

CHILD-TO-CHILD READER

Clever Saroja



Voluntary Health Association of India

The Child-to-child Primary Health Readers have been developed to teach and encourage primary school children in India to become aware of their health and development problems. These are also meant to create concern about the health of their younger brothers and sisters. Each book has been written by an experienced educationalist in conjunction with a panel of medical and language specialists.

The Readers can be used as an integral part of primary school education in Science, Social

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Library and Information Centre

367, " Srinivasa Nilaya "

Jakkasandra 1st Main,

1st Block, Koramangala,

BANGALORE - 560 034.

Phone : 5531518 / 5525372

e-mail:sochara@vsni.com

Clever Saroja

A reader in caring for the sick

Authors

Amla and Ujwala

Illustrations

Stephen Marazzi

Project Coordinator

Dr. Amla Rama Rao

Consultants

Ms. Rajni Khanna

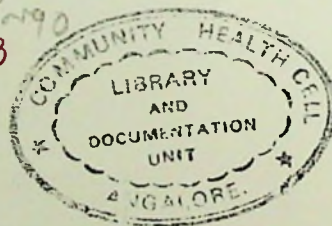
Dr. Murlidharan

Dr. Indrani Ganguly



Voluntary Health Association of India

CH-140
04893



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First edition : 1990

Reprint : 1995

Published by

Voluntary Health Association of India

Tong Swasthya Bhawan, 40 Institutional Area,
South of IIT, Near Qutab Hotel, New Delhi-110 016

Phones : 668071, 665018, 6965871, 6962953

Fax : 011- 6853708

Clever Saroja

Saroja was 11 years old and a clever girl. She lived with her family — a mother and father who worked hard and loved their children, a nine-year-old brother Munna, and a three-year-old sister Bhanu. Saroja was in charge of the children whenever their parents went out. She took great pride in being the eldest and in taking good care of her brother and sister.



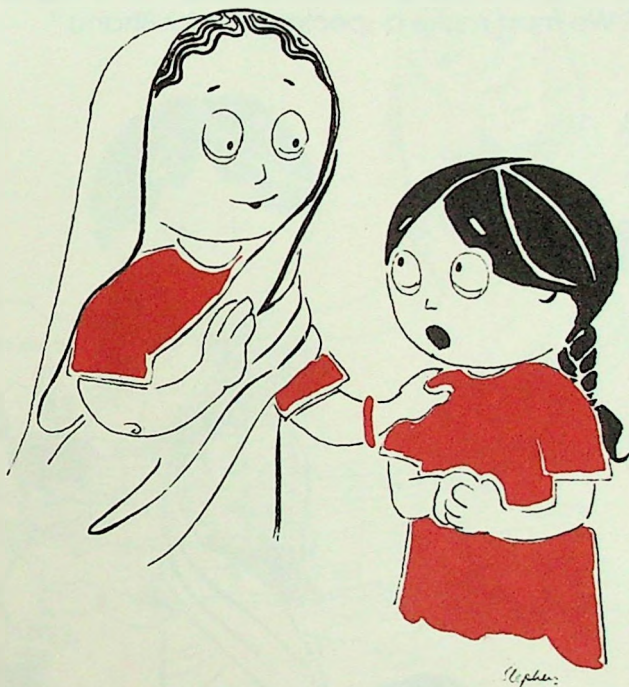
Every morning, Saroja's parents went off to work. Her mother returned at midday, just in time to see Saroja and Munna off to school. She never worried about little Bhanu while she was at work — Saroja and Munna, she knew, would take good care of the little one.

One morning, while her mother was at work and Munna was playing with his friends, Saroja heard Bhanu crying. She saw that the little girl had passed a watery yellow stool. "Oh!" said Saroja, "You've done it again! Amma cleaned you and put you to bed just half an hour ago!" She washed Bhanu, changed the sheet and put her back on the bed. Then she carefully washed her own hands.



Saroja had just finished washing the dirty sheet when she heard Bhanu crying again. The poor child had passed another watery stool, her third in the past hour. She was looking scared and unwell. Saroja got worried. She cleaned the baby quickly and ran out to call their neighbour, Lata behenji.

Lata behenji listened carefully to Saroja's story. She put a hand on the girl's shoulder. "Don't worry, Saroja," she said. "Your little sister has diarrhoea. Go home and comfort her, and I'll come soon to teach you how to make a special drink which will help her to get better."



