CHILD CARE

A baby is helpless. It depends completely on his or her mother or any other person taking care of him or her to meet his or her needs. The care given to a baby influences his or her development. The care required by a child includes love and warmth, good food, clothing, good health, bath, play or exercises, immunization, etc.

Breast Feeding

Baby needs good food that can promote growth and development. Poor feeding in infancy can retard growth. A baby can be fed with the breast or a feeding bottle.

Breast feeding is the natural way to feed a baby. It can be started immediately after birth. A baby can be fed exclusively on breast milk form birth to six months.

Breast milk contains all the nutrients needed by a baby more than any other food. It is easily digested and absorbed by the baby. It is sterile and contains antibodies which protect the child against disease infection. Colostrum is the name given to the first milk produced in first few days.

Guidelines for Breast Feeding

The mother has to wash her hands and clean the breast before feeding the baby. She ought to sit comfortably and carry the baby close to herself. With the breast held properly (and away from the baby's nose), the baby would feed. Wind the baby after feeding and clean the nipples.

Artificial or Bottle Feeding

This is the process of feeding a baby with artificial milk, often through a feeding bottle. There are different brands of baby's milk or infants' formula in the market. They are commonly made from cow-milk. It is best to breast-feed babies, however, there are times when it becomes necessary to bottle feed them. For instance, when mother is working full-time outside the home; when there are multiple births (e.g. twins or triplets) and the mother's milk may not be sufficient for the babies; when mother

cannot produce enough milk; or when mother is sick and cannot breast feed.

Artificial feeding is expensive. The milk can easily be contaminated by disease germs. It requires elaborate preparation and sterilization of feeding unit. It does not make for close contact between mother and child.

Guidelines for Bottle Feeding

At first, boil all water that would be used for preparing the baby's food. Sterilize the baby's feeding unit. Follow the manufactures instructions found on the back of the milk tin for the preparation of baby's food. Wash your hands, then prepare the baby's food. The food should be made up when it is required. It should not be made before time. The teat of the feeding bottle must be suitable for the baby.

Care of the Feeding Bottle

1. Provide a special suitable container (unit) for storage of the feeding bottles, etc. Plastic container is the best.
2. Wash the feeding bottle immediately after meal as follows:
   i. Unscrew the feeding bottle.
   ii. Rinse bottle, teat, screwing and the cap with clean water.
   iii. Wash the rinsed articles with soap water and bottle brush, then rinse.
   iv. Pour enough clean water into the unit. Add teaspoonful of Milton for every litre of water. Common salt can be used in place of Milton.
   v. Completely immerse the bottle, teat, cap, and screw ring into the sterilizing solution.
   vi. Add feed time, remove the items and simply drain. Do not rinse.
   vii. Change the solution every morning.