

## LIST OF DIFFICULT WORDS

Here is a list of words that may be difficult to understand. Knowing what these words mean can help you use the book better.

Some of the words included here are explained in the chapters, but many are not. The first time they are used in a chapter, the words are written in *slanted letters*. Some of the explanations here in this vocabulary also contain words written in *slanted letters*. This is because an explanation for these words can be found somewhere else in this list.

This vocabulary is listed in the order of the alphabet:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

### A

**abdomen** The part of the body that contains the *stomach, liver, guts* and *reproductive organs*. The belly.

**abnormal bleeding** Bleeding that is different from what is usual, natural, or average. Not normal.

**abortion** When a woman does something to end a pregnancy.

**abscess** A raised, red, painful lump on the skin that is filled with *pus* (for example, a boil).

**abuse** When someone hurts another person's body (physical abuse), humiliates or insults a person (emotional abuse) or makes a person do sexual things against her will (sexual abuse).

**access (to health services)** When health services are available, and a woman has the freedom, the money, and the time to use them.

**acute** When something happens suddenly, lasts for a short time, and is usually serious or strong—for example, acute pain or acute *infection*. Compare with *chronic*.

**addiction** When the body feels a strong need for alcohol or a *drug*.

**afterbirth** See *placenta*.

### AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)

A *disease* caused by the *HIV virus* usually passed through sex. A person has AIDS (rather than just being infected with HIV) when the *immune system* gets so weak it can no longer fight off common *infections* and illnesses.

**allergy, allergic reaction, allergic shock** A problem—such as itching, sneezing, hives or rash, and sometimes difficult breathing or shock—that affects certain people when specific things are breathed in, eaten, *injected*, or touched. Allergic shock is a severe form of allergic reaction.

**anal sex** Having sex in the *anus*.

**anemia** A disease in which the blood gets weak and thin because it lacks red blood cells. This happens when blood is lost or destroyed faster than the body can replace it.

**anesthesia** General anesthesia is when you are given medicine to make you sleep during an *operation* so you will not feel pain. Local anesthesia is when you are given an *injection* in one place so that you will not feel pain in that area.

**antacid** Medicine used to control too much *stomach acid* and to calm stomach upset. See *heartburn*.

**antibiotic** Medicine used to fight *infection* caused by *bacteria*.

**antibodies** Substances the body makes to fight *infection*.

**antiretrovirals** Medicines used to help people with HIV stay healthier and live longer. They do not cure HIV or AIDS.

**anus** The opening of the *intestine* where waste (*stool*) leaves the body.

**anxiety** Feeling nervous or worried.

**appendicitis** An *infection* of the *appendix*.

**appendix** A finger-like sac attached to the large intestine.

**areola** The dark, bumpy area around the *nipple*.

**ART Antiretroviral Therapy** ART is a combination of 3 or more *antiretroviral* medicines taken every day by people with HIV. (It is also called HAART or Triple Therapy.)

**artery** A thin, tube-like vessel that carries blood from the heart through the body. Arteries have a *pulse*. *Veins*, which return blood to the heart, have no pulse.

**arthritis** Pain and swelling in the *joints*.

**asthma** A disease of the lungs, which causes attacks of difficult breathing. There is often a hissing or wheezing sound when a person breathes out.

## B

**bacteria** *Germs* that cause many different *infectious diseases*. Bacteria are too small to see without a *microscope*.

**bacterial vaginosis** An *infection* of the *vagina* caused by bacteria.

**bag of waters** The sac (or amniotic sac) inside the *womb* that holds the baby. When the sac breaks and releases fluid, this usually means that *labor* has begun.

**balls** Part of the man's outer *genitals*. Also called the *testicles*.

**barrier methods** *Family planning methods* that prevent pregnancy by keeping the *sperm* from reaching the egg.

**Bartholin's glands** Small *glands* on either side of the vaginal opening that make a liquid to keep the *vagina* wet.

**benefit** The good that something may bring.

**bile** A liquid found in the *gallbladder* that helps digest fatty foods.

**bilharzia** An *infection* caused by a kind of worm that gets into the bloodstream.

**biopsy** When a piece of *tissue* or fluid is taken from somewhere on or in the body and examined to see if it is healthy or diseased.

**birth canal** See *vagina*.

**birth control** See *family planning*.

**birth control pills** A *hormonal family planning method*.

**birth defects** Physical or mental problems a child is born with, like a *cleft lip* or *cleft palate*, or an extra finger or toe.

**birth spacing** Using *family planning methods* to space your children.

**blackouts** When you are using too much alcohol or other *drugs* and wake up not knowing what happened.

**bladder** The bag inside the *abdomen* that stores *urine*. As the bladder fills, it stretches and gets bigger.

**blood clots** Soft, dark red, shiny lumps in the blood that look like liver.

**blood pressure** The force or pressure of the blood upon the walls of the blood vessels (*arteries* and *veins*). Blood pressure varies with the age and health of the person.

