



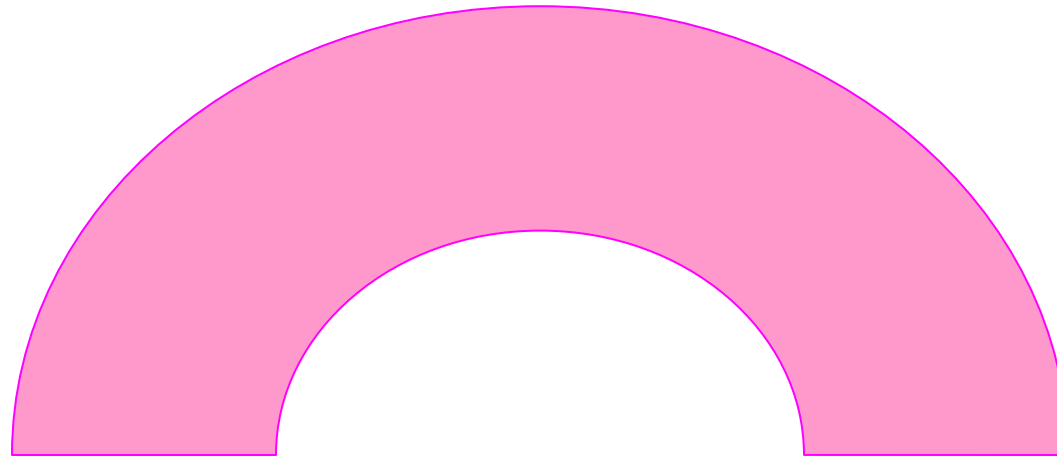
Obstetric Fistula

**A Devastating
Maternal Injury**

**‘Join us! –
Let’s Prevent It Together!’**

Picture Book





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Foreword

I am very happy to know that a 'Picture Book' on prevention of Obstetric Fistula has been developed by the Fistula Care Project of EngenderHealth Bangladesh, which will be used by service providers at the facility level and facilitators of community awareness raising meetings at the community level to create an environment to facilitate prevention of Obstetric Fistula in the catchments' population of Fistula Care supported hospitals.

I thank the members of the Bangladesh Fistula Care Project team, the Global Fistula Care Team and all the team members of the EngenderHealth Bangladesh Country Office for providing their valuable suggestions and support in developing this 'Picture Book' on prevention of Obstetric Fistula.



Dr. A. J. Faisal
Country Representative
EngenderHealth Bangladesh County Office

User Instructions

This picture book is designed to support health service providers and field-level workers in raising awareness among local leaders and the general population about obstetric fistula and engaging these audiences in the effort to prevent obstetric fistula and improve maternal health in their communities.

The book is divided into three sections:

- *The 1st section describes the tragic story of 14 year old Fatema. The story is intended to be used in stimulating discussion about the factors contributing to Fatema's tragedy.*
- *The 2nd section describes what an obstetric fistula is and how an obstetric fistula develops.*
- *The 3rd section focuses on how obstetric fistula can be prevented. It describes important actions that women, families, and communities can take to ensure that women go through pregnancy safely.*

Obstetric fistula is preventable. It is hoped that this book will help users prevent obstetric fistula in their communities.

Obstetric fistula can be treated “free of cost” at the following health facilities

