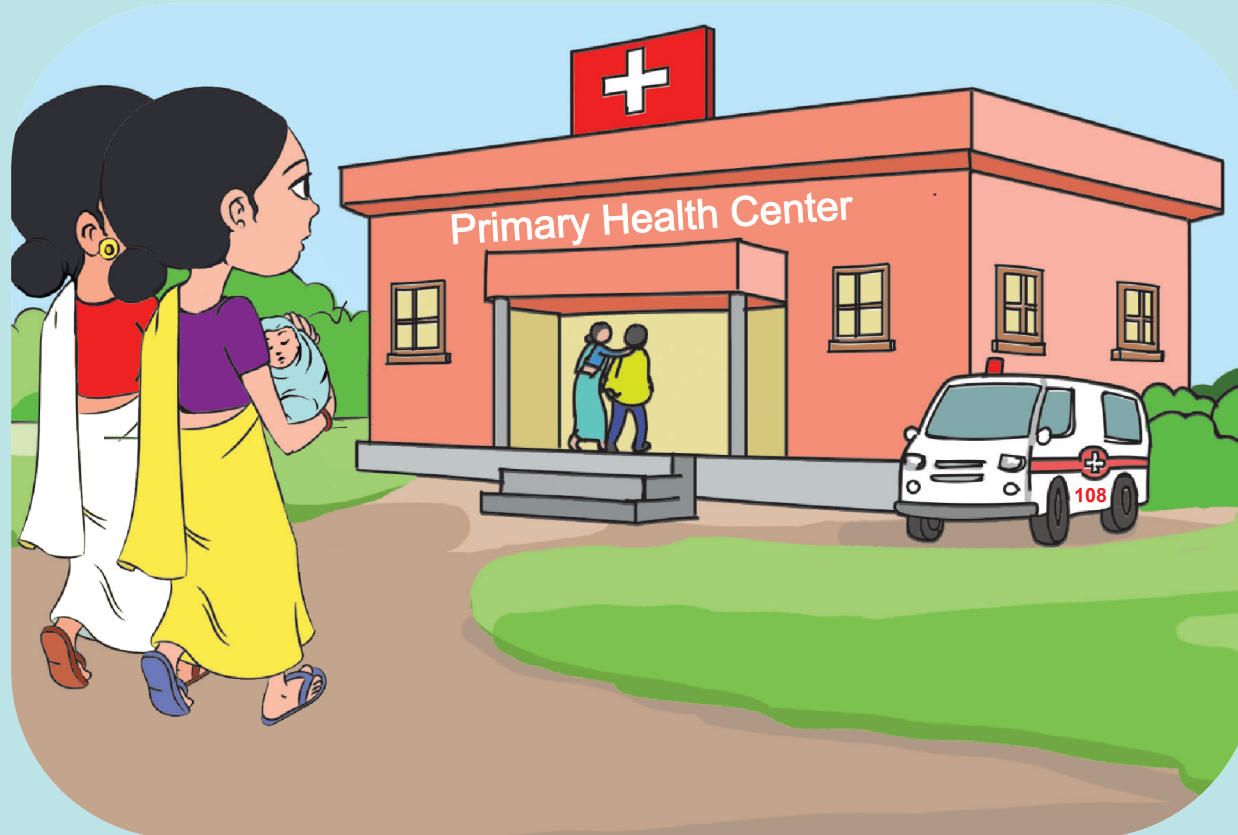


# Identification and referral of sick newborn



Ministry of Women & Child Development  
Government of India, 2018

17





# Why newborns are vulnerable to infections?



Display the card and ask the participants to read questions one by one. Let the discussion happen.

Try to remember when and why is the newborn most vulnerable to infections.



Help the participants to reach the correct responses by using the points given on the right side. Try to find out during the discussions if each participant has identified at least one weak newborn in her village.

## The first month of life is the most vulnerable period of life.

- New born babies are very prone to illnesses as their bodies have not yet learnt to fight infections. After spending nine months in the protection of the womb, where there are no germs, the baby suddenly comes out into a world that is not as clean.
- Weak newborns, whose birth weight is low, or who are born prematurely, have a higher chance of getting infection because their bodies are weaker than healthy newborn babies.
- The best protection for babies after birth is the breast milk from their mothers. The mother is an adult whose body has already learnt to fight infections. Feeding breast milk will transfer this ability to fight germs in newborns.
- Most of the weak newborns below 2 kg will lack stamina and energy to breastfeed in the first few days of life. Feeding them with cup or spoon will give more exposure for infection to spread if proper hygiene practices are not maintained. Weaker bodies and exposure to infections can develop very serious illnesses in newborns and that is why extra care of weaker newborns is crucial.