**blood transfusion** When someone's blood is given to another person, in a *vein* and using a special needle, to replace blood the person may have lost.

**blurred eyesight** When the eyes cannot see things clearly.

**bowels** The *intestines*.

**brand name** The name for a medicine that is given by the company that makes it. Compare with *generic*.

**breast exam** Checking the breasts for lumps that might be a sign of *cancer*.

**breast infection (mastitis)** An *infection* inside the breast that can be very painful for the mother, and make it difficult for the baby to suck the *nipple*.

**breech** When a baby is born feet or buttocks first, instead of head first. This can be dangerous for the baby.

**bronchitis** An *infection* of the large tubes in the lungs.

**buttocks** The round, fleshy part of the body a person sits on.

## C

**caffeine** A *drug* found in coffee, tea, and cola drinks that causes the heart to beat faster and makes a person feel more awake.

**calcium** A *mineral* found in some foods that helps make bones and teeth strong.

**cancer** A serious disease that causes *cells* to change and grow in an abnormal way, causing growths. Cancer can affect many different parts of the body.

**cannula** A small tube used to suction out the contents of the *womb*.

**cassava (manioc root)** A starchy root grown in the tropics.

**cataracts** An eye problem in which the lens or covering of the eye becomes cloudy, making it more and more difficult to see. The dark, round, center part of the eye (pupil) looks gray or white when a light is shined on it.

**CD4 count** This blood test measures how well a person's immune system is working.

**cell** The smallest unit of living matter in the body.

**cervix** The opening of the *womb* at the back of the *vagina*.

**cesarean section (c-section)** When it is dangerous for a baby to be born through the *vagina*, the woman can have an *operation* in which her *abdomen* is cut open and the baby is taken out.

**chart** A file where information about a person's illnesses and treatments is kept.

**chemicals** Substances found in all living and nonliving things. Many chemicals used in women's work cause harm to the body.

**child spacing** Having children at least 2 or 3 years apart so that a woman's body has a chance to get strong again between pregnancies.

**chlamydia** A *sexually transmitted infection*.

**chlorine solution** A *chemical* liquid that can be used to kill *germs*. Also known as bleach.

**cholera** A serious *infectious disease* with severe *vomiting* and bloody *diarrhea*.

**chronic** Something that lasts for a long time, or that occurs often. Compare with *acute*.

**circulation** Blood flowing through the *arteries* and *veins* in the body.

**circumcision (in a man)** When the loose fold of skin at the end of a man's *penis* is cut off.

**circumcision (in a woman)** When part or all of a girl or woman's outer *genitals* are cut off.

**cleft lip** An opening or gap on a baby's upper lip, often connecting to the nostril.

**cleft palate** A split or abnormal opening in the roof of the baby's mouth.

**climax** When the body reaches its peak of sexual pleasure. Also called an "orgasm."

**clitoris** The part of the *vulva* most sensitive to touch.

**clots** See *blood clots*.

**cold sores** See *herpes*.

**colostrum** The yellow-colored milk that comes from the breasts for the first 2 or 3 days after birth. It is very healthy for the baby and protects against disease.

**community health workers** Health workers who work in the community and may or may not have formal training.

**complications** Problems or things that go wrong.

**compost** A mixture of plant and animal waste that is allowed to rot for use as a fertilizer. Hay, dead leaves, vegetable waste, animal droppings, and manure all make good compost.

**compress** A folded cloth or pad that is put on a part of the body. The compress may be soaked in hot or cold liquid.

**conception** When the egg and *sperm* join to begin making a baby.

**condom (rubber)** A narrow bag of thin rubber that the man wears on his *penis* during sex. The bag traps the man's *sperm* so that it cannot get into the woman's *womb* and make her pregnant. Condoms also help prevent the spread of *sexually transmitted infections* including *HIV*.

**condom for women** See *female condom*.

**constipation** When a person has a difficult time passing *stool*.

**contagious** An illness that can be spread easily from one person to another.

**contaminated** When medical supplies or food contain harmful *germs*.

**contraception (birth control)** Any method of preventing pregnancy. See *family planning*.

**contraceptive gel** A slippery jelly or cream that is put into the *vagina* before sex to prevent pregnancy.

**contractions (pains, labor pains)** When the *womb* squeezes and becomes hard. Contractions open the *cervix* and help push the baby out of the *womb*.

**convulsion** An uncontrolled seizure or “fit”. A sudden jerking of part or all of the body.

**cord (umbilical cord)** The cord that connects the baby at its navel (belly button) to the *placenta*.

**counseling** When a trained person helps you think about your situation or decisions you need to make. For example, some people are trained especially to help people cope with *HIV* and *AIDS*.

**counting days method** A *family planning method* in which a woman counts the days of her *monthly cycle* to find out when she is most *fertile*. She then avoids having sex during her fertile time.

**cramps** A painful tightening or *contraction* of a muscle. Many women have cramps that begin just before *monthly bleeding* or just after it starts.