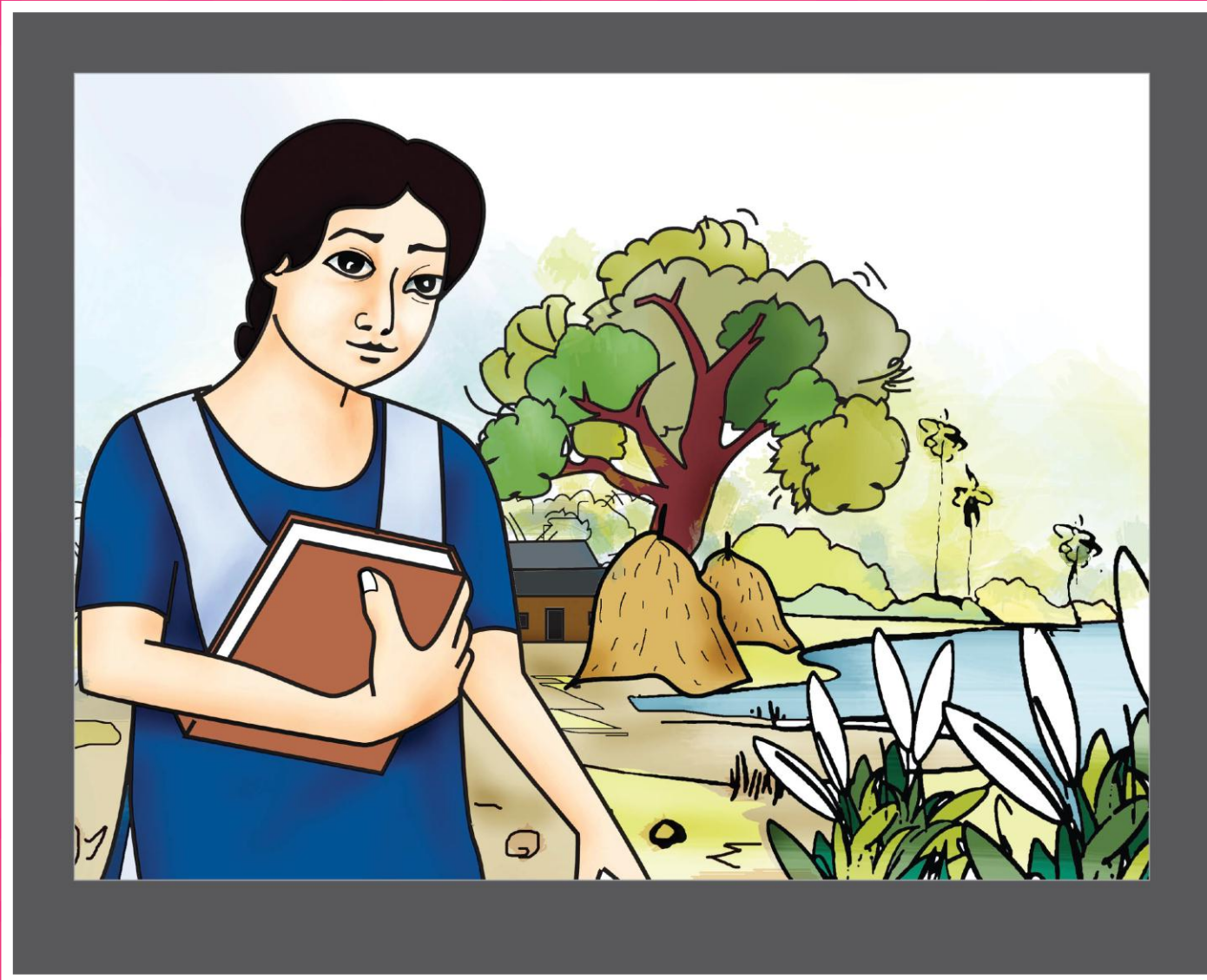
- *Ad-din Hospital, Bara Maghbazar, Dhaka*
- *Kumudini Hospital, Mirzapur, Tangail*
- *10 Government Medical College Hospitals*