## What is the difference between weak and sick newborn?

We have learned earlier that a baby is considered weak if the birth was before completing 8.5 months or 37 weeks, if the birth weight was less than 2kg or if the baby was not able to suckle vigorously at the breast right from the first day. However if the baby who was feeding well for the first few days, but later has lost interest in breastfeeding and is looking less active has probably fallen sick.

It is important to understand the difference between weak and sick newborn because a weak newborn can be taken care of at home but the sick baby needs referral to the hospital. The babies can fall sick anytime after the birth however the chances of getting sick is higher in the first month after birth. Today we will learn more about sick newborns in this module.



10 Minute

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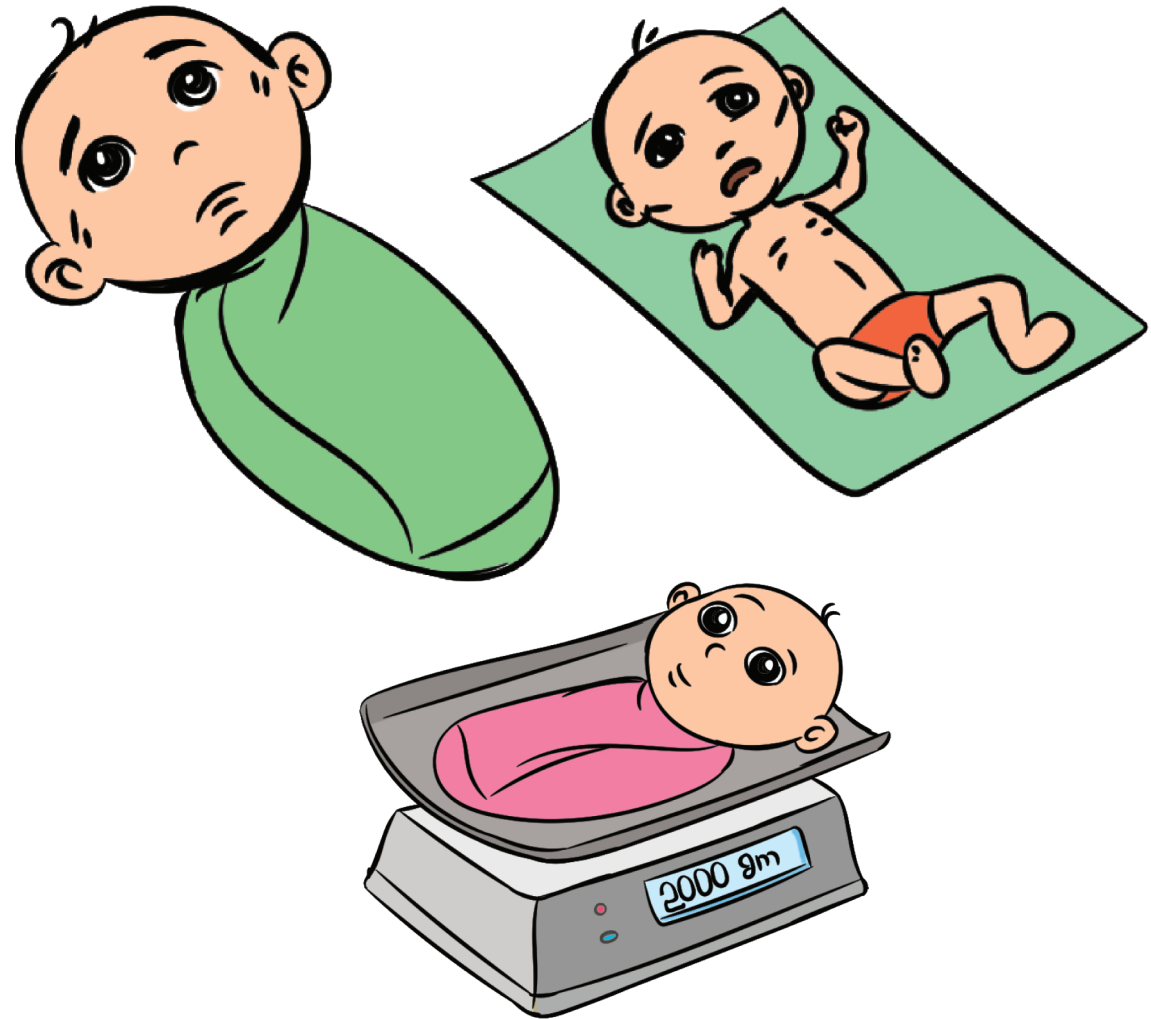
Identification and referral of sick newborn

F1

# Why newborns are vulnerable to infections?



- Are we visiting the families on first day of birth?
- How can we identify a weak newborn?
- Between a newborn and a weak newborn, who has the higher chance of falling sick?
- What is the difference between weak and sick newborn?





