

﴿And We reveal of
the Qu'ran that which
is a healing and a
mercy for believers﴾

Qu'ran 17:8 2



Faith for Life

Muslims Handbook

The first edition of the Faith for Life booklet was published
in 2010 with the support of UNICEF.

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ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

Health is a prerequisite for continuity of life and comfortable living. The Faith for Life (F4L) booklet is a compilation of appropriate health messages linked and backed by scriptures from our Holy books. The booklet has essential messages that religious leaders and faith communities need to know to intervene on:

- Health-seeking behaviour
- Maternal, child healthcare and nutrition
- Common childhood and immunizable illnesses
- HIV/AIDS
- Child Protection
- Water sanitation and hygiene
- Mental health and substance use disorders
- Disease surveillance and outbreak response
- Early childhood education.

The booklet supports and complements the efforts of the government in improving the health and well-being of children, mothers, youth and communities. Faith communities are urged to embrace these teachings that will help them overcome the many challenges faced by children, mothers, youth and communities.



HEALTH-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

Introduction

Health-seeking behaviour means any action undertaken by individuals who perceive themselves to have a health problem or to be ill for the purpose of finding an appropriate remedy or treatment by a qualified healthcare provider. Proper use of available healthcare services at our facilities e.g., immunization, family planning, antenatal and child welfare services for our wellbeing and enjoyment of good health, is part of health-seeking behaviours.

Key Messages

1. Always consult a qualified healthcare giver whenever you feel ill, in addition to prayer.
Are those who know equal to those who know not? (Quran 39:9).
2. Observe any unusual signs and or symptoms that could lead to illness and seek help from a health worker.
Whatever a disease that may be, Allah has created a medication for it (Hadith narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari).
3. Ensure regular visits to health facilities for professional care and health advice.
Yes, servants of God seek medical treatment. He also said (Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him): God has not created a disease without creating a cure for it.
4. The nurture and wellbeing of a child is a collective responsibility of both parents, where applicable.
"He is not of us who has no compassion for our little ones and does not honor our old ones." (Hadith narrated by Imam Al-Tirmidhi)



MATERNAL-CHILD HEALTH CARE & NUTRITION

a. Care of pregnant women

Nearly 5,000 women and girls die annually due to pregnancy and childbirth complications such as bleeding during or after delivery, obstructed labour, high blood pressure and infections like malaria, HIV and anaemia

Key Messages

1. Every woman should attend antenatal clinics as soon as she knows that she is pregnant.
There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm." (Hadith narrated by Ibn Majah and Imam Al-Daraqutni and others).
2. Every pregnant woman should be issued with the MCH Handbook and should bring it with her during clinic visits.
"Knowledge is a must for every Muslim by and girl" (Hadith narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari)
3. For the health of both mothers and children, a woman should wait until her last child is at least two years old before becoming pregnant again.
"Mothers should nurse their children for two full years – those who wish to complete the full term of nursing" (Quran 2:233).
4. All mothers, including those who deliver at home, should attend post-natal clinics for care within two days of delivery.
"Do not throw yourself into destruction" (Quran 2:195)

b. Newborn Care

Approximately 1,600,000 babies are born in Kenya annually, or around 4,300 every day, according to UNICEF (2022). Among young women aged between 20 and 24 years, 23 per cent gave birth by the age of 18. Approximately 92 babies will die each day before reaching their first month; while 96 stillbirths occur every day.

Newborns need round-the-clock care and love. They should be exclusively breastfed for six months, kept clean, warm and fed appropriately.

Key Messages

1. Every newborn should begin breastfeeding immediately after birth and continue exclusive breastfeeding for six months.
"Mothers should nurse their children for two full years – those who wish to complete the full term of nursing..." (Quran 2:233).
2. Every newborn should be checked by a health worker 24 hours after birth, during the first week and again six weeks after birth.
"Are those who know equal to those who know not" (Quran 39:9).
3. Every mother should look out for danger signs of illness in a newborn, for example refusal to feed, infection of the cord, fast breathing, lethargy (not active) and fever.
Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) said: *"Yes servants of God seek medical treatment. God has not created a disease without creating a cure for it."*

c. Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is an unequalled way of providing ideal food and care for the health, growth and development of the infant. WHO (2021) estimates that exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, can save the lives of at least 800,000 children annually. Continued breastfeeding for up to two years or more improves the health and development of millions of children.