- *Ad-din Hospital, Rail Road, Jessore*
- *LAMB Hospital, Parbatipur, Dinajpur*

Fatema's Story

**A 14 year old
village girl named
Fatema**

Fatema's Story



Fatema's Story

**Fatema got married at
the age of 15**

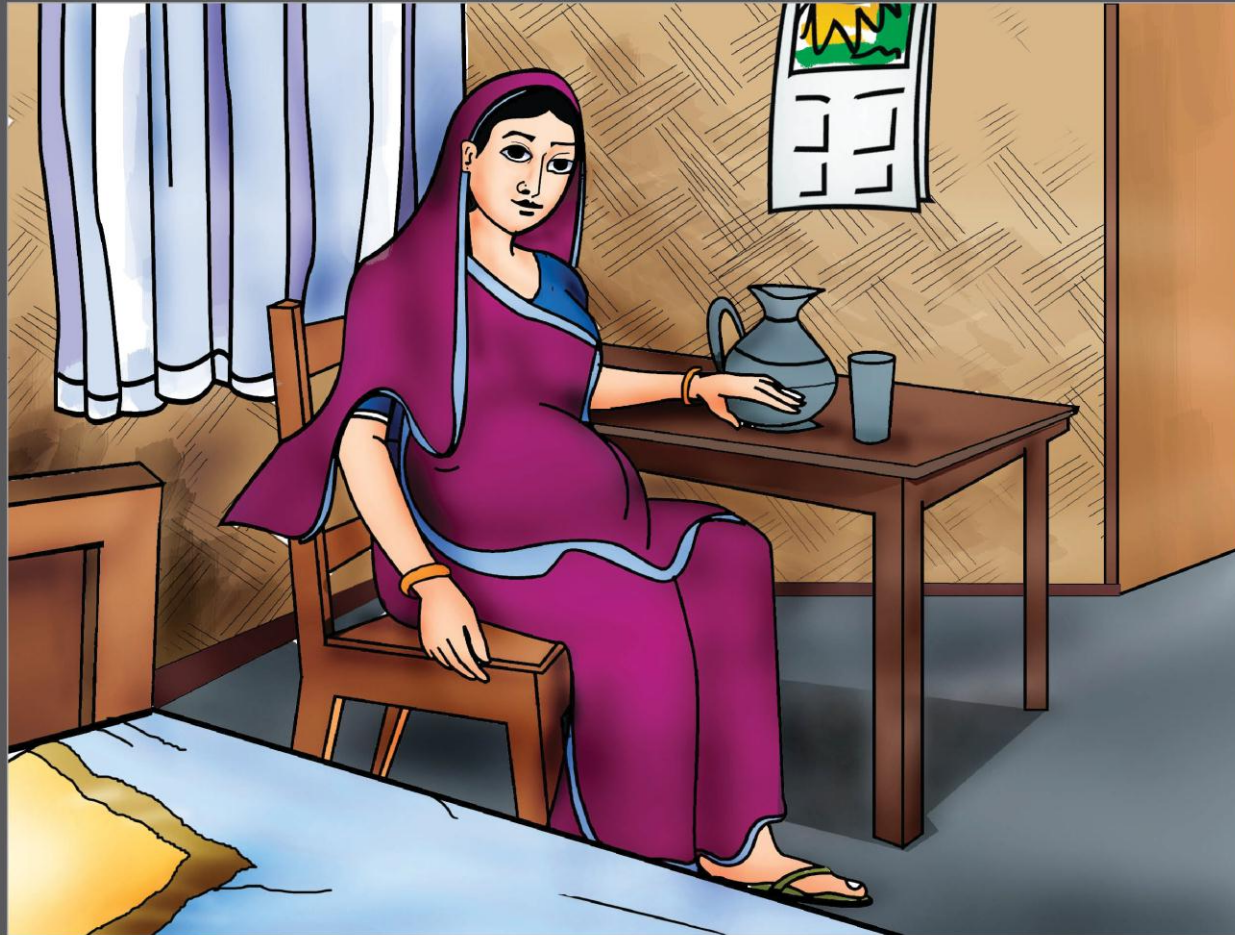
Fatema's Story



Fatema's Story

Just after marriage, Fatema became pregnant. She was not aware of antenatal care.

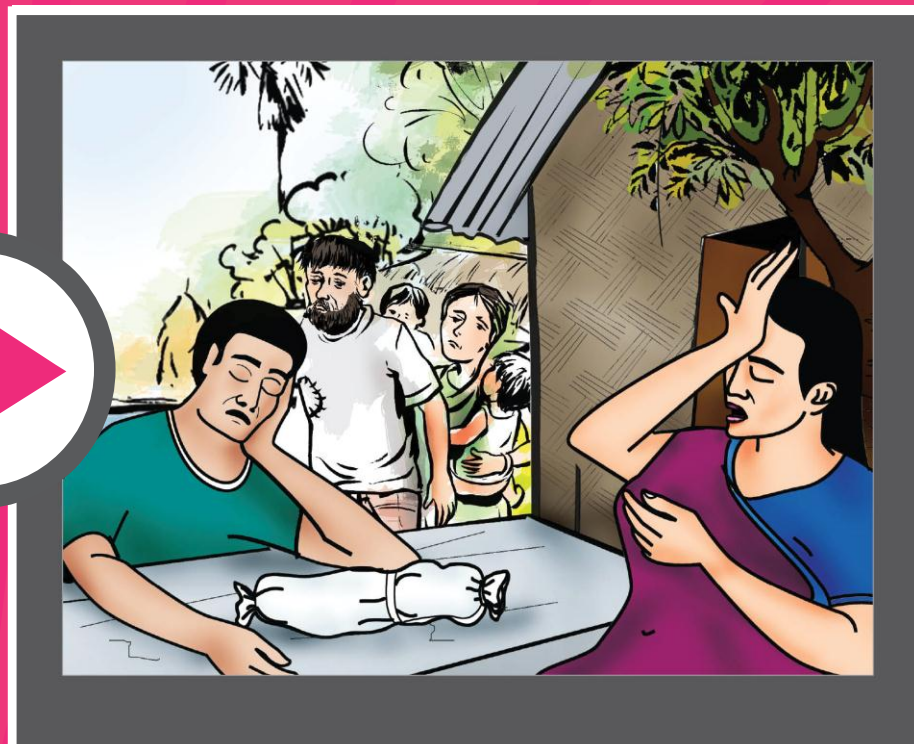
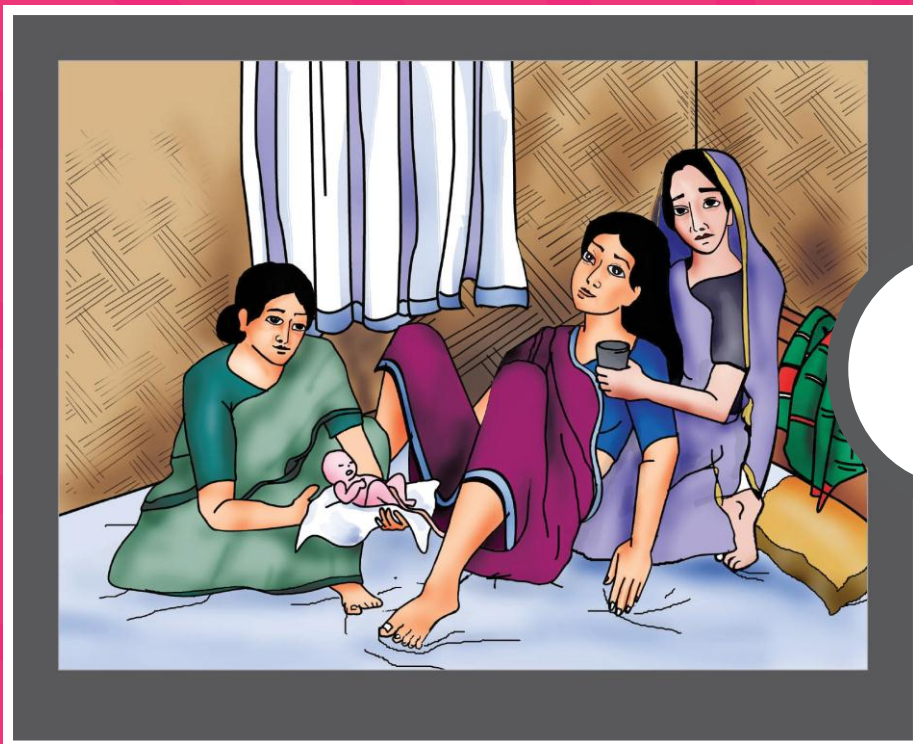
Fatema's Story