# What do we do to prevent the infections in newborn?

We have learned about essential new born care. Now let us try to remember why each of the newborn care practices is important.



**Display the card. Ask the participants to read each point, give them some time to respond. Use the points given on right side to facilitate the discussion.**

Try to remember, we had discussed about doing two home visits during the last trimester and another visit on the Day 1 of birth for ensuring newborn care.



**Ask the participants if they are doing these home visits?**

## Components of Essential New Born Care:

Once the baby is born and has cried, immediate newborn care includes three main actions for preventing infections i.e Breastfeeding, Warmth and Cord care, Hygiene and Clean Surroundings. While ensuring breastfeeding and warmth helps to protect newborns from infection, cord care and general hygiene and cleanliness will help in preventing infections among newborn. Let us understand more about this:

- **Providing timely and exclusive breastfeeding:** Breast milk protects the baby from infections, and the baby who is fed early gets this protection early. Babies who are breastfed early are also likely to be given only breastfeeding, and caretakers are likely to avoid giving other harmful liquids thus reducing chances of infections.
- **Ensuring that the baby is kept warm:** This is the period during which the baby is most likely to become cold if she is not kept adequately warm and can easily catch infections. Delayed bathing, skin to skin contact and keeping the baby adequately wrapped can protect baby from getting cold.
- **Ensuring clean handling of the baby and particularly of the umbilical cord:** Use of unsterile clamp or thread for tying the cord and unsterile blade or scissor for cutting the cord can cause infections in the baby. Similarly, applying unclean substances, like cow dung, to the cord or umbilicus can cause severe infections in the baby, which may lead to the baby's death. Nothing should be applied to the cord stump after the umbilical cord has been cut. Similarly, nothing should be applied to the umbilicus or the cord until it dries up on its own.

**Washing hands** is the single most effective way of preventing infection in newborns. Anyone who is touching the baby should wash hands with soap and water first. Remember the hand washing technique learned earlier.

Essential newborn care is also the best opportunity to identify babies who need more care. Babies who are born earlier than expected date of delivery or are too small have a higher chance of getting infection and need special care to survive.



15 Minute

M17

Identification and referral of sick newborn

F2



# What do we do to prevent the infections in newborn?



For Protection from infections-

- Breastfeeding
- Warmth

For Prevention from infections-

- Cord care, Hygiene and Clean surroundings

What did we decide to do to ensure immediate newborn care at birth?





# Sources of infection

We have learned how we can protect and prevent newborns from infections. **Now let us understand where does the infection come from.**



**Display the card and ask the participants to read each question.**

**Draw the attention of participants to the illustrations. Remind them about the discussions done in previous module and revise how does the infection spread, by making use of the points given on right side.**



**Tell the participants:**

Today we will learn about how does infection spread in newborns, in particular. Ask:

- So where does it come from?
- What can be applied on cord?
- What things should not be applied on cord?

**Encourage the participants to respond. Using the points on the right side, help the participants understand how does infection enter the body.**

- There are hundreds of thousands of different kinds of germs – small living creatures that our eyes cannot see. They are found everywhere, many of them live in air, water, bed, surface, our skin, mouth, clothes, body fluids etc.
- Some of them do not harm us, but there are about 100 kinds of other microorganisms that can cause infections, such as fever, diarrhea or cold and cough. Some can cause even more dangerous diseases like tetanus.
- Some of these germs get into our bodies from the food and water that we eat or drink, or from the air that we breathe. But we get many of them simply from our hands.
- **In the case of newborns, periods of labor, birth and immediately post-birth, are critical times for spreading infections. A baby can get infection**
  - Through unsterile clamp or thread used for tying the cord.
  - Through an unsterile blade or knife or other instrument use for cutting the cord.
  - Through application of things such as honey, ghee, turmeric, medicine, powder and specially harmful substances such as cow dung and urine, on the cord or umbilicus.
  - By wiping cord or umbilicus using unclean cloth.
  - Through unclean surroundings during delivery and at home.
  - By touching the baby with unclean hands while cleaning, breastfeeding or changing clothes of baby.
  - People who are sick with cold, cough, fever, skin infection etc can also easily transfer the infection to newborns.
  - By giving food and any fluids other than breastmilk may harm the baby as it may contain germs from water or from feeding bottles or utensils.



