

12. Home Remedies for Simple Illnesses



Can you tell ?

- Observe the pictures given below, and answer the following questions.



**Why is this boy's arm in plaster ?
Could we have put his arm in plaster at home?**



Why has this girl been brought to a doctor ?

Illness

When we are well, we feel hungry at the right times. We sleep well at night. We have no complaints about digestion. And most importantly, we feel refreshed on getting up in the morning. We do not feel tired even if we have been at work.

But sometimes, for some reason, we fall ill.



Sakhu had a slightly sore throat. Still, she had some ice-cream. The next day, her throat hurt and she found it difficult to swallow. Mother made her gargle with warm salt water before and after school for two days. On the third day, Sakhu's throat had stopped hurting. This was a simple illness and she soon felt better again.

A fortnight later, Sakhu's Tai fell ill. She was running a temperature. Her eyes had become yellow. She did not feel like eating anything. Mother took her to the doctor. The doctor said that Tai had jaundice.



The doctor advised her to take complete rest for three weeks. She also told her to eat as little as possible of things which contain oil, ghee or butter. This was not an illness that could be cured easily.

Right or wrong ?

Shripati and his younger sister Tara were working in the field. A snake bit Shripati. After biting Shripati, the snake wriggled away. Neither of them got a proper look at the snake. But, knowing that it was a snake that had bitten him, Shripati was very frightened. He shouted loudly for help. People came running.

Tara was saying that Shripati should be taken to the taluka place at once. The government hospital there would have the anti-snakebite injection to give Shripati. But no one paid any attention to her.

People quickly got the bullock-cart ready, and putting Shripati in it, took him to the village temple. They called the village *mantrik*. He laid Shripati on a bed of neem leaves and began to chant mantras against the action of the snake's poison.



What do you think? Do the mantras act against the snake's poison ?

Was it right or wrong to bring Shripati to the village *mantrik* ?

Would you have taken Shripati to the *mantrik* or to the Government Hospital ?

Soon, Shripati felt better. But, was that because the mantras acted against the snake poison ? Or, was the snake non-poisonous and the *mantrik* got the credit even when he did not deserve it ?

Home remedies

If an illness is one that gets cured readily, one can try a home remedy. Do you remember, Sakhu's mother made her gargle her throat with warm water. And Sakhu felt better in a day or two.

Elderly, experienced people in the family sometimes suggest such cures.

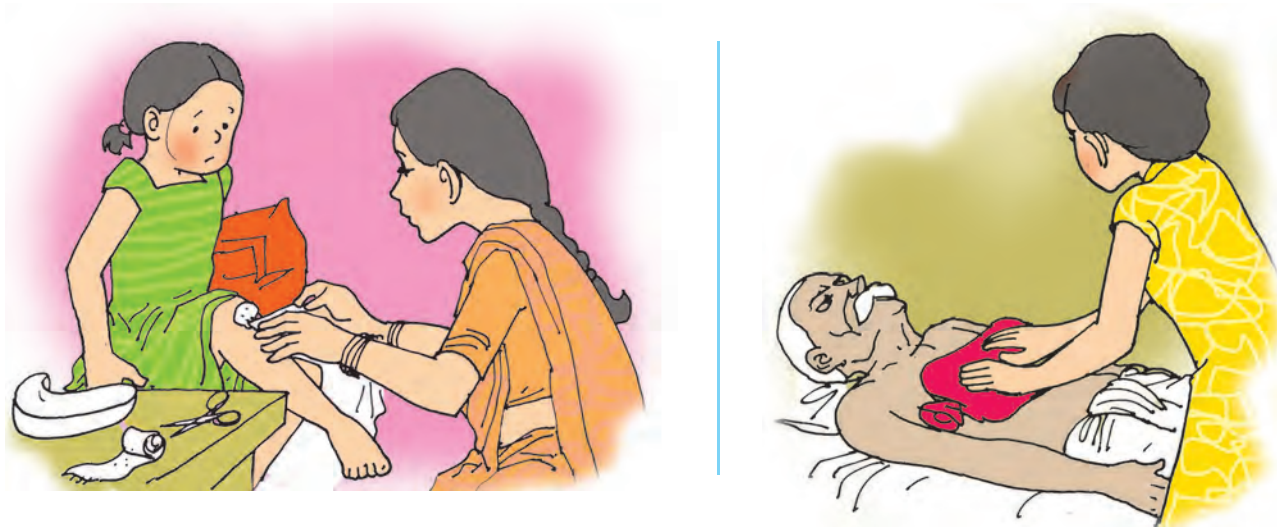
If we have a cold we can inhale steam at bed-time or take hot fomentations on the chest.

If someone is vomiting as a result of a fever or indigestion, it is better not to insist on him or her having a meal. At most, they should be given a cool lemon sherbet and something light, like dahibhat, to eat the next day.

If someone has a cut, bruise or a small wound, it should be washed with clean water and dabbed dry. A tincture of iodine may be applied to it. Then it should be covered with clean cotton and bandaged.

Even if an illness appears to be minor, it should never be neglected. Remember, home remedies have limits. If a person does not recover in a day or two or if the illness worsens, one must go to a doctor.

Without a doctor's advice, one should never take any medicine that must be swallowed.



People who provide health services to society

A service that takes care of the health of the people and provides treatment for those who are ill is called a health service or medical service.

Big towns and cities have doctors' clinics and hospitals. But, in most cities and in rural areas there are Government Hospitals and Primary Health Centres too. Patients can get treatment at concessional rates there.

The municipal corporations of big cities also run hospitals that provide medical treatment.



What we have learnt –

- Some illnesses are cured quickly. But, there are some that do not get cured easily.
- Minor illnesses can be cured with home remedies. Experienced, elderly people in the family know of such home remedies.
- For a cold, one can inhale steam or take hot fomentations. A lemon sherbet is good for someone who is vomiting.



Always remember –

Mantras, incantations, magic spells and charms do not cure any diseases or illnesses.



Exercises

(A) What's the solution ?

Helen is in the fourth Standard in a school in Mumbai. One day, on her way home, she was hit by a moving vehicle. She fell down and became unconscious. Her leg was also badly injured.

(B) Use your brain power !

1. For what purpose is the extract of vasaka leaves useful ?
2. What are the signs which tell you that someone has a cold ?
3. What is a balm used for ?
4. What tells you that the temperature of someone who had a fever is coming down ?

(C) Complete the table.

Given below are the names of some diseases and illnesses.

(1) cold (2) chikungunya (3) malaria (4) bruising (5) stomach upset (6) typhoid
(7) scorched fingers (8) sprained ankle

Determine which of these get cured quickly and which ones do not and complete the following table.

Get cured quickly	Do not get cured quickly

(D) Answer in brief.

1. Why did Sakhu get a throat-ache?
2. When Tai had jaundice, for how long did the doctor advise her to take complete rest?
3. What is the home remedy for a cold?
4. Should one take medicines that must be swallowed, without a doctor's advice?

(E) Fill in the blanks.

1. Tai's eyes had become
2. Knowing that it was a that had bitten him, Shripati was very frightened.
3. One must wash and a wound before applying a tincture of iodine on it.

○○○ ————— **Activity** ————— ○○○

- Visit a nearby hospital and interview the doctor there. Find out about some first aid measures.