Fatema's Story

When Fatema's labour pains started, her mother-in-law called for the traditional birth attendant to help. The birth attendant had no training. Fatema laboured for two days at home and finally delivered a dead baby.

Fatema's Story



Fatema's Story

Q What happened next in Fatema's life?

Urine started leaking continuously through her birth canal seven days after the delivery.

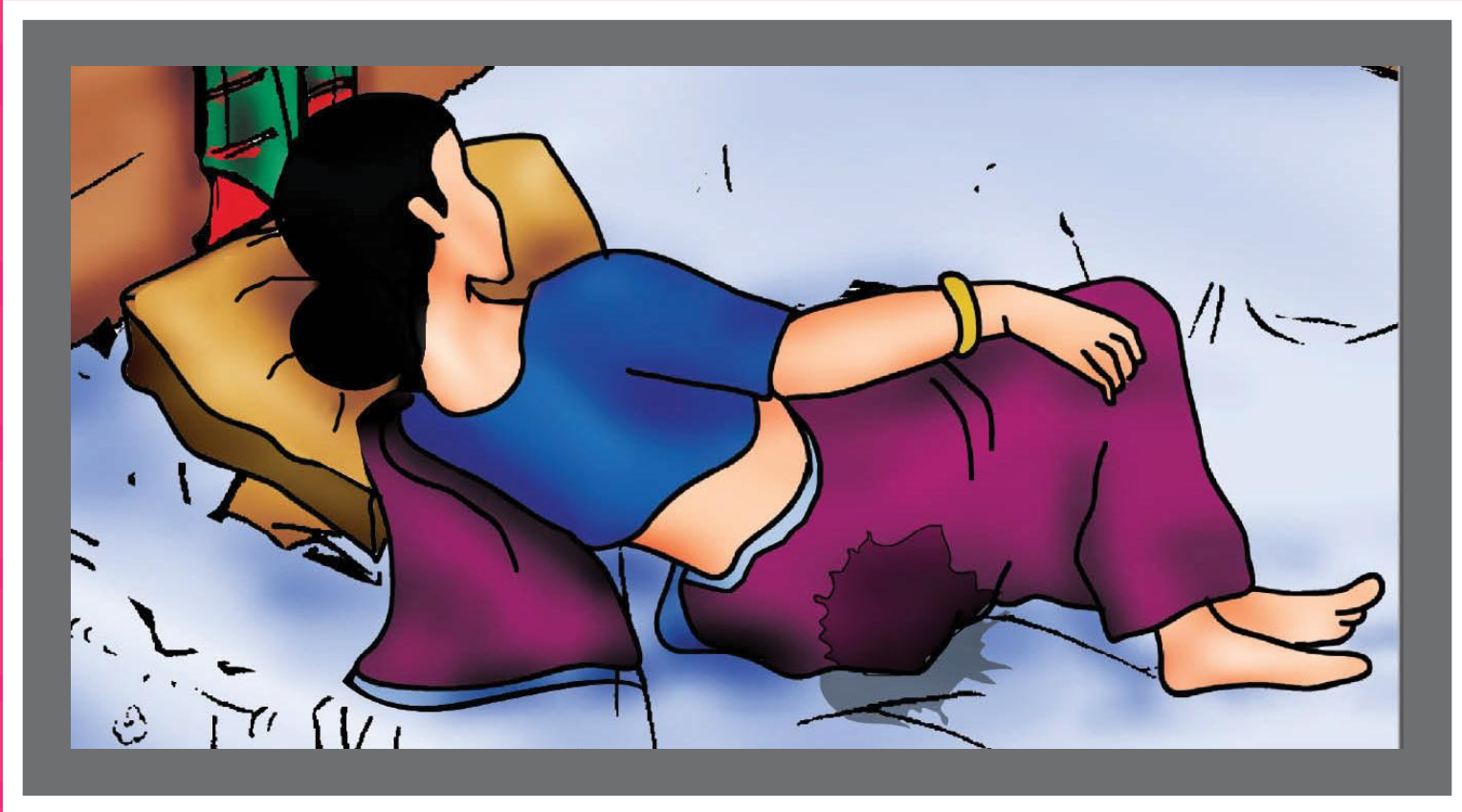
Q How was Fatema affected by this condition?