10 Minute

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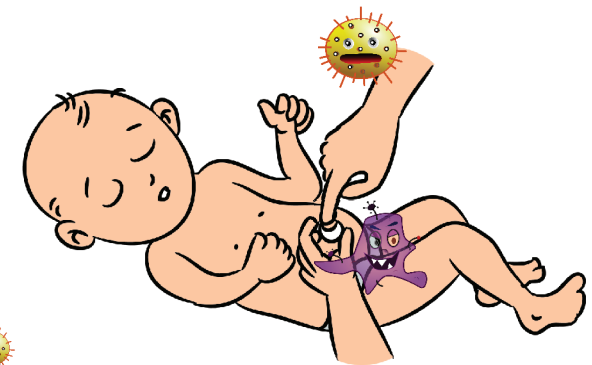
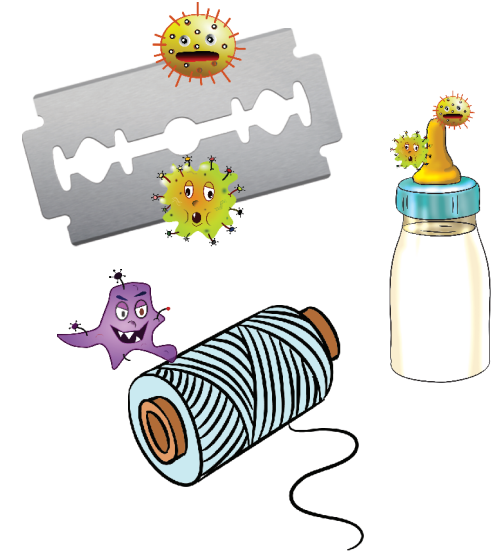
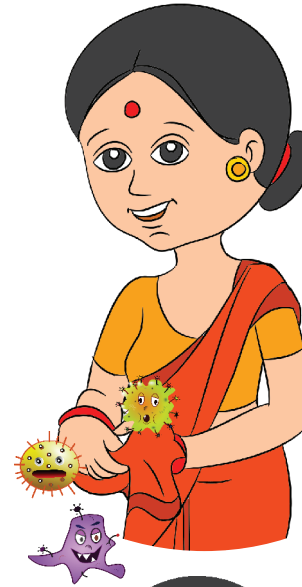
Identification and referral of sick newborn

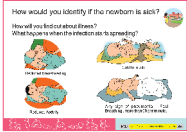
F3

# Sources of infection



- How many kinds of germs are there around us?
- Where does the infection spread from?
- From where and how does it enter the body in case of newborns?





# How would you identify if the newborn is sick?



Display the card and ask the first question. Explain about early symptoms by using text given on right side.



Now ask the second question and draw the attention of the participants to the illustrations. Explain about each danger sign with the help of illustrations and points given on the right side.

Emphasize that early recognition of these danger signs will help in identifying babies who need urgent care and treatment. Refer the baby if any of these 4 symptoms are visible.

## How will you find out about illness?

Some of the early symptoms to observe in newborns are redness or swelling near cord, smell from the cord with pus or blood discharge. Even if they are present or not the baby might have developed severe illness. It is difficult to identify illness by just looking at the cord, infection can enter and spread rapidly and baby will look overall sick. Early recognition of the danger signs will help in identifying those babies who need urgent care and treatment.

## What are the danger signs?

Danger signs indicate serious illness and it can occur in many illnesses. Every newborn should be assessed for the presence of the following danger signs-

**Reduced Breastfeeding:** If the baby was able to breastfeed properly for first few days but is showing the signs of reduced breastfeeding and disinterest, then the baby might be getting ill. It is important to keep observing such babies and refer them to hospital for treatment.

**Reduced Activity:** Does the baby look well? Observe his activity. A well baby will be active and alert when awake. If the baby was active earlier but is now looking dull, drowsy, lethargic and is waking up with difficulty even after stimulation or not waking up properly then the baby has serious illness.

**Cold to touch:** Check the baby's temperature; feel the temperature of baby's foot and see if it is cold to touch as compared to your own. If the baby's belly and feet are cold, the baby is too cold and may be very sick.

