



**Nutritious foods given often during and after illness are necessary for the child's recovery**

# Why

## do children need nutritious foods during and after illness for quick recovery?

Few Indian children are given fluids and foods according to recommended practices during and after illness; even among the most educated mothers, only one sick child in five is given more to drink to prevent dehydration.

Only one child in three aged 6 to 24 months with diarrhoea is treated with ORS; the use of zinc supplements is almost negligible.

Children need nutritious foods and fluids during and after illness to recover quickly

- Sick children need increased amounts of food and fluids but they have poor appetite; feeding them nutritious foods in small quantities and giving fluids often, including breastmilk, helps them recover faster.

Active and frequent feeding during and after illness helps break the vicious cycle of malnutrition and infection

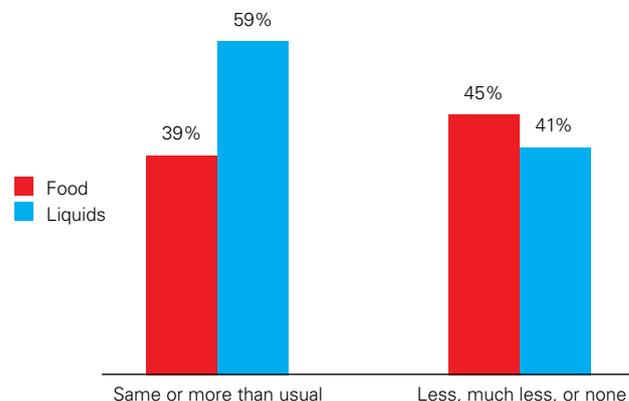
- Frequent episodes of illness can lead to a vicious cycle of infection and malnutrition and even result in death.
- Prompt treatment of illness and continuation of feeding, including breastfeeding, given frequently and actively (patiently) during and after illness are vital for children.

Oral rehydration salts with zinc supplements promote faster recovery during diarrhoea

- Diarrhoea is one of the most common causes of death among young children under five. Deaths from acute diarrhoea are most often caused by dehydration, the loss of fluids in the body.
- For the treatment of diarrhoea, oral rehydration salts (ORS) to replace lost fluids and zinc supplements to reduce the duration and severity of diarrhoea and the risk of it happening again within a short time are essential.

# Where are we today?

Feeding practices of children under age five with diarrhoea (%)



Source: NFHS-3, 2006

# How to ensure nutritious food, oral rehydration salts and zinc supplements for all sick children?

Promote awareness, increase policy focus

- Promote awareness on the importance of active and frequent feeding for children during and after illness.
- Advocate for the implementation of the national policy on ORS and zinc supplementation.

Harmonize communication, improve mothers' capability

- Harmonize communication efforts to promote frequent and active feeding for children during and after illness, including oral rehydration salts and zinc supplementation.
- Improve the capability of mothers to prevent and treat infections including diarrhoea by improving counselling and support to them on diarrhoea management and child feeding during and after illness.