- Fatema's husband divorced her without seeking treatment for the condition.
- Fatema returned to her parents' house, where she lives with great sadness and loneliness.
- She does not have the education or skills to get a job. She feels ashamed and embarrassed due to the smell of urine. She sees no one and never leaves the house.

Q Why do you think this happened?

Q What could Fatema, her husband and their families have done differently?

Fatema's Story

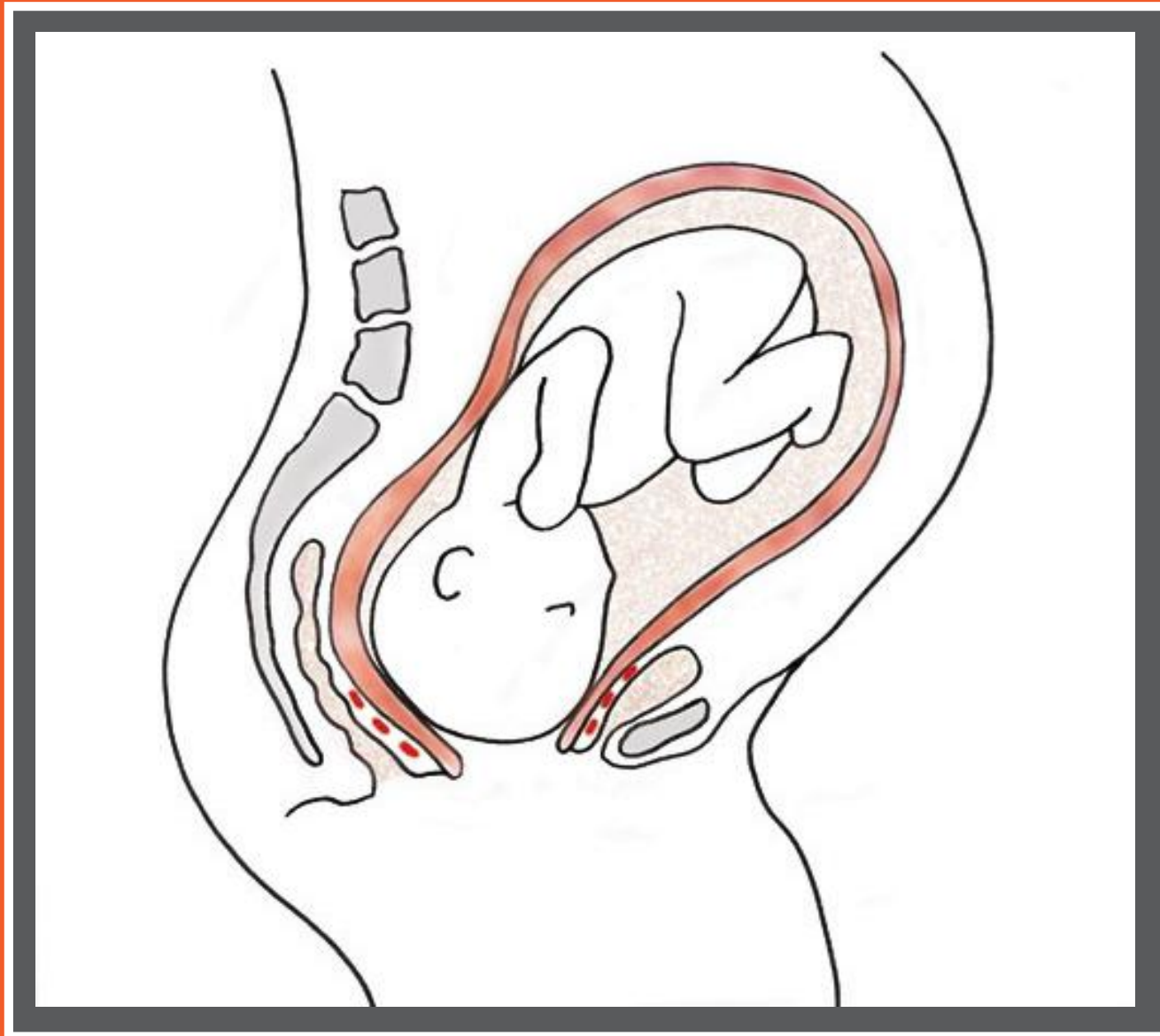


What Is Obstetric Fistula?

Fistula is a hole or abnormal opening in the birth canal from which continuous leaking of urine or feces or both occurs.