**Any sign of pneumonia:** Observe how the baby is breathing. Unwell baby may breathe too fast, have long pauses in his breathing or will have heavy breathing. If the rate of breathing is more than 60 breaths/ minute then it is not normal.

A sick newborn can become very sick rapidly and may not survive if there is a delay in recognition of symptoms or taking the baby to hospital. If any of these 4 danger signs is present, refer the newborn to the nearest facility where injectable antibiotics are available.

All small babies are at risk of developing serious illnesses and need continuous assessment for these signs.



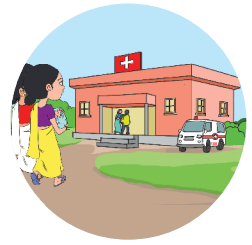
15 Minute

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Identification and referral of sick newborn

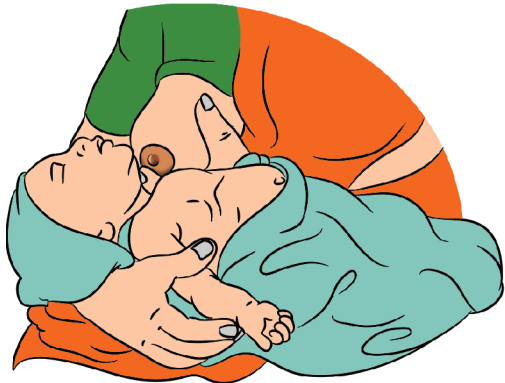
F4

# How would you identify if the newborn is sick?

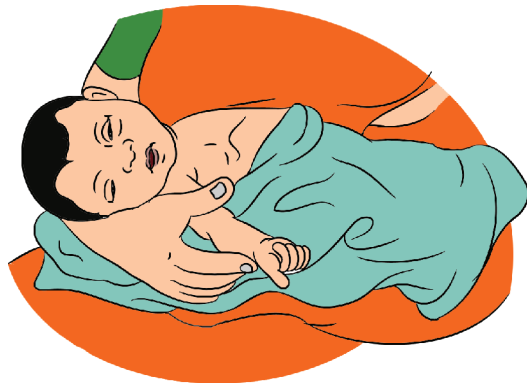


How will you find out about illness?

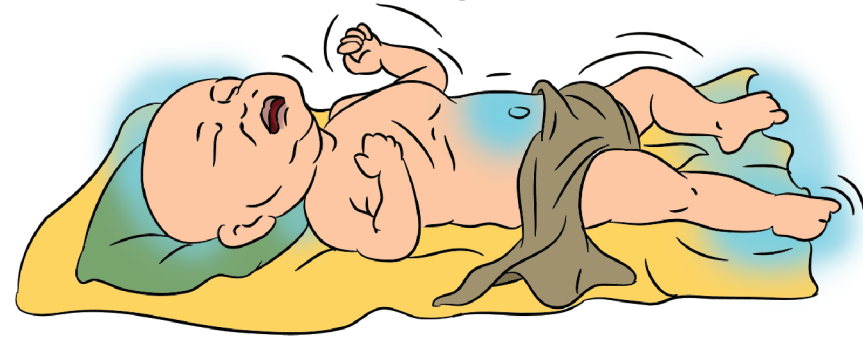
What happens when the infection starts spreading?



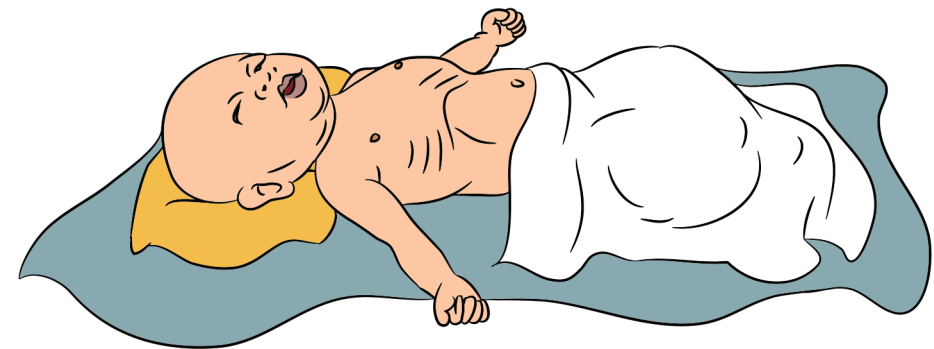
Reduced breastfeeding



Reduced Activity



Cold to touch



Any sign of pneumonia – Fast Breathing , more than 60 per minute.