**cryotherapy** A treatment that freezes and destroys abnormal tissue on the *cervix*.

**curette** A small tool used to scrape out the lining of the *womb* during a *dilation and curettage (D and C)*.

## D

**D and C** See *dilation and curettage*.

**date rape** When a woman is forced to have sex by a man she is dating or courting.

**dehydration** When the body loses more liquid than it takes in.

**dementia** When a person has severe difficulty remembering things and thinking clearly.

**dengue fever** A serious illness caused by a *virus* that is spread by mosquitoes.

**dependence** When the mind feels an overpowering need for a *drug*.

**depression** When a person feels extremely sad or feels nothing at all.

**diabetes** When a person's body does not use sugar properly.

**diaphragm** A *family planning method* in which a soft rubber or silicone cup, usually filled with *contraceptive gel* or cream, is worn over the *cervix* during sex.

**diarrhea** Passing 3 or more loose, watery stools in a day.

**digestion** When food is broken down by the *stomach* and *intestines* to be used by the body or to pass out of the body as waste.

**dilation and curettage (D and C)** To gradually open the *cervix* and then scrape out the *womb*. Often used for an *abortion* or to find the cause of *abnormal bleeding from the vagina*.

**disability** Physical or mental limitations that affect daily living.

**discharge (from the vagina)** The wetness or fluid that comes out of the *vagina*.

**discrimination** When people are ignored or treated badly because of who they are (for example, because they are women or old or poor).

**disinfection** Cleaning tools and equipment in a certain way to get rid of nearly all the germs. Also called high-level disinfection.

**divorce** To legally end a marriage.

**dizziness** Feeling lightheaded or unsteady.

**dose** The amount of a medicine you should take at one time.

**douche** Washing out the *vagina*. This can cause harm because it washes out the natural wetness in the *vagina*.

**drugs** Substances, like alcohol and cocaine, that can be used in harmful ways to alter the mind, to feel good, or to cope with life.

**dysentery** *Diarrhea* with *mucus* or blood in it, usually caused by an *infection*.

## E

**eclampsia** A dangerous condition during pregnancy, which can lead to seizures (*convulsions*).

**ectopic pregnancy** See *pregnancy in the tube*.

**ejaculate** When a man reaches his peak of sexual pleasure and his *semen* comes out.

**embryo** An unborn baby is called an embryo between the second and eighth weeks after *conception*.

**emphysema** A serious lung disease.

**enema** A solution of water put up the *anus* to make a person pass *stool* or to increase the amount of fluid in the body.

**epilepsy** A disease in which a person has *convulsions* and *loss of consciousness*.

**erection** When a man becomes sexually excited and his *penis* gets hard.

**esophagus** The tube connecting the mouth and the *stomach* that food goes down.

**estrogen** A female *hormone*.

**examination (exam)** When a health worker, nurse, or doctor looks at, listens to, or feels parts of the body to find out what is wrong.

**exhaustion** Extreme tiredness.

## F

**fainting** See *loss of consciousness*.

**fallen womb** See *prolapsed uterus*.

**fallopian tubes** The tubes that lead from the *ovaries* to the *womb*. When the *ovary* releases an egg, it travels down these tubes to the *womb*.

**family planning** When a woman uses methods to prevent pregnancy, so that she can have the number of children she wants, when she wants them.

**farsighted** Being able to see things that are far away but not things close by. Often happens after age 40.

**fats** Foods, like oils and butter, that give the body energy.

**female condom** A thin piece of rubber that fits into the *vagina* and covers the outer folds of the *vulva*. The condom prevents a man's *sperm* from reaching the woman's *womb*.

**fertile time** The time in a woman's cycle when she can get pregnant. For most women, this time starts about 8 days after the first day of the last *monthly bleeding* and lasts for about 11 days.

**fertility awareness (Natural Family Planning)** A *family planning* method that teaches a woman how to know her fertile time.

**fertilization** See *conception*.

**fertilizer** A material used to make the land richer so that more crops can be produced.

**fetoscope** A tool for listening to and counting the heartbeat of the baby inside the mother's *womb*.

**fetus** The baby growing inside the *womb*.

**fever** When the body *temperature* is higher than normal.

**fiber** Parts of certain plants that when eaten help the body pass *stool*.

**fibroids** Growths in the *womb* that can cause abnormal bleeding from the *vagina*, pain, and repeated *miscarriage*.

**fistula** A hole in the skin between the *vagina* and the urine tube or *rectum* that causes *urine* or *stool* to leak from the *vagina*.

**fit** See *convulsion*.

**flashback** When a person suddenly remembers something from the past as if it is happening now.

**flexibility** When the muscles and *joints* can move easily, without stiffness or pain.

**folic acid** or **folate** A B-vitamin that helps make healthy red blood cells. It is especially important that a pregnant woman get enough folic acid in her diet in order to prevent *birth defects* in the baby.

