

WORLD HEALTH DAY

World Health Day, April 7, marks the anniversary of the coming into force of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, and this year coincides with the Organization's twenty-fifth anniversary. As in the past, the aim of World Health Day is to draw the attention of the public to a health problem of importance in a large number of countries. The theme for 1973 is "Health begins at home", for which the Director-General of WHO has issued the following message:

The World Health Organization ever since its inception in 1948 has concentrated on health problems affecting millions, hundreds of millions of people. Yet it seems to me fitting that on this World Health Day, WHO's twenty-fifth anniversary, we should concern ourselves with health in the little world of the family at home. Just as international health security depends on the level of health of each country in the world community, so the health of the city, the village, the hamlet, depends on the state of health in the homes that make it up.

There are innumerable ways of making the home a healthier place. Learning more about health, making the best use of available foods, disposing properly of wastes dangerous to health, helping children to grow up strong and self-reliant, planning the family so that each child has a better, brighter chance of succeeding in life, taking some basic precautions against accidents, protecting the happiness of old people—these are but a few suggestions.

In many such actions, the family needs service from the community. Water supply, vaccination against communicable diseases, and help to mothers in pregnancy and childbirth are obvious

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examples. Another reason why community services are important is that, in many a home today, the elders are living in conditions very different from those they knew when they were young. In the overcrowded city, for example, their time-tested ways are perhaps no longer appropriate. Community action can smooth the process of adaptation.

Efforts to lead a healthier life may of course be foiled by one's neighbour's illness or by his bad habits; but if some diseases are communicable, so are good habits and healthy ways of living. Everybody can contribute to world health by making health begin at home.