# How can a sick child be saved from death?



**Display the card. Ask the participants to read the points one by one.**



**Tell the participants:**

It is very important to identify the hospitals where injectible antibiotics are available.

**Explain:**

The condition of sick newborn can worsen quickly so it is crucial to get the treatment at the earliest possible.



**Make use of the points given on right side to explain how a sick child can be saved.**

Danger signs in a baby point to life threatening conditions that can lead rapidly to death. Identifying such babies promptly and referring them to the identified facility right away can save their lives.

If any of the 4 danger signs are visible, the baby needs to be referred. Before referring the baby;

- Identify hospitals beforehand where the injectible antibiotics are available and where there will be trained manpower available for giving injections.
- Identify PHCs where the injectible antibiotics are available for treatment.
- Contact ASHA and ANM immediately for providing first dose of antibiotic.
- If ASHA is available she is supposed to give first oral dose of antibiotics before sending the baby to hospital.
- If ANM is available she is supposed to give first dose of injectible antibiotics before sending the baby to hospital.
- If ASHA and ANM are not available to give the first dose in one to two hours of identifying danger signs, then take the baby directly to hospital where injectible antibiotics are available.
- Arrange for the transport and advice mother to keep the baby warm through skin – to-skin contact while traveling to hospital.
- Prepare the family that if the baby is not feeding at all, she may require admission.

**Treatment:**

Currently the treatment available for treating sick newborn is by giving following antibiotics:

- Amoxycylin to be given orally
- Gentamycin to be given through intramuscular injections.

Most of the babies suffering from illness can be treated and saved by using this treatment.



**15 Minute**

**M17**

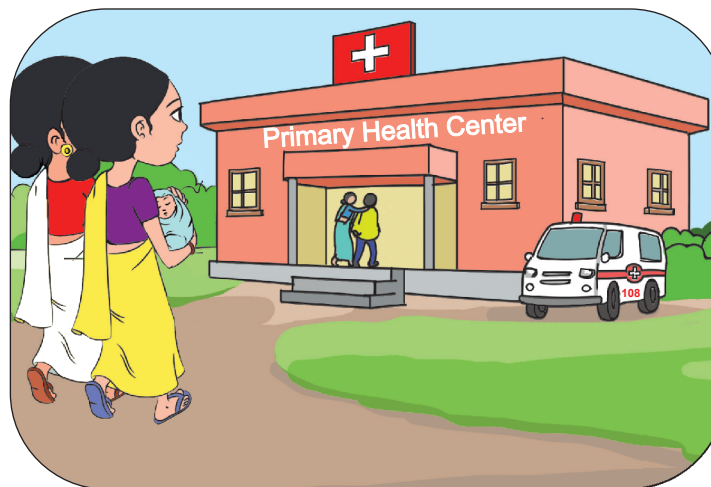
Identification and referral of sick newborn

**F5**

# How can a sick child be saved from death?



- Identification of hospitals where injectible antibiotics are available
- Contacting ASHA/ANM immediately.
- Referral to the nearest hospital
- If newborn is not feeding at all, she may require admission.



Where is such treatment available?

- ASHA to give first oral dose of antibiotic before referral
- Trained ANM to give injectible antibiotic
- Refer to PHCs where injectible antibiotics are available
- Hospital where injectible antibiotics are available.





# What can you do to identify sick children?



**Display the card.**



**Ask the participants if they have come across any sick child in the community. Let there be discussion.**



**Ask the participants to read the points one by one and explain each point with the help of text given on right side.**



**Emphasize**

It is important to teach mothers and caretakers to identify danger signs and what to do when this happens.

- The routine home visits will not be sufficient for identifying sick children at home. During home visits talk to the mother and ask her if she has noticed anything about the baby that concerns her.
- The newborn is delicate and can easily fall sick. These illnesses can also worsen quickly in all newborns, more so in case of weak newborns.
- Help mother to observe and assess her baby for danger signs as she will often be the first one to note any change in her baby's condition.
- While doing the basic examination of the baby on the Day 1 visit, teach the mother and care taker to make key observations and ask her to keep assessing the newborn regularly.
- Advise mother and care taker that if she has any concerns about the baby's health or if she notices any of the above signs in baby then she should inform the AWW, ANM or ASHA right away.
- If the AWW, ANM or ASHA are not available then the baby should be taken to nearest hospital without any delay.