**fumes** Vapors that can contain harmful *chemicals*.

## G

**gallbladder** A small, muscular sac attached to the *liver*. The gallbladder collects a liquid that helps digest fatty foods.

**gallstones** Hard material that forms in the *gallbladder* and can cause severe pain.

**gang rape** When a woman or girl is *raped* by more than one man.

**gangrene** When skin and *tissue* dies because of a lack of blood to that area.

**gauze** Soft, loosely woven kind of cloth used for bandages.

**gender discrimination** See *discrimination*.

**gender role** The way a community defines what it means to be a woman or man.

**generic** The name of the main ingredient in a medicine.

**genital herpes** A *sexually transmitted infection* that produces sores on the *genitals* or on the mouth.

**genital warts** Growths on the *genitals*, caused by the *HPV virus* which is passed during sex.

**genitals** The sexual parts both inside and outside a woman's body.

**German measles** See *rubella*.

**germs** Very small organisms that can grow in the body and cause some *infectious diseases*.

**gland** A small sac that produces fluid.

**glaucoma** A disease of the eye in which too much pressure builds up inside the eyeball and damages vision. Glaucoma can happen slowly (*chronic glaucoma*) or suddenly (*acute glaucoma*).

**glaze** The liquid coating on a clay pot that hardens when fired and keeps water from seeping through the clay.

**goiter** A swelling on the lower front of the neck (enlargement of the *thyroid gland*) caused by lack of *iodine* in the diet.

**gonorrhea** A *sexually transmitted infection*.

**groin** the very top of the leg where it joins the body in the front, next to the *genitals*.

**gut thread** A special thread for sewing or stitching tears from childbirth. The gut thread is slowly absorbed (disappears) so that the stitches do not need to be taken out.

## H

**hallucinations** Seeing strange things or hearing voices that others do not see or hear.

**health centers** Places that provide a middle level of health care, usually in larger towns. Health centers may have trained nurses and doctors.

**health posts** A place that provides health care like *immunizations*, *prenatal care*, *family planning*, and health exams.

**heartburn** A burning feeling in the throat that is common in later pregnancy.

**helper foods** Foods that provide *nutrition*—like *protein*, *vitamins*, *minerals*, *fats*, and *sugar*—that are needed in addition to the main food.

**hemorrhage** Heavy bleeding.

**hemorrhoids** Small, painful bumps or lumps at the edge of the *anus* or inside it. They are a type of swollen *veins* that may burn, hurt, or itch.

**hepatitis** A serious disease of the *liver* caused by a *virus*. Some forms of hepatitis can be *sexually transmitted*.

**herbicides** Chemicals used to kill unwanted plants.

**herpes** Several diseases caused by different *viruses* that cause sores on the mouth or *genitals*. Herpes can be passed through sex.

**herpes zoster (shingles)** A painful rash caused by the *chickenpox virus*, with blisters on the face, back, and chest.

**high blood pressure** When the force or pressure of the blood upon the walls of the *arteries* and *veins* is harder than normal.

**HIV (Human Immune-deficiency Virus)** It is the virus that causes *AIDS*.

**hives** Hard, thick, raised spots on the skin that itch severely. They may come and go all at once or move from one place to another. A sign of *allergic reaction*.

**home remedies** Traditional ways of healing.

**hookworm** A *parasitic* worm that infects the *intestines*.

**hormonal methods** *Family planning methods* that prevent the woman's *ovary* from releasing an egg and keep the lining of the *womb* from supporting a pregnancy.

**hormones** *Chemicals* the body makes that tell it how and when to grow. *Estrogen* and *progesterone* are the most important hormones for women.

**hospital** A medical center with doctors, nurses, and special equipment for finding or treating serious illnesses.

**HPV** Some strains of Human Papilloma Virus cause genital warts, others cause cervical cancer. There is now a HPV vaccine.

**hydrogen peroxide** A chemical that kills *germs*, often used for cleaning wounds.

**hymen** A thin piece of skin that partially closes off the *vaginal* opening. In some communities, a woman is no longer considered a *virgin* if her hymen is torn, even though it can be torn by activities other than sex.

**hysterectomy** An *operation* in which the *womb* is removed.

## I

**immune system** The parts of the body that recognize harmful *germs* and try to fight off *infection*.

**immunization** See *vaccination*.

**implantation** When the *fertilized* egg attaches to the *womb* wall at the beginning of pregnancy.

**implants** A *family planning method* in which 1 or 2 small tubes containing hormones are put under the skin.

**impotence** When a man is unable to have sex, usually because his *penis* will not get or stay hard.

**incest** Sexual relations between family members or relatives.

**incision** A cut made into the body.

**incomplete abortion** When part of a pregnancy remains in the *womb* after an *abortion*.

**indigestion** See *heartburn*.

**infant formula** Artificial milk for babies used instead of breast milk. Infant formula and other replacement foods do not have the same nutrition or health benefits as breast milk.