Saroja was sitting on the bed with Bhanu, singing softly, when Lata behenji walked in. Munna followed. He was surprised to see his little sister so weak and quiet. "Is it serious?" he asked.

Lata behenji replied: "If you take quick, correct steps to treat diarrhoea, it is not serious. But if you neglect it, then it can be very serious, especially for babies." She thought for a while, wondering how to explain it to the children. "You see, diarrhoea makes us lose a lot of water, sugar and salt from our bodies. If we do not replace these, we will lose our strength ... Have you seen a plant that has not been watered for a long time? Doesn't it droop and dry up? That is what diarrhoea can do to us, especially to babies and children. Now run, get me some salt, sugar and a glass of clean water. We must make a special drink for Bhanu."



Saroja watched carefully as Lata behenji took a glass of clean water. She added a teaspoon of sugar. Then a little salt, only from the tip of the spoon. She stirred the mixture. "Every time Bhanu passes a stool, you must give her some of this drink. Let her sip it slowly, but often." she told Saroja.



Bhanu drank up the whole cup of special drink as she was very thirsty. "Don't forget to give her more later," said Lata behenji. "Remember! A little bit of salt on the tip of the spoon, a teaspoon of sugar and a glass of clean water."

After their kind neighbour had left, Saroja told her brother: "I am going to make some soft rice for Bhanu. My teacher told us that sick children must eat nourishing food. They must eat to get strength and fight the illness."

As the rice cooked, Saroja and Munna sat with their little sister, giving her sips of the special drink, talking to her and comforting her. Every time she passed a stool, they cleaned her, washed their own hands carefully and gave her a cup of special drink to sip. Soon, Bhanu cheered up. By the time their mother returned home, Saroja and Munna were getting ready for school. Little Bhanu was asleep.



The children told their mother about Bhanu's diarrhoea and how Lata behenji had taught them to make the special drink. "And I fed her some soft rice," said Saroja, "Because my teacher had told me that sick children need nourishing food to get well." Saroja's mother beamed happily at her children. "When you go to school, tell your teacher and friends how you took care of Bhanu," she said. "They can do the same for their own brothers and sisters."

How to make the special drink

MIX : SUGAR + SALT + WATER



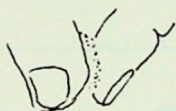
A SCOOP
OF SUGAR

OR



ONE LEVEL
TEASPOON
OF SUGAR

AND

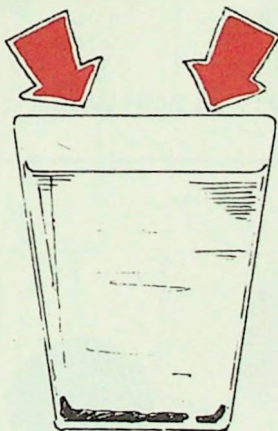


A PINCH OF SALT

AND



A LITTLE SALT
AT THE END OF
A TEASPOON



ONE GLASS
OF WATER

This is what Saroja told her class:

WHEN WATER IS LOST FROM THE BODY BECAUSE OF
DIARRHOEA
THE SKIN GETS DRY,
THE BODY GETS WEAK,
THE EYES ARE NOT BRIGHT,
WE MUST ACT FAST!