Key Messages

1. All mothers should start breastfeeding immediately after birth.
*"And we inspired the mother of Musa (Moses) saying "Suckle him"
(Quran, 28:7).*
2. Continue breastfeeding exclusively (give breast milk only) for the first six months.
"Mothers should nurse their children for two full years – those who wish to complete the full term of nursing" (Quran 2:233).
3. After six months of exclusive breastfeeding continue breastfeeding as you give your baby other nutritious foods for the next two years and beyond.
Do not forbid yourself of wholesome things Almighty Allah has made lawful for you" (Quran, 5:87)



COMMON CHILDHOOD & IMMUNIZABLE ILLNESSES

Children are more prone to illnesses for a number of reasons, the major one being their low immunity. This is because they have limited exposure to illness and, therefore, haven't built the required immunity to fight infections. Major causes of death among children vary by age. Children under five years are especially vulnerable to infectious diseases like malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoea and many others. Despite being entirely preventable and treatable, common infectious diseases are still killing young children in large numbers in Africa.

a. Malaria

Malaria is a parasitic disease, typically characterized by shivering, chills alternating with fever, headache and nausea, and sometimes vomiting. Malaria is transmitted through mosquito bites. Sleeping under an insecticide-treated net is the best way to prevent the bites.

Key Messages

1. Seek correct treatment for malaria from a qualified health worker or an authorized health facility.
"There is no disease that Allah created, except that he also has created its treatment"
(Hadith narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari).
2. Everybody should sleep under an insecticide-treated net, especially pregnant women and children under five years who are at high risk.
The Prophet (Peace be upon Him) said: "Whatever the disease may be, Allah has created a medication for it"
(Hadith narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari).
3. Support preventive measures as recommended by health workers.
"No one of you is to urinate in the constant water which does not flow then showers in it"
(Narrated by Imam Muslim).
4. Support efforts to vaccinate all children as recommended by health workers.
"And if anyone saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind"
(Quran 5:32)

b. Pneumonia

Pneumonia remains the leading infectious cause of death globally among children under five, killing approximately 2,000 children a day (WHO, 2020). Kenya is currently ranked among the 15 countries with the highest estimated number of deaths due to pneumonia.

Key Messages

1. Ensure that your child completes all recommended immunisations.
“And if anyone saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of all man-kind (Quran,5:32).”
2. Whenever your child has a cough or difficulty in breathing and fever, they should be taken to a health provider for treatment.
In an authentic hadith, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) said: “Yes, servants of God! Seek medical treatment.”.
3. Ensure your house is properly ventilated and that there is free circulation of clean air.
The messenger of Allah (peace be upon Him) advised not to breath or blow in the pot.

c. Measles and rubella

Measles and rubella are contagious viral diseases that are highly spread through direct contact with saliva and mucus of an infected person or through droplets produced from coughing or sneezing. They are characterized by rashes, eye redness, headache and runny nose.

Key Messages

1. Ensure children receive two measles rubella doses at the recommended age.
Whatever a disease that may be, Allah has created a medication for it"
(Hadith narrated by Imam al-Bukhari).
2. Whenever a child develops skin rashes, red eyes, has a cough or fever they should be taken to a health provider for treatment.
"Indeed, lost are they who have killed their children foolishly without knowledge and have forbidden that which Allah has provided for them, inventing a lie against Allah. They have gone astray and were not guided"
(Quran 6:140).
3. Ensure children receive all other routine immunization as per the Ministry of Health recommended schedule.
"Whatever a disease may be, Allah has created a medication for it"
(Hadith narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari).

Recommended routine immunization schedule

Vaccine	Age	Diseases prevented	Route of administration
BCG	At birth, or two weeks after birth	Tuberculosis	Injection
Oral Polio Vaccines (OPV)	At birth, six weeks; 10 weeks	Polio	Drops to the mouth
Rotavirus	At six weeks; 10weeks	Diarrhea	Drops to the mouth
Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)	At 14 weeks	Polio	Injection
Pentavalent vaccine	At six weeks; 10 weeks; and 14 weeks	Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, whooping cough, meningitis, Haemophilus influenza Type B	Injection
Pneumococcal vaccine	At six weeks; 10 weeks; and 14 weeks	Pneumonia	Injection
Measles-rubella vaccine	At nine months; 18 months	Measles-rubella	Injection
Malaria vaccine(in selected counties)	At six months; 24 weeks	Malaria	Injection
Yellow fever vaccine (in selected counties)	At nine months	Yellow fever	Injection
HPV vaccine	Dose 1: At 10 -14 years; Dose 2: Six months after Dose 1	Cervical cancer	Injection



HIV & AIDS

HIV is transmitted through; Unprotected sex with an HIV-infected person; HIV-infected woman to her baby during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding; Blood from HIV-contaminated syringes, needles or other sharp instruments and from transfusion with HIV-contaminated blood.