**infection** A sickness caused by *bacteria*, *viruses*, or

other organisms. Infections may affect part of the body or all of it.

**infectious disease** Diseases caused by *germs* or *parasites* that can be spread from one person to another.

**infertility** When a woman has had sex regularly during her fertile time for one year but has been unable to get pregnant. A woman with repeated *miscarriages* is also considered infertile.

**infibulation** A form of female genital cutting in which the outside *genitals* are cut away and the opening to the *vagina* is sewn almost closed. Deinfibulation is when it is reopened for childbirth.

**inheritance** The possessions, property, or money a person receives after someone dies.

**injections** When medicine or other liquid is put into the body using a *syringe* and needle.

**inner folds** The part of a woman's *genitals* that lie just inside the hairy outer folds of the *vulva*. The inner folds are soft flaps of skin without hair that are sensitive to touch.

**intestines** The guts or tube-like part of the food canal that carries food and finally waste from the *stomach* to the *anus*.

**intimacy** Sharing your private thoughts and feelings with someone.

**intramuscular injection (IM)** *Injection* deep into the muscle.

**intra-uterine device (IUD, IUCD)** A small object that is put into the *womb* to prevent pregnancy.

**intravenous (IV)** When medicines or fluids are put into a vein.

**iodine** A *mineral* found in the ground and some foods that prevents *goiter* and mental slowness at birth.

**iron** A *mineral* found in some foods that helps make the blood healthy.

## J

**jaundice** Yellow color of the skin and eyes. Jaundice can be a sign of *hepatitis* or of newborn jaundice.

**joints** Places in the body where bones come together.

## K

**kidneys** Two large *organs* in the lower back that make *urine* by cleaning waste from the blood.

## L

**labia** Large and small folds of skin that are part of the *vulva*.

**labor** The work a woman's body does in childbirth, when her *womb* squeezes or contracts, causes her *cervix* to open, and pushes her baby down through the *vagina* and out of her body.

**latex** A material like thin rubber. *Condoms* and gloves are often made of latex.

**latrine** A hole or pit in the ground for passing *urine* or *stool*. A toilet.

**laxatives** Medicine used for *constipation* to make *stools* softer and more frequent.

**lice** Tiny insects that attach on the skin or hair of people and other animals.

**ligaments** Strong fibers in a person's body that help hold muscles and bones in place.

**literacy** The ability to read and understand written information.

**liver** A large *organ* under the lower right ribs that helps clean the blood and get rid of poisons.

**loss of consciousness** When a sick or injured person seems to be asleep and cannot be awakened. Unconscious.

**lubricants** A slippery cream or jelly used to make dry surfaces wet. Lubricants are often used on *condoms* during sex.

**lymph nodes** Small lumps under the skin in different parts of the body that trap *germs*. Lymph nodes become swollen and painful when they get *infected*.

## M

**main food** The main food, usually low-cost, that is eaten with almost every meal. This main food usually provides most of the body's daily food needs. For good nutrition, the body also needs *helper foods*.

**malaria** An *infection* that causes chills and

high *fever*, which is spread by mosquitoes. The mosquito sucks up the malaria *parasites* in the blood of an infected person and injects them into the next person it bites.

**malnutrition** When the body does not have enough of the foods it needs to stay healthy.

**massage** A way of touching the body to relieve pain, tension, or other signs. Massaging the belly can help the *womb* contract and stop heavy bleeding after birth, *miscarriage* or *abortion*.

**mastitis** See *breast infection*.

**masturbation** Touching one's own body to bring personal sexual pleasure.

**maternal mortality** When a woman dies due to problems from pregnancy and birth.

**medical abortion** Using certain medicines to end a pregnancy.

**membranes** A thin layer of skin or *tissue* that either covers *organs* inside the body or lines other parts. An example is the sac that surrounds and protects the baby when it is in the mother's *womb*.

**menopause** When a woman's *monthly bleeding* stops forever.

**menstrual cycle** See *monthly cycle*.

**menstruation** See *monthly bleeding*.

**microscope** An instrument that makes very tiny objects look larger.

**midwife** Someone with special training or experience to help a woman give birth.

**migraines** Severe headaches with *blurred eyesight*.

**minerals** Substances in foods—like *iron*, *calcium*, and *iodine*—that help the body fight disease and recover after injury or illness.

**miscarriage** When a woman loses a developing baby before it is old enough to survive outside the *womb*.

**monthly bleeding (menstruation, monthly period)** When a bloody fluid leaves a woman's *womb* and passes through the *vagina* and out of her body. It happens about every 28 days and lasts for a few days.

**monthly cycle** The period of time between the beginning of one *monthly bleeding* and the beginning of the next. About 2 weeks after a woman starts her monthly bleeding one of her *ovaries* releases an egg, and about 2 weeks after that she starts another monthly bleeding.

