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Acknowledgments

Facts for Family Planning presents a comprehensive collection of key information and messages that anyone can use who communicates to others about family planning. Although a variety of individuals and groups can use *Facts for Family Planning*, it is primarily for those who communicate to men and women who are seeking information about family planning and help in selecting a family planning method. This publication is modeled on the early, popular versions of *Facts for Life*, a book that helped the child survival community communicate consistently about an emerging body of knowledge and best practices.

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Introduction

Facts for Family Planning provides key information for those who communicate about voluntary family planning and reproductive health in developing country settings. This book is designed to help in developing materials and messages about family planning.

Program directors and managers can use this information to guide the development of training materials and communication messages for program activities. Counselors, social workers, community health outreach workers, teachers, religious leaders, and others who help individuals and couples make informed decisions about their lives can use this book as a resource for information on family planning. Journalists and media outlets can also use the information here as a basis for television, radio, and other mass media programming and for use in social media applications such as websites or on cell phones.

Facts for Family Planning also offers a resource for those developing targeted advocacy messages and materials for politicians and decision-makers who influence policy and funding for family planning services. It can also serve as a resource for those not familiar with the family planning field when creating communication campaigns designed to promote healthy behaviors.

USING THIS BOOK

Following the format of UNICEF’s successful book on child health, *Facts for Life*, each chapter of *Facts for Family Planning* has three parts:

- An **INTRODUCTION** briefly describes what the chapter covers.
- **KEY FACTS TO SHARE** provide main points to communicate to others.
- **SUPPORTING INFORMATION** gives background and details on each of the key facts.

The **key facts** may need to be translated into other languages or adapted to reflect local situations and customs. In doing so, local health experts should review the translation or adaptation to be sure the information remains correct. The key facts can be adapted to many situations and communicated in many ways, for example:

- Designing communication for family planning programs
- Developing family planning counseling materials and tools
- Designing outreach materials and strategies for community groups
- Developing guidance for individuals who talk to family and friends about family planning
- Reporting on family planning for newspapers, radio, and television
- Designing mass media programs that discuss family planning including public service announcements, drama/soap operas, game shows, and social media outlets (e.g., Internet and cell phone applications)
- Advocating policies that support family planning and seeking government commitment for high-quality, voluntary services

The **supporting information** can be especially helpful for developing messages for health workers or anyone else who wants to know more about family planning.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Facts for Family Planning contains 10 chapters. Chapter 1 presents the importance of family planning to women's health and key reasons why the promotion of family planning is important at the community, national, and international levels. The information in this chapter will be helpful to those advocating for family planning, including journalists. Chapters 2–5 guide couples as they make informed decisions about planning their family, the best time to have the first pregnancy, how to space future pregnancies for the health of the mother, and what steps to take when their family is complete. These chapters will be helpful to those who communicate directly with families or develop communication materials on family planning.

Chapter 6 provides key messages and information that women and men need to know about their fertility. Chapter 7 presents basic information on the most common contraceptive methods.

The last three chapters provide information on important issues related to family planning. Chapter 8 includes key messages about family planning for women who have a miscarriage or an abortion. Chapter 9 focuses on unmarried youth and how messages about contraceptive use and prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, can be useful to young people. Chapter 10 provides basic information on family planning as it relates to STIs/HIV.



TIPS ON USING THIS BOOK

The key messages in *Facts for Family Planning* need to be adapted so they relate to people's communities, their families, and their lives. This will help people understand, accept, and act on the information presented here. When adapting these messages, users need to take into account a country's customs and traditions. If people feel respected and understand how family planning relates to the health and well-being of their families, they are more likely to follow the advice that *Facts for Family Planning* offers. Please keep the following steps in mind when adapting key messages:

- Identify the people who need the information in *Facts for Family Planning* and the most appropriate practices that need to be communicated. When adapting the message consider the goals, language, customs, and level of knowledge of the people you are working with. Messages that are relevant and easy to understand are more likely to be accepted and acted upon.
- Use common language that people can understand. Create clear messages, and keep instructions easy so they can be followed. Avoid using technical details or words that people will not understand.

- Note that the terms “family planning” and “contraception” are used interchangeably in this book. The term “family planning” works best when talking about couples or when discussing not only the method of contraception but also issues related to family planning information, counseling, commodities, and the health system. However, when discussing issues related to single people and unmarried youth in particular, the term “contraception” or “contraceptive services” is more accurate.
- When developing these messages, try them out first to make sure that the people who receive the information understand it and know how to put the information into action. Gently ask questions about the information and discuss the answers with them to make sure they understand.
- Make the messages relevant to people’s lives. Find ways to make the information from *Facts for Family Planning* interesting and meaningful to the specific audience. For example, use local or personal examples to help illustrate the key messages.

Communicating helpful information about family planning will help strengthen individuals, families, communities, and, ultimately, nations. Please share *Facts for Family Planning* with your family, friends, colleagues, and community leaders.