But urine only during strong sneezing/coughing/laughing is not fistula

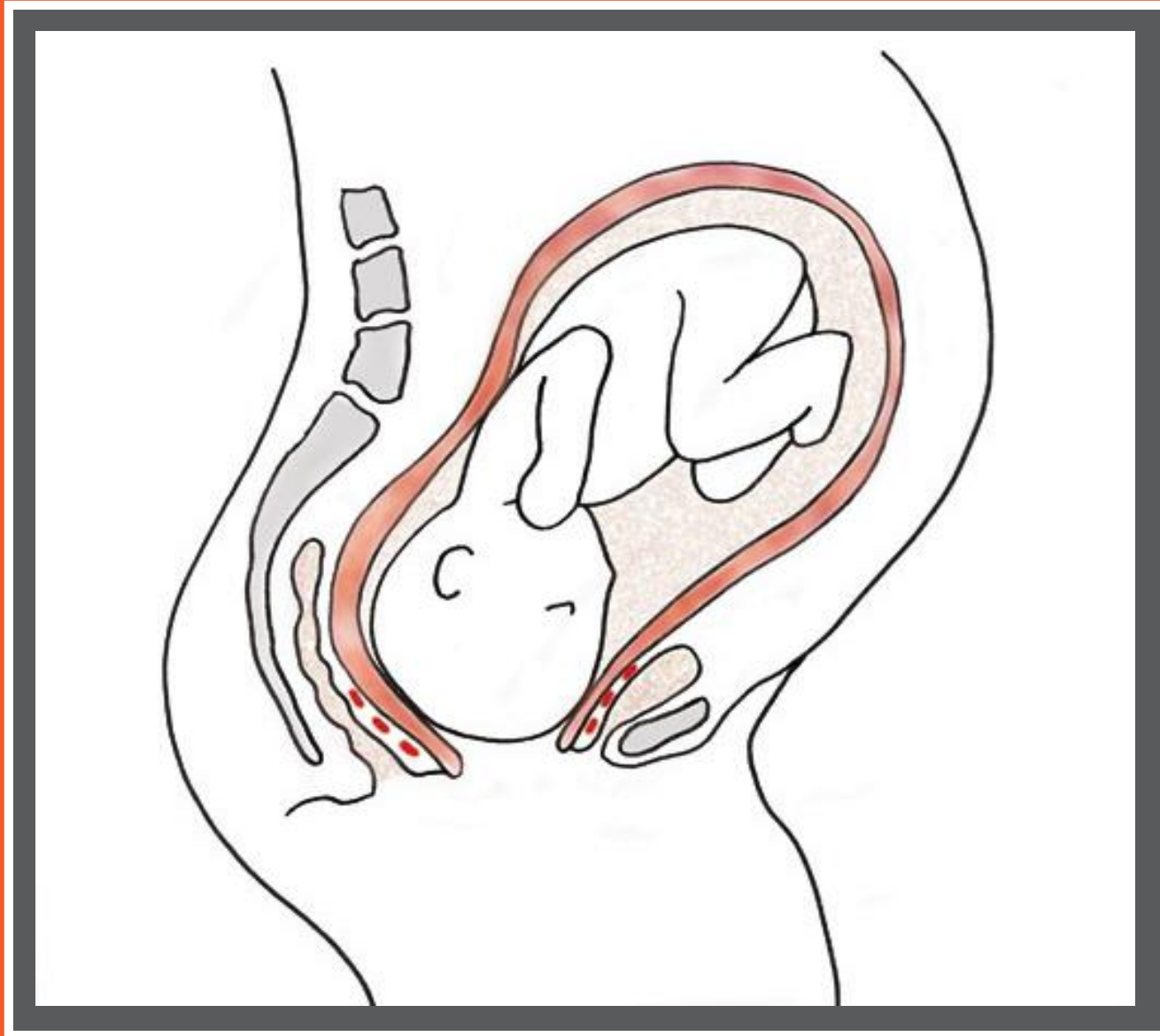
What Is Obstetric Fistula?



How Does Obstetric Fistula Develop?

- **When labor lasts too long (more than 12 hours), women are at risk of developing an obstetric fistula.**
- **During labor, the baby's head presses against the soft tissue in the mother's birth canal. This pressure from the baby's head reduces or cuts off the circulation of blood to the tissue.**
- **When labor lasts too long (more than 12 hours), the tissue can die. A hole forms between the birth canal and the bladder or rectum or both, and then urine or feces leak constantly. This is an obstetric fistula.**

How Does Obstetric Fistula Develop?



Why Does Obstetric Fistula Develop?

“A woman is at risk of obstetric fistula when labor pains last more than 12 hours. A woman should be taken to the hospital immediately if she has not delivered the baby after 12 hours of labor.”

Why Does Obstetric Fistula Develop?



Pregnancy at a young age increases a woman's risk for long labor and obstetric fistula

Q Why do many girls get married at a young age?