Key Messages

1. Everybody is encouraged to take a HIV test to establish their status as the first step of prevention.

"And spend in the cause of Allah and do not throw yourselves into destruction and do good. Truly Allah loves good doers" (Quran 2:195).

2. People living with HIV should visit the nearest health facility for access to appropriate services and support.

In an authentic Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) said: "Yes servants of God seek medical treatment." He also said: "God has not created a disease without creating a cure for it."

3. HIV positive persons should adhere to their medications as prescribed.

"O Mankind; There has come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (disease)in your hearts-and for those who believe in guidance and mercy!" (Quran 10:57).

4. Everyone should show love and compassion to children and adults living with or affected by HIV.

"He is not of us who has no compassion for our little ones and does not honour our old ones" (Hadith narrated by Imam Al-Tirmidhi).

PREVENTION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION

Transmission of HIV from an HIV-positive mother to her child can happen during pregnancy, labour, delivery or breastfeeding. In the absence of any intervention, transmission rates range from 15 to 45 per cent and half of the babies infected with HIV die before they are two years old.

Key Messages

1. All pregnant women should attend at least eight antenatal clinics and ensure they get triple elimination services (prevention of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B).
“And do not kill yourselves nor kill one another, surely Allah is most merciful to you” (Quran 4:29).
2. Maternal syphilis is also associated with increased risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV during pregnancy, delivery and breastfeeding.
And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse. Verily, it is Fahishah — anything that transgresses its limits (a great sin) — and an evil way (that leads one to hell unless Allah forgives him) (Quran 17:32).
3. Children of HIV positive mothers can be prevented from getting HIV through the attendance of the synchronized mother-and-child clinics.
Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) said: “There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm” (Hadith narrated by Imam ibn Majah).
4. All pregnant women should ensure they deliver in a health facility (skilled birth delivery was at 62 per cent in 2015); if HIV positive, they should receive services to prevent the child from getting the HIV virus.
Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) said: “Yes servants of God seek medical treatment.”.
5. HIV positive mothers should exclusively breastfeed for six months and ensure the baby is on HIV drugs for the period recommended by the health care workers



CHILD PROTECTION

Child protection is the safeguarding of children from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. There are various harmful practices that injure the rights of the child including; child labor, violence against children, child marriage and female genital mutilation.

Key Messages

1. Always protect and promote the child's safety.
"Allah will on the day of judgement question each person in a position of responsibility about what he/she was responsible for (in this life) Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him).
2. Ensure justice for children by reporting child abuse offenders to the authorities and making follow-ups.
"Indeed, lost are they who have killed their children foolishly, without knowledge, and have forbidden that which Allah has provided for them, inventing a lie against Allah. They have gone astray and were not guided" (Quran 6:140).
3. Female mutilation is a harmful and dehumanizing practice.
"And when the female (infant) buried alive (as the pagan Arabs used to do) shall be questioned for what sin was she killed" (Quran 81:8-9).
4. Emphasize the importance of good parenting.
"No person shall have a burden laid on Him greater than he can bear. No mother shall be treated unfairly on account of her child, nor father on account of his child. And on the fathers heir is incumbent the like of that (which was incumbent on the father)" (Quran 2:233).



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Safe water, sanitation and hygiene are important to human health and well-being. They contribute to livelihoods, school attendance and reduce disease transmission, promote dignity and create healthy living environments for communities. Living in a clean and safe environment is everyone's right. Access to clean water and environment, and good hygiene practices not only keeps communities thriving but also gives them healthier lives.

Key Messages

Safe drinking water

1. Always collect and store drinking water hygienically.

"And we sent down from the sky water (rain) in due measure and we gave it lodging in the earth verily, we are able to take it away" (Quran 27:60).

2. Treat water by boiling, filtration, distillation and chlorination.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) said: "No one who wakes from sleep must put his hand into any utensil until he has washed it three times, as he does not know what his hand has touched."

3. Store water in clean, covered containers before drinking.

"He who amongst you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has no strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue; and if he has no strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor) it from his heart and that is the least faith" (Hadith narrated by Imam Muslim).

4. Ensure water sources are protected from contamination.

"There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm" (Hadith narrated by Imam Ibn-Majah and Imam-Daraqutni and others).

Key Messages

1. Wash your hands with clean water and soap after visiting the toilet and after cleaning a baby who has defecated or changing their nappy.
"Oh you who believe, when you prepare for prayers, wash your face; wash your hands and arms unto elbow. Rub your heads with water and wash your feet to the ankles" (Quran 5:6).
2. Wash your hands before handling food, cooking or eating.
"Cleanliness is part of Iman (faith)" (Hadith narrated by Imam Muslim).
3. Always use a toilet and keep it clean.
Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) prohibited urination and defecation anywhere near or in a water source such as wells, rivers and shores. He said: "Avoid three evils, defecation on water sources, shades and in the road." (Hadith reported by Abu-Hurairah)



MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

a. Mental Health

Mental health refers to our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It helps in determining how we relate to others, make choices and handle stress. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood to adulthood.