**monthly period** See *monthly bleeding*.

**morning sickness** See *nausea*.

**mucous method** When a woman checks the *mucus* in her *vagina* every day to find out when she is most *fertile*.

**mucus** A thick, slippery wetness that the body makes to protect the inside of the *vagina*, nose, throat, *stomach*, and *intestines*.

**mumps** A *contagious* disease caused by a *virus* and common in children. Mumps can be *prevented* by *vaccination*.

## N

**natural methods (of family planning)** Methods of preventing pregnancy that do not require any devices or *chemicals*.

**nausea** When a person feels sick to her *stomach*, as though she wants to *vomit*. This often happens to women during the first 3 or 4 months of pregnancy. Also called “morning sickness.”

**nipple** The center of the dark-colored part on the outside of the breast where milk comes out.

**nutrition** Good nutrition is eating enough food and the right kind of food so the body can grow, be healthy, and fight off disease.

## O

**operation** When a doctor makes a cut in the skin in order to repair damage inside, or to change the way the body functions.

**oral sex** When a person uses his or her mouth on a partner's *genitals* to give the partner sexual pleasure.

**organ** A part of the body that is more or less complete in itself and does a specific job. For example, the lungs are organs for breathing.

**orgasm** See *climax*.

**osteoporosis** Weak, brittle bones that break easily. Osteoporosis is more common in older women, because they produce less *estrogen* after *menopause*.

**outer folds** The fatty lips of the *vulva* that protect the outside *genitals* and close up when the legs are together.

**ovaries** Small sacs about the size of an almond or grape, one on each side of the *womb*. Ovaries produce eggs that join with a man's *sperm* to make a baby.

**overdose** Taking too much of a *drug* or medicine at one time. This can cause serious injury or death.

**ovulation** When an egg is released from one of the *ovaries* during the middle of a woman's *monthly cycle*.

**oxygen** A *chemical* in the air that is necessary for life.

## P

**Pap test** A test in which some skin *cells* are scraped from the *cervix* during a *pelvic exam* and then examined under a *microscope* to see if there are any early warning signs of *cancer*.

**paralysis** Loss of the ability to move part or all of the body.

**parasites** Tiny worms and animals that can live in a person (or animal) and cause disease.

**peer counselor** Someone who is trained to talk with another person who is in a similar situation. For example, one young woman may counsel another young woman, or someone who used to drink too much may counsel another person who is trying to quit.

**pelvic area** Everything between a woman's hips. This is where a woman's *reproductive* parts are.

**pelvic exam** An examination of a woman's *genitals* both inside and outside her body. A pelvic exam sometimes includes a *speculum* exam.

**pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)** An *infection* of the *reproductive parts* in a woman's lower *abdomen*. Also called pelvic infection.

**penis** The male sex *organ*, also used to pass *urine*. The penis gets hard during sex and releases a fluid called *semen* that contains *sperm*.

**pension fund** A fund—often set up by a union, employer, or the government—that pays people when they get older and stop working.

**PEP** The short-term use of *antiretroviral* medicines to prevent health workers accidentally exposed to HIV, or women who have been raped, from getting HIV.

**period** See *monthly bleeding*.

**permanent methods (of family planning)** See *sterilization*.

**pesticides** Poisonous *chemicals* used to kill insects that destroy food crops.

**PID** See *pelvic inflammatory disease*.

**piles (hemorrhoids)** Swollen *veins* around the *anus*, which can itch, burn, or bleed.

**pimp** A man who finds clients for a *sex worker* and who often keeps all or part of her money.

**pimple** A spot or small *infected* swelling that grows, often on the face, due to extra oil on the skin. Common in adolescent girls and boys. Also called *acne*.

**placenta (afterbirth)** A spongy *organ* in a woman's *womb* that passes the baby everything it needs to grow during pregnancy. The baby is connected to the placenta by the *cord*. After the baby is born, the placenta also comes out of the *womb*.

**plant medicines** Flowers, leaves, roots and other parts of plants that can be used to treat diseases.

**PMTCT** The use of *antiretroviral* medicines to prevent the HIV infection passing from mother to baby during pregnancy and birth. PMTCT Programs can also help mothers with other medicines, nutrition, and counselling.

**pneumonia** An *infection* of the small breathing tubes deep in the lungs.

**polyps** Growths found usually in the *womb*. Polyps are almost never caused by *cancer*.

**pregnancy in the tube** A pregnancy that grows in one of the *fallopian tubes*, instead of in the *womb*.

**prenatal** The time between when a woman gets pregnant and when she gives birth.

**prenatal care** Checkups during pregnancy, when a midwife or specially trained health worker examines a pregnant woman to make sure the pregnancy is going well.

**premature** When a baby is born too early.

**prevent** Stopping something before it starts.

**pressure sores (bed sores)** Sores that form over bony parts of the body when a person lies or sits on that part of the body for too long without moving.

**privacy** When a person gives information to a health worker, nurse, or doctor and knows it will not be overheard by, or repeated to, others.

