

HEALTHY BABIES

Sexual and Reproductive Health

In rural areas such as the Tansa Valley, women often have very poor knowledge of menstrual hygiene and health treatments for Reproductive Tract Infections (RTIs). RTIs can lead to serious issues, including infertility and menstrual problems. Pregnant mothers may also pass these infections to their babies, contributing to a rise in mortality.

Education is the key to healthy babies and healthy women of reproductive age (12 - 45 years). Since 2002, PRASAD Chikitsa's Reproductive and Child Health Centre has supported women to make positive decisions about their health and their pregnancies.

In the villages, women learn about pre-natal and post-natal care, immunization, feeding practices, the menstrual cycle and family planning. Anaemia is also addressed as women are at high risk due to menstrual problems, repeated childbirths and poor hygiene. Women needing treatment are referred to the Family Health Centre.



Knowledge of Sexuality for Young Women - Dignity and Self-care

PRASAD Chikitsa has also developed programs in schools to target young women reaching puberty. The Menstrual Hygiene Project, run by the Anukampaa Health Centre, hosts School Health Camps that benefit more than 2,500 students per year. When young women understand the biological aspects of how their body functions, the changes it goes through in puberty and how to manage them, they gain a deeper respect for themselves and a sense of dignity that encourages proper self-care. They can also educate other women, including their mothers, in their villages.

During the talks, PRASAD Chikitsa presents a film based on women's health issues, followed by a reiteration of the concepts of female physiology and the reproductive system. A diagram is used to demonstrate understanding. To avoid anaemia, the importance of a balanced diet is also stressed.

Medical staff from the Gurudev Siddha Peeth Netrachikitsa Hospital explain the importance of seeking medical advice instead of relying on home treatments. The young women are also introduced to the benefits of using disposable sanitary napkins, rather than the traditional cloth ones, which put them at risk of infections.

A much higher awareness of reproductive health issues among young adolescents has led to more confidence in young people in their own self care.



You can help PRASAD Chikitsa !

**\$50 funds the treatment of 10 patients
for the treatment of an RTI**

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Changing Lives – Real Stories

When Shubhangi was 14, she and her three sisters lost their parents to tuberculosis. Their grandmother provides basic needs and ensures schooling by doing odd jobs. Shubhangi, recently diagnosed with an RTI, was informed about the benefits of sanitary napkins. After treatment for her RTI (and blood investigations due to her family history of tuberculosis), she returned to good health.



RTIs are known to cause malformations in a foetus. When Mayuri's second baby had no kidneys (and would die at birth), she had a medical abortion and her infection was treated. With regular follow-ups and health awareness, her next baby was perfectly healthy.



Making It Practical



To ensure behavioral change, the out-patient department and outreach events continue to inform women of modern hygiene practices. PRASAD Chikitsa, with Benchmark Industries, has made sanitary napkins available at an affordable price lowering the pressure on their low daily income. PRASAD Chikitsa has also followed through by installing vending machines and disposable facilities in the local schools. Teachers from each school are trained about the health issues of RTIs and shown how to keep the machines in working order.

How you can help

- **\$10** funds the treatment of 2 patients for the treatment of an RTI
- **\$20** treats 10 patients suffering from malaria
- **\$60** provides funds for extra nutrition for 30 adolescents for a month
- **\$130** supports the training of a SHG (self help group) for a year
- **\$200** enables the plantation and survival of 50 shade giving trees along the roads of a village
- **\$750** buys school materials for 100 children

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PRASAD Australia's Facebook has weekly photo updates.

The PRASAD Project was initiated in 1992 by Gurumayi Chidvilasananda, the spiritual head of the Siddha Yoga path. PRASAD® is a philanthropic expression of the SYDA Foundation—the central organization for the Siddha Yoga path. PRASAD's humanitarian work is based on the core values of Siddha Yoga: selfless service, enduring commitment, and respect for all people, regardless of their race or belief.

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PRASAD® Australia - PO 366, Leichhardt NSW 2040 • prasadau@internode.on.net • www.prasadaustralia.org • ACN 099 466 654
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