Key Messages

"There is no health without mental health"

1. Mental health is essential to both the individual and society.
"There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also created its treatment" (Hadith).
2. Hope is the beginning for a mental health system that is geared toward recovery.
"And if you would count the graces of Allah, never could you be able to count them" (Quran 14:34).
3. Early identification of mental illness is key in treatment and recovery.
"Verily in remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest" (Quran 13:28).
4. Know when and how to seek help from family, friends or professionals and provide referrals to others who need them.
"Praise be to Allah, who has removed from us {all} sorrow. Indeed, or Lord is forgiving and appreciative" (Quran 35:34).

b. Substance Abuse

Substance (drug) abuse is increasing in Kenya, especially among the youth. Current statistics indicate that more than half of drug users are aged between 10 and 19 years. The youth are the backbone of any country for socio-economic development and any disruption to the social fabric within this age group results in a decline in literacy levels, loss of productivity and, therefore, economic loss to the country.

Key Messages

1. Do not rely on self-medication as it could be the beginning of an addiction.
"So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are true believers" (Quran 3:139).
2. Prevention and awareness are the key to coping with the struggle in overcoming addiction.
"For indeed, with every hardship, there is relief" (Quran,94:5-6).
3. All it takes to overcome drug and alcohol addiction is focus, determination and hard work.
"Oh Allah, I seek refuge in you from grief and sadness, from weakness and from laziness, from miserliness and from cowardice from being overcome by debt and overpowered by men (Bukhari).
4. To reconfirm the confidence of the person, make them understand they are bigger than their problem.
"Allah does not burden a soul beyond what it can bear" (Quran 2:286).



DISEASE SURVEILLANCE & OUTBREAK RESPONSE

It is important for every community member to actively take up the role of identifying and reporting any health threats spotted within the community to the nearest health facility or health worker. Disease prevention and control are important in ensuring that the public remains healthy at all times. From time to time, the country is bound to face disease outbreaks and emergencies from both emerging and re-emerging diseases such as COVID-19, polio, yellow fever, Rift Valley fever, influenza, diarrhoea and cholera, among others.

Suspected illness	Illnesses signs to look for
Diarrhea (loose stools)	Any person aged two years or more, with three or more watery or blood-stained loose stools in 24 hours.
Chest infection	Any person aged less than five years with cough and difficulty breathing.
	Any person with body hotness and cough.
	Any person with a cough for more than two weeks.
Severe weight loss	Any person with rapid weight loss and frequent illness.
Sexually transmitted infections	Any person with discharge, ulcer or pimple on his/her private parts.
Skin disease	Any person with a skin patch or worm emerging from the skin.
Polio	Any person aged less than 15 years with sudden loss of movement of one or both legs or arm or both with no report of injury.
New-born tetanus	Any new-born who is normal at birth, then after two days is unable to suck or feed and has body stiffness
Malnutrition	Any child aged less than five years with severe weight loss or swelling of both legs.
Animal bites	Any person who has been bitten or scratched by a domestic or wild animal.
Maternal death	Death of a woman during pregnancy, childbirth, miscarriage or within 42 days after delivery.
New-born death	Death of a new-born within 28 days of delivery.



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Education is a fundamental right in Kenya, which a majority of children do not enjoy. Equitable and inclusive primary education gives all children a fair chance to learn and develop the skills they need to thrive. An inclusive education system considers the unique contributions of students of all backgrounds and allows diverse groups to grow to the benefit of all.

Key Messages

1. Education helps a child to know the 'good' and the 'bad'.
"Read in the name of thy Lord who created" (Quran 96:1)
2. Education is important for the growth and development of a child.
The obligation of education is to knowing, feeling and believing in the knowledge of the science has also been described in the following hadith (Ibn Majah).
3. Education provides:-
 - Knowledge and skills
 - Develops communication skills and values for harmonious co-existence
"When a man dies, his actions will end, but three, a recurring charity, or knowledge (where people benefit), or a righteous son who is praying for him (the deceased) (Muslim)
4. Education helps and makes a child to be self-dependent.
"The main human being is a believer who has knowledge. If he is needed, then he gets the benefits. And if he is not needed then he can benefit himself" (Al-Bukhari)



Handbook

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



MINISTRY OF HEALTH



INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL *of* KENYA