**progesterone** A female *hormone*.

**progesterin** A *hormone* made in a laboratory that is similar to the *progesterone* made naturally in a woman's body. It is found in some hormonal *family planning methods*.

**progesterin only pill** A method of *family planning* that contains one *hormone*—*progesterin*—but no *estrogen*.

**prolapsed uterus** When the muscles that hold up the *womb* become weak, causing it to fall or drop down into the *vagina*.

**prostitute** See *sex worker*.

**proteins** Body-building foods necessary for proper growth and strength.

**puberty** The time when a girl changes into a woman and her *monthly bleeding* begins, or when a boy changes into a man.

**pubic bone** The front part of the *pelvic* bones, just beneath the hair on a woman's *genitals*.

**pulse** The heartbeat, which tells how fast and how hard the heart is working. The pulse can be felt at certain points on the body, like the inside of the wrist or the neck.

**purification** Killing harmful *germs* in water before drinking it.

**pus** White or yellow fluid that is filled with *germs*, often found inside an *infected* tear or wound.

## R

**radiation** Rays of energy given off by certain elements. Radiation is harmful because it kills *cells* in the body. But it can also be used to treat *cancer* by killing cancer cells.

**radiation treatment** When a machine sends rays of energy into a person's body to kill *cancer cells*. The rays cannot be seen or felt.

**rape** When a man puts his *penis*, finger, or any object into a woman's *vagina*, *anus*, or mouth without her consent.

**rectal exam** Checking the *rectum* for growths or other problems. A rectal exam can also give information about the wall or lining of the *vagina*.

**rectum** The lower part of the *intestine* that is connected to the *anus*.

**rehydration drink** A drink to treat *dehydration*. The drink can be made with boiled water, salt, sugar, or powdered cereal.

**reproductive health** Health services like *family planning services* or *prenatal care*, that help prevent or treat health concerns connected to a woman's *reproductive parts*.

**reproductive parts** The parts of a man's and a woman's body that allow them to make a baby.

**resistance** The ability of something to defend itself against something that would normally harm or kill it. Many *bacteria* and *viruses* can become resistant to the effects of medicines like *antibiotics* and *antiretrovirals* so these treatments no longer work against disease.

**rubella (German measles)** A disease spread by a *virus* that can harm a baby growing in the *womb*.

**rhythm method** See *counting days method*.

## S

**safer sex** Avoiding direct contact with a sexual partner's *genitals*, blood, *semen*, or *vaginal wetness*.

**saliva** A person's spit.

**sanitation** Public cleanliness to prevent disease, such as providing clean drinking water and keeping public places free of waste.

**scabies** A *contagious* skin disease caused by a *parasite*.

**scar** A cut or wound that leaves the skin or *tissue* rough and raised after it has healed.

**scrotum** The bag between a man's legs that holds his *testicles* or *balls*.

**seizure** See *convulsion*.

**self-esteem** How a woman feels about herself, and about her role in her family and community.

**semen** The liquid containing a man's *sperm*, which is released from his *penis* during *ejaculation*.

**sepsis** A serious *infection* that has spread into the blood.

**sex worker** Anyone who exchanges sex for money or other favors, goods or services.

**sexual abuse** See *abuse*.

**sexual assault** Unwanted sexual contact.

**sexual harassment** Unwanted sexual attention from anyone who has power over a woman.

**sexual health** When a woman has control over her sexual life.

**sexual intercourse** Sex with the *penis* in the *vagina*.

**sexual roles** The way a community defines what it means to be a woman or a man.

**sexually transmitted infections (STIs)** *Infections* passed from one person to another during sex.

**shock** A dangerous condition with severe weakness or *loss of consciousness*, cold sweats, and fast, weak *pulse*. It can be caused by *dehydration*, heavy bleeding, injury, burns, or a severe illness.

**side effects** When medicines or *hormonal methods* cause changes in the body other than those needed to fight disease or prevent pregnancy.

**speculum** A small metal or plastic tool that holds the *vagina* open.

**sperm** Tiny organisms in a man's *semen* that can swim up a woman's *vagina* and *fertilize* an egg. This is how a pregnancy starts.

## T

**spermicide** A contraceptive cream, gel or foam that helps prevent pregnancy by killing *sperm*.

**squeezing exercise** An exercise to help strengthen weak muscles that cause a woman to pass *urine* often or to leak urine.

**status** The importance a person has in her or his family and community. Or whether a person has HIV (positive status) or not (negative status).

**STIs** See *sexually transmitted infections*.

**sterile** When something is completely free from *germs*.

**sterilization** A permanent way of making a woman or man unable to have children.

**steroids** A class of medicines used to treat many different health problems. Steroids can have serious *side effects* if used for a long time.