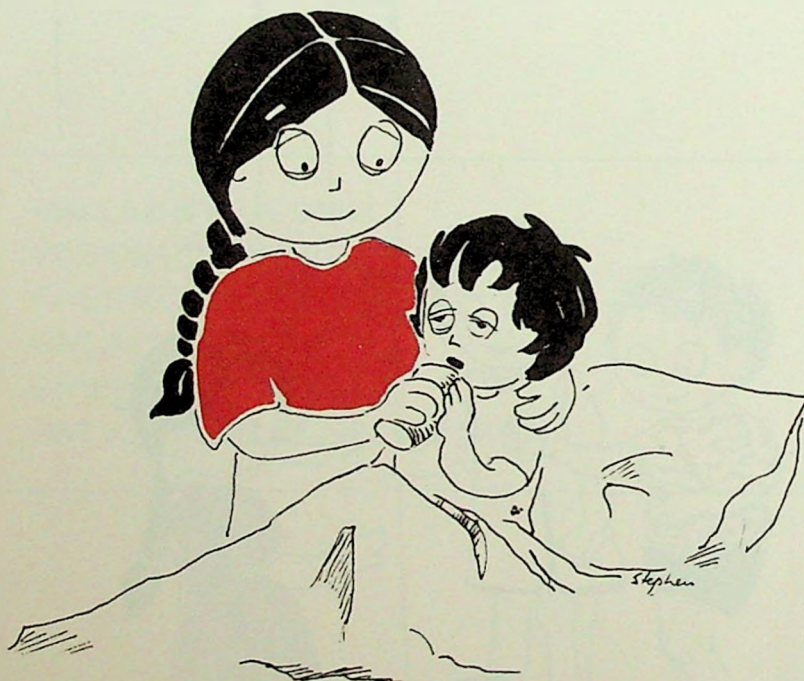
MAKE THE SPECIAL DRINK.
GIVE ONE CUP AFTER EVERY STOOL.
GIVE IT SLOWLY.
GIVE A LITTLE AT A TIME.
GIVE IT OFTEN.
GIVE SOFT FOOD ALONG WITH WATER.

Down with fever

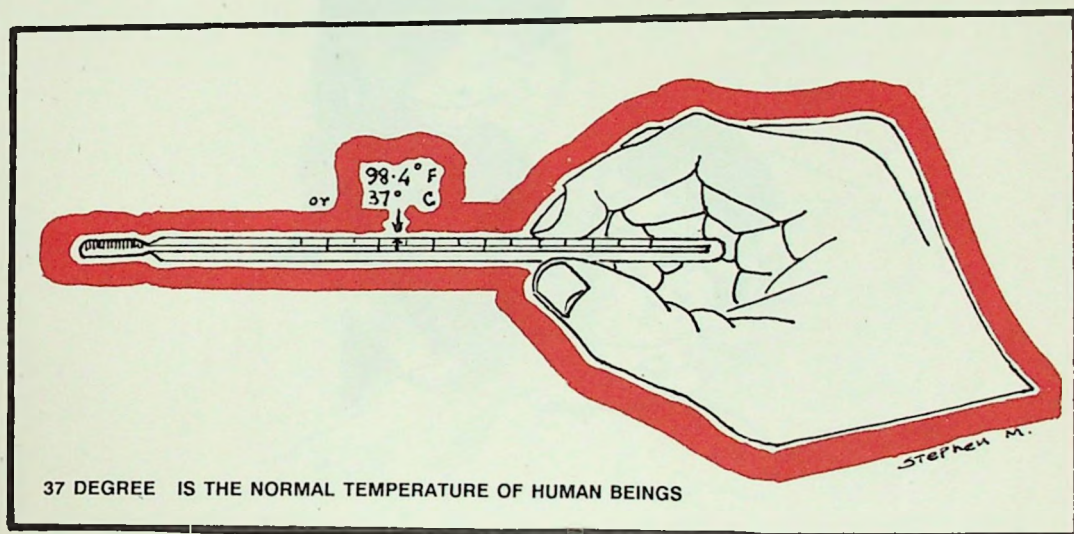
A few weeks later, Saroja and Munna were playing with their friends in the street in front of their house. Suddenly, Saroja noticed that little Bhanu was sitting alone under the mango tree. She seemed sad. Saroja went up to her, "Hey what's wrong with you?" she said, touching the little girl's cheek. Bhanu's face felt hot and her cheeks were flushed. "Didi, I'm thirsty, my head hurts and I feel so hot and funny," she said. Saroja held the little girl's hand "Come," she said "come and rest."



Saroja put her sister on the bed. Then she ran to the kitchen, uncovered the water pitcher and filled a glass using a ladle with a long handle. She was careful not to put her hands into the drinking water — her teacher had told her that germs spread if we dip our dirty hands into the water pitcher. As Bhanu drank the water, Saroja tried to remember what she had been told in school about fever. She remembered : *the most important thing was to cool the body fast.*

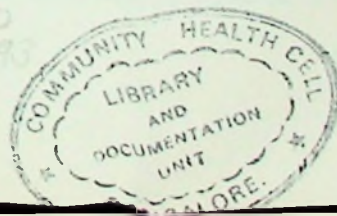


Saroja called Munna into the house. At first, he did not want to leave his games. But when he heard that Bhanu was sick, he immediately ran to Lata behenji's house. She gave him a thermometer to check how high Bhanu's fever was. In the meantime, Saroja got things ready to cool Bhanu down by wiping her with cold water and a clean cloth.