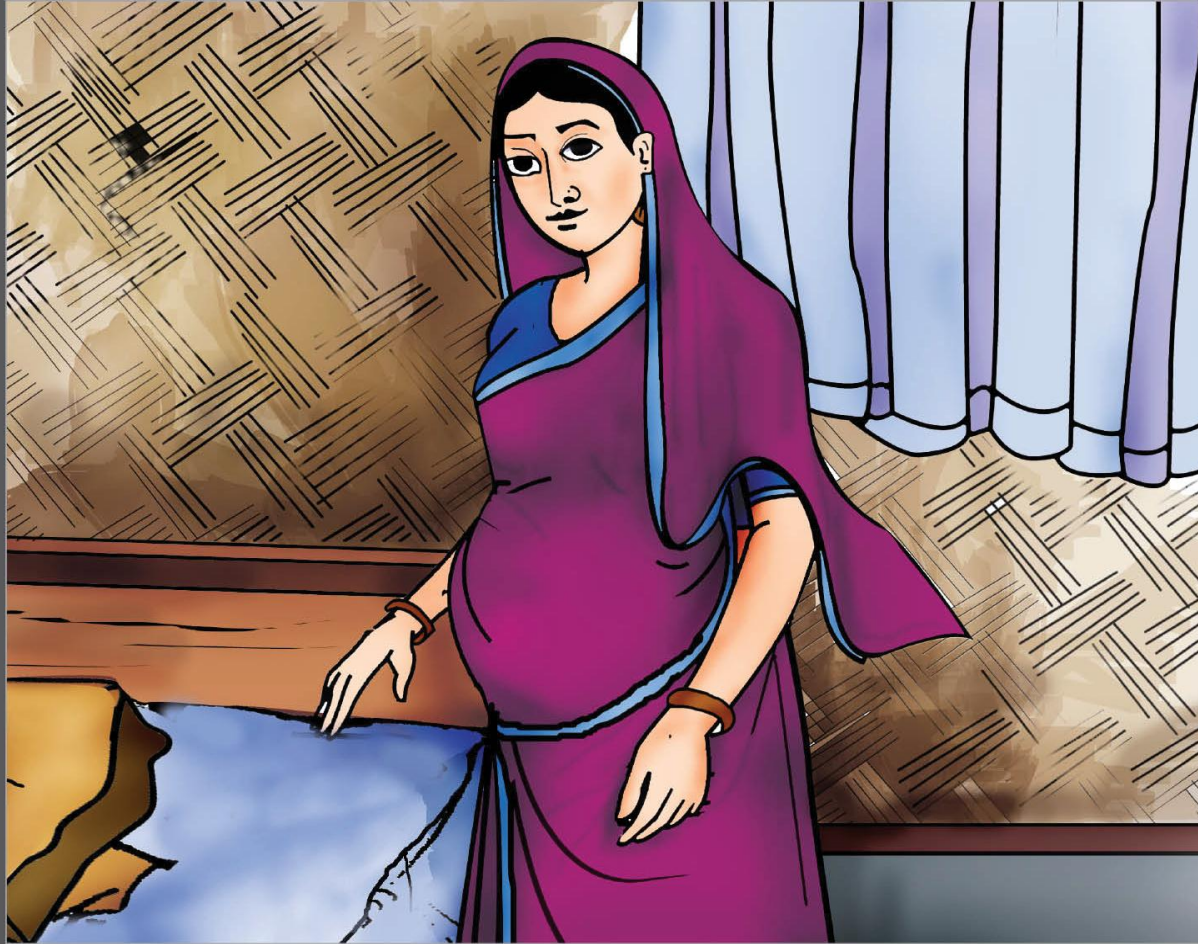
Q Why do many become pregnant shortly after marriage?

Q Why does obstetric fistula develop at such a young age?

Ans.

- In our country, most girls get married at young age (younger than 18)
- Many girls become pregnant soon after being married and before their bodies are physically mature enough to go through pregnancy and childbirth safely.
- Women who become pregnant before age 18 may be at greater risk for long labor and obstetric fistula.