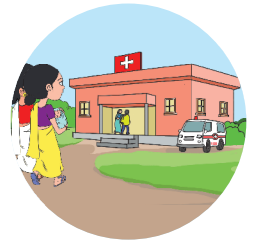
20 Minute

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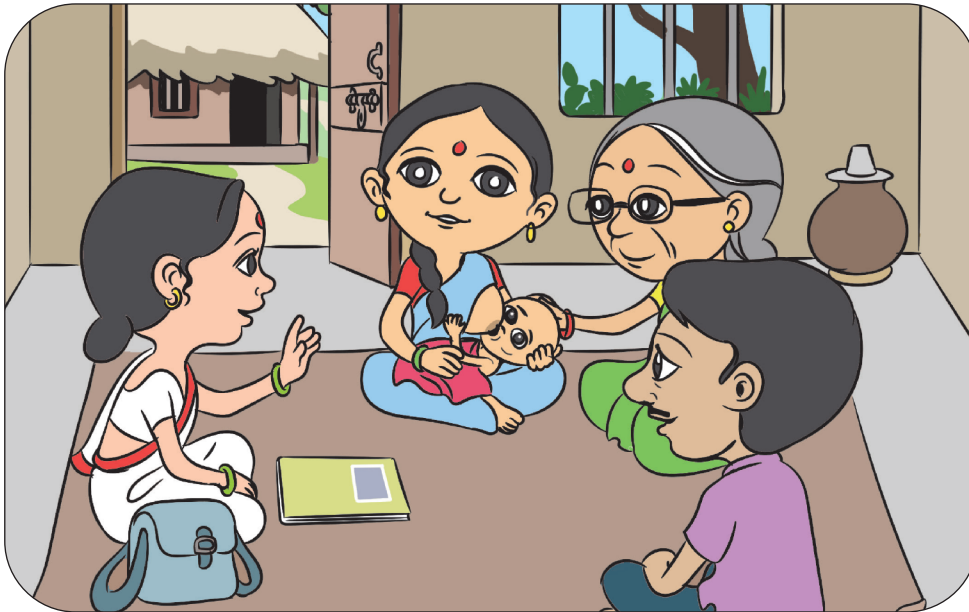
Identification and referral of sick newborn

F6

# What can you do to identify sick children?



- Child can fall sick at home and the sickness can worsen quickly



Educate family on the Day 1 visit about danger signs and treatment available



Routine home visits will not be sufficient. Enquire about the signs of illness during each home visit





# Summary



Display the card and summarize all the points.



Ask the participants to read the points one by one, ask if they have understood, and use content from the previous slides to explain wherever required.



15 Minute

M17

Identification and referral of sick newborn

F7

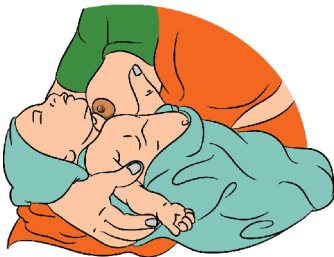


# Summary



- Newborns are vulnerable to infections and they can easily catch infections during birth and in the first month of life.
- Newborns can be protected from infections by ensuring breastfeeding and adequate warmth.
- One of the simplest ways to prevent from infection is by not applying anything to the cord and by washing hands before touching the baby.
- Weak newborns can be managed at home with extra care but sick newborns need hospital care.

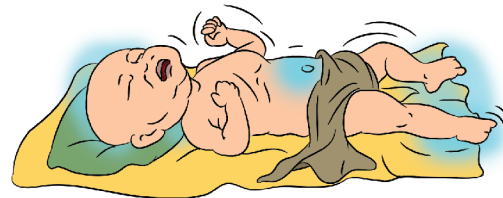
If any of these symptoms is visible, refer the baby to hospital where injectible antibiotics are available.



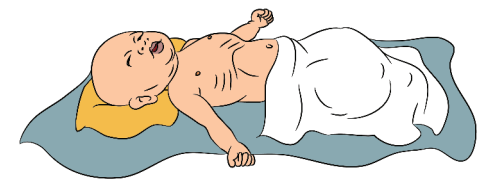
Reduced  
breastfeeding



Reduced  
Activity



Cold to touch



Any sign of pneumonia –  
Fast Breathing , more than  
60 per minute.

- Educate mother and care takers on how to identify danger signs and whom to contact in such situation.
- Ask the mother and care takers about signs of illness during the home visits





# Action Points



Display the card.

Ask the participants to read the point one by one.

Use previous cards to explain anything that is not clear.