"Lata behenji said that the thermometer should be kept under the tongue for half a minute," Munna said. He pulled out the thermometer from Bhanu's mouth.

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Holding it between two fingers, he read it. Saroja read it too. Yes, her sister did indeed have a high temperature. Munna washed the thermometer, as Lata behenji had asked him to do, and put it back into the box.



Munna and Saroja undressed their sister and gently wiped her with the cloth and cold water. This helped to cool the fever and also made her feel fresh and cheerful. "We can also put a cloth, folded and soaked in water, on her forehead," said Saroja.

Saroja then decided to make some khichri for Bhanu to eat. "I don't want to eat," groaned Bhanu. "I only want to drink water." "I will give you some nimboo pani, Bhanu, but you must also eat some food. Otherwise, how will you get energy to get better?" said Saroja. "You don't want to *remain* sick, do you?"



An hour later, Munna and Saroja were trying to coax Bhanu into eating some more khichri. "Never mind if she can't eat it all now," Saroja told Munna. "It's better if a sick child is given frequent small meals instead of one or two heavy meals."

Bhanu's forehead felt a little cooler and her cheeks were less flushed. She had been sweating quite a bit and her clothes were sticking to her little body. "We'll have to give you another wash after you finish eating. You're sticky and sweaty all over" said Saroja.



When their mother came home, Bhanu was fast asleep. She was still a little warm, but looked comfortable. "I must say they really do teach you useful things at school," said their mother. "I'm proud of you."

THINGS TO DO

- 1) Gather information about children having diarrhoea in your family and neighbourhood,
 - a) Find out at what age it is most common
 - b) Make a special drink for diarrhoea and make sure that a child with diarrhoea drinks it.
- 2) Learn to take the temperature by a thermometer.
- 3) Collect what is needed to cool down the fever.
- 4) Do a role play to show how to care for a child who is ill.
- 5) Play the First Aid Quiz with the dice (see overleaf).

5 HOW DO YOU MAKE YOUR OWN COUGH SYRUP?



7 WHAT IS HIGH BODY TEMPERATURE?

8 WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN PIMMI HAS DIARRHOEA?

9



10 WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN CIMMI HAS A COLD?

11 NAME FIVE NON-INFECTIOUS DISEASES



30 +

FINISH

4

FIRST AID QUIZ



WHO IS THE BEST DOCTOR?

TAKE TURNS TO THROW A DICE, OR FLICK A COIN OR STONE OR BUTTON, AND, ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS ALONG THE WAY, MOVE FROM "START" TO "FINISH."

WHO REACHES FIRST IS THE WINNER.

17

16 WHAT IS NORMAL BODY TEMPERATURE?



15 WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN SUDHIR IS COUGHING?

14

13 WHAT IS A VIRUS?



12



FOR A COIN:
HEAD = 2 MOVES,
TAIL = 1 MOVE.
FOR A STONE
OR BUTTON:
SIDE 1 = 2 MOVES
SIDE 2 = 1 MOVE

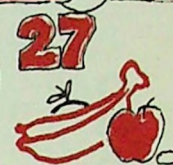
ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS:

FOR A RIGHT ANSWER
TAKE A STEP FORWARD

FOR A WRONG ANSWER
TAKE A STEP BACKWARD

ANSWERS ON PAGE

29 WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN RINKU HAS STOMACH INFECTION?



26 WHAT ARE SIGNS OF DEHYDRATION?

25

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN PIMMI IS VOMITING?



23

22 WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN MUNNA IS DEHYDRATED?



20

19 WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN MALA IS LONELY AND BORED?



START

—STEPHEN M.

We can all get diarrhoea or fever any time. What do we do if there is no doctor around? Saroja and Munna show us.

You will also enjoy reading:

Attack

A Toothy Story

The Food Fair

Watch Out

VHAI is a federation of more than 3000 health organisations throughout the country which assists in making community health a reality for all the people of India through issue-based campaigns, lobbying in Parliament, training programmes for community development and health workers, documentation, production of books and other information aids.