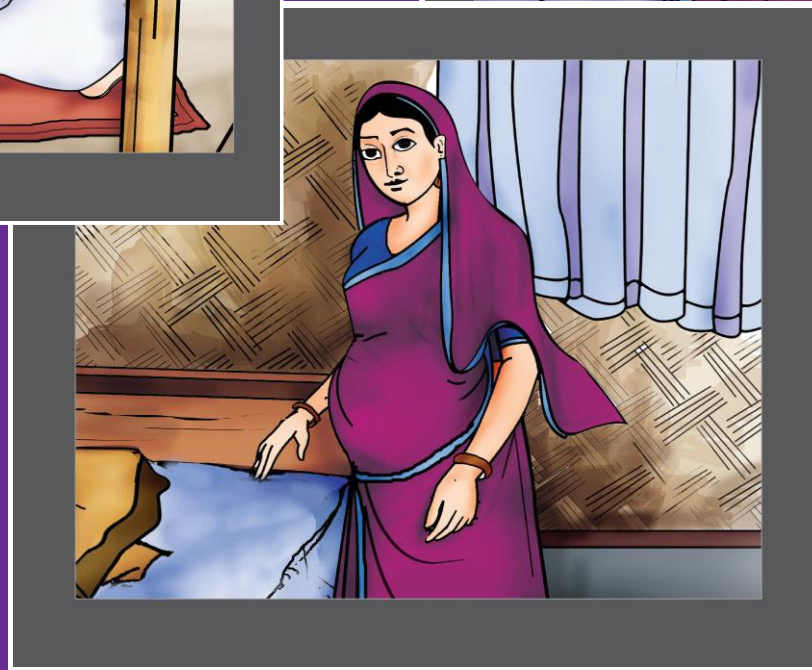
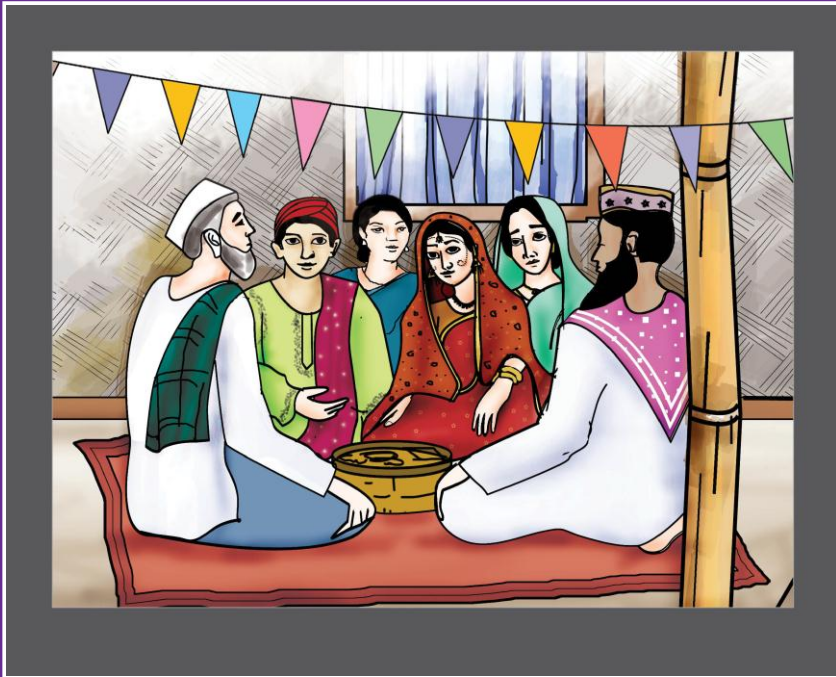
Pregnancy at a young age increases a woman's risk for long labor and obstetric fistula



How to prevent the occurrence of obstetric fistula?

- **Delay marriage until after age 18.**
- **Use family planning to delay pregnancy until a woman can go through pregnancy and childbirth safely.**
- **Ensure that pregnant women attend antenatal care regularly and develop a birth plan.**
- **Ensure that pregnant women deliver with a skilled birth attendant who can recognize and manage complications or refer the woman quickly if labour does not progress well.**

How to prevent the occurrence of obstetric fistula?



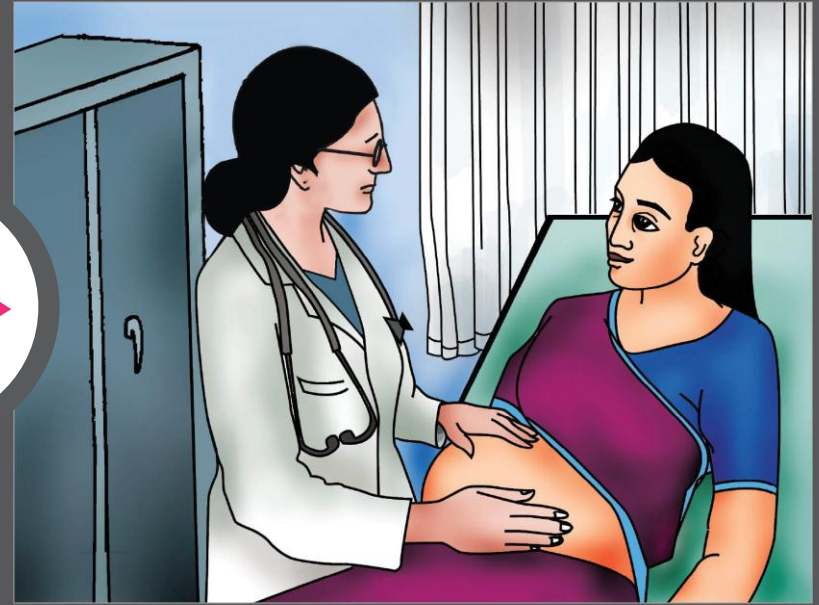