**stethoscope** An instrument used to listen to sounds inside the body, like the heartbeat.

**stomach** The sac-like *organ* in the belly where food is *digested*.

**stool** The waste that passes from the *anus* during a *bowel* movement.

**stress** Any activities or events that put pressure on a woman, causing tension in her body and mind.

**stroke** A sudden *loss of consciousness*, feeling, or ability to move caused by bleeding or a *clot* inside the brain.

**subcutaneous injection** An *injection* into the fatty *tissue* under the skin, not into the muscle or vein.

**sugar** Sweet foods, like honey or sugar cane, that give energy.

**support groups** When people with a common problem meet together to help one another.

**surgery** When a doctor cuts into the body to find out what is wrong or to treat an illness. An *operation*.

**syphilis** A *sexually transmitted infection*.

**syringe** An instrument used to inject medicine.

**tampons** Cotton, cloth, or sponges that are put inside the *vagina* to catch *monthly bleeding* before it leaves the body.

**temperature** The degree of heat of a person's body.

**testicles** The part of the male *genitals* that is inside the *scrotum* and makes the *sperm*.

**testosterone** The main *hormone* in a man's body.

**tetanus** A serious disease caused by a *germ* that lives in the *stools* of people or animals. Tetanus enters the body through a wound.

**thrush** A fungal *infection* that causes white patches and soreness on the skin inside the mouth, on the tongue, and the tube that connects the mouth with the *stomach*.

**thyroid gland** A *gland* in the front of the throat that makes *hormones* that affect growth and development. The thyroid needs *iodine* to work properly.

**thermometer** An instrument used to measure how hot a person's body *temperature* is.

**tissue** The material making up the muscles, fatty areas, and *organs* of the body.

**toxemia** See *eclampsia*.

**toxic** A harmful substance that can cause disease or death when it enters the body is said to be toxic.

**toxicity** When a person takes too much medicine and it builds up to a dangerous level in the body.

**traditional healers** Healers who use methods based on beliefs that have been passed down from generation to generation.

**trauma** When something horrible happens to a person or to someone the person is close to.

**trichomonas** A disease of the *genitals* that is passed during sex.

**tubal ligation** An *operation* in which the *fallopian tubes* are cut or tied so the egg cannot travel to the *womb* to be *fertilized*.

**tubal pregnancy** See *pregnancy in the tube*.

**tuberculosis** A serious *infection* caused by a *germ* that usually affects the *lungs*.

**tubes** See *fallopian tubes*.

**tumor** Abnormal growth.

## U

**ulcer** A *chronic* open sore of the skin, the *stomach*, or the *intestines*.

**ultrasound** A machine that uses sound to take a picture of the inside of the body without cutting it open. It is often used during pregnancy to see the baby inside the *womb*.

**unconscious** See *loss of consciousness*.

**unsafe sex** Direct contact with a sexual partner's *genitals*, blood, *semen* or *vaginal wetness*—if there is any chance you or your partner has a *sexually transmitted infection (STI)*.

**urethra** A short tube that carries *urine* from the *bladder* to the hole a person urinates from.

**urine** Liquid waste that collects in the *bladder* and leaves the body through a hole just above the *vagina*.

**uristix** Special paper strips that change color when dipped in *urine* that has sugar in it. Uristix can be used to find out if a person has *diabetes*.

**uterus** See *womb*.

## V

**vaccinations** or **vaccines** Medicines that are *injected* to give protection against specific diseases like *tetanus*.

**vagina (birth canal)** A tube made of muscle that goes from the opening of the woman's *genitals* to the *cervix*.

**varicose veins** Abnormally swollen *veins*—often blue, lumpy, and winding—on the legs of older people, pregnant women, and women who have had a lot of children. Pregnant women also sometimes have varicose veins in the *genitals*.

**vasectomy** A permanent method of preventing pregnancy, in which the tubes that carry *sperm* from the *testicles* to the *penis* are cut.

**veins** Thin, tube-like vessels that carry blood back to the heart. Also see *artery*.

**virgin** A person who has not had sex.

**virus** *Germs* smaller than *bacteria*, which cause some *infectious diseases*.

**visual inspection** A method of screening women for *cancer* of the *cervix*. A vinegar solution (acetic acid) is painted on the cervix and turns abnormal tissue white.

**vitamins** Foods that the body needs to work properly, to fight disease, and to get better after a sickness or injury.

**vomiting** Throwing up the contents of the *stomach* through the mouth.

**vulva** All the parts of a woman's *genitals* that can be seen on the outside of her body between her legs.

## W

**withdrawal** The period of time in which the body gets used to being without a *drug* or alcohol to which it is physically *addicted*.

**womb (uterus)** A sac of strong muscle inside a woman's belly. *Monthly bleeding* comes from the womb, and the baby grows inside the womb during pregnancy.

## X

**x-rays** Pictures of parts of the inside of the body, like the bones or the lungs, which are created by rays sent through the body. The body does not need to be cut open.

## Y

**yeast infection** A vaginal *infection* with white, lumpy *discharge*, itching, and burning. These infections are common during pregnancy and when taking *antibiotics*.