10 Minute

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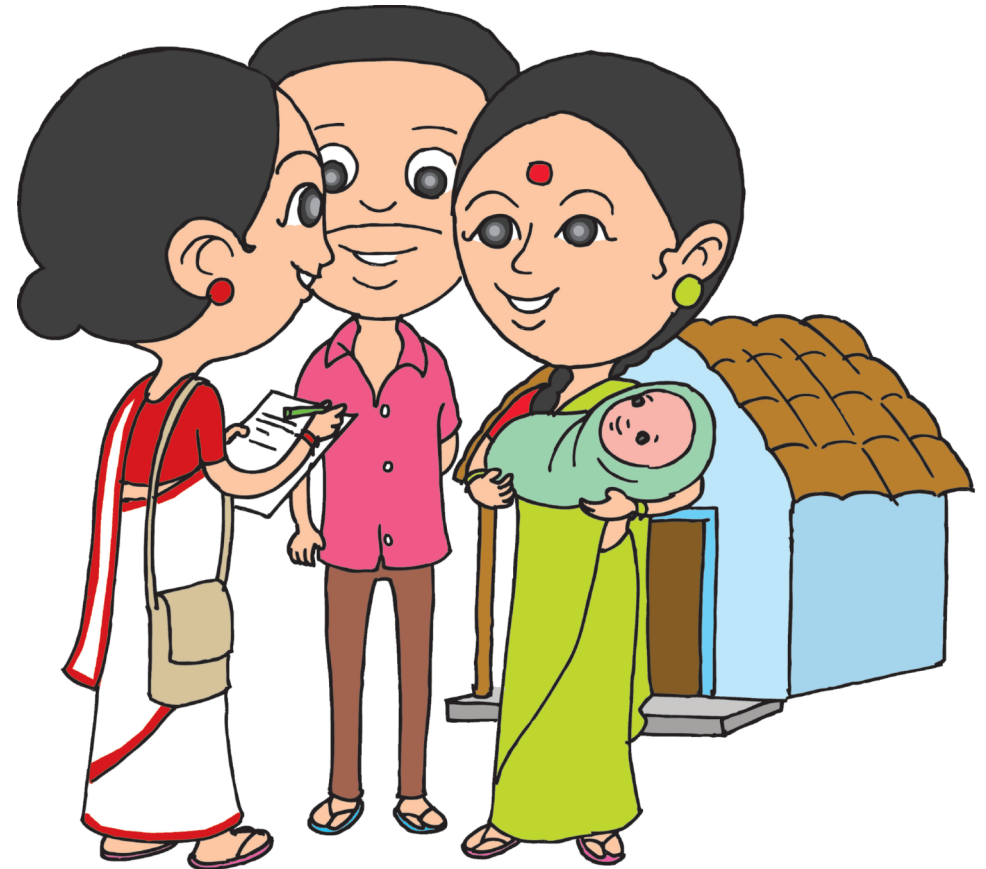
Identification and referral of sick newborn

F8

# Action Points



- During the Day 1 home visit- Educate mother and care takers about how to identify danger signs and whom to contact if any of these signs is visible.
- If not on Day 1, then try to visit at your earliest and educate mother and caregiver about danger signs.
- Identify the PHCs/hospitals in your area where injectible antibiotics are available for treatment.



- 1 *Why this Monthly Meeting ?*
- 2 *Making or updating Home Visit Planner & Initiating Home Visits*
- 3 *Planning and Organizing Community Based Events at AWC*
- 4 *Observing Breastfeeding in Newborn Babies - Why and How*
- 5 *Identification and Care of a Weak Newborn baby*
- 6 *Complementary Feeding: Diet Diversity*
- 7 *Preventing Anemia in Women*
- 8 *Assessment of Growth in Children*
- 9 *Ensuring that Complementary Feeding improves over time*
- 10 *Ensuring Exclusive Breastfeeding*
- 11 *Care of the Weak Newborn Baby - How many weak babies are we missing?*
- 12 *How to ensure timely initiation of Complementary Feeding*
- 13 *Identifying and preventing Severe Acute Malnutrition*
- 14 *Feeding During Illness*
- 15 *Supporting mothers with issues in Breastfeeding*
- 16 *How to take care of weak newborn with the help of Kangaroo Mother Care*
- 17 **Identification & Referral of Sick Newborn**
- 18 *Preventing illnesses to avert Malnutrition and Death*
- 19 *Prevention of Anemia in girls and adolescents*
- 20 *Birth Preparedness- For Institutional and Home Delivery*
- 21 *Preparation During Pregnancy: For NewBorn Care & Family Planning*

