASES

- Health workers may identify other conditions or diseases that could be impacting your child's nutrition, such as a respiratory illness, malaria, or other infectious disease.
- Health workers may recommend medicines or shots to treat these diseases.
- Health workers may also recommend immunizations to prevent common diseases that can impact a child's nutrition.



Recognizing Signs of Malnutrition

- *Malnutrition can severely affect your child's health and development.*
- *Detecting and addressing signs of malnutrition can save a child's life and enhance his or her potential.*
- *This document addresses two forms of malnutrition: wasting and stunting.*

SIGNS OF MALNUTRITION:

Review the signs of malnutrition below to become familiar with what to watch for in your child. These signs do not represent every sign that may occur, and different children could present different signs.

ENERGY

- Lack of energy
- Dizziness
- Weakness



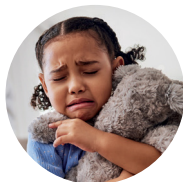
BODY'S DEFENSE SYSTEM

- Frequently ill
- Frequent diarrhea
- Slow wound healing
- Long recovery times



CONCENTRATION AND MOOD

- Difficulty concentrating
- Slow to react
- Easily irritated



APPEARANCE

- Dry, breakable hair, lightening of color, hair loss
- Sunken eyes, hollow cheeks
- Swollen, bleeding gums; decaying teeth
- Swollen abdomen, small legs, and arms
- Numbness and swelling in hands and feet
- Dry, scaly skin, bruising easily, swelling under the skin (edema)



APPETITE

- Reduced appetite
- Lack of interest in food and drinks



Take the Next Steps

It is not always easy to detect if a child is malnourished. They can look like other children in the area. If you believe your child could be malnourished:

- **Consult with a health professional.**
A professional can determine your child's nutritional status and provide additional guidance.
- **Meet with your Relief Society or Elders Quorum president to ask for guidance and help if needed.**
They can support you and help you find resources from the community and the Church to meet the nutritional needs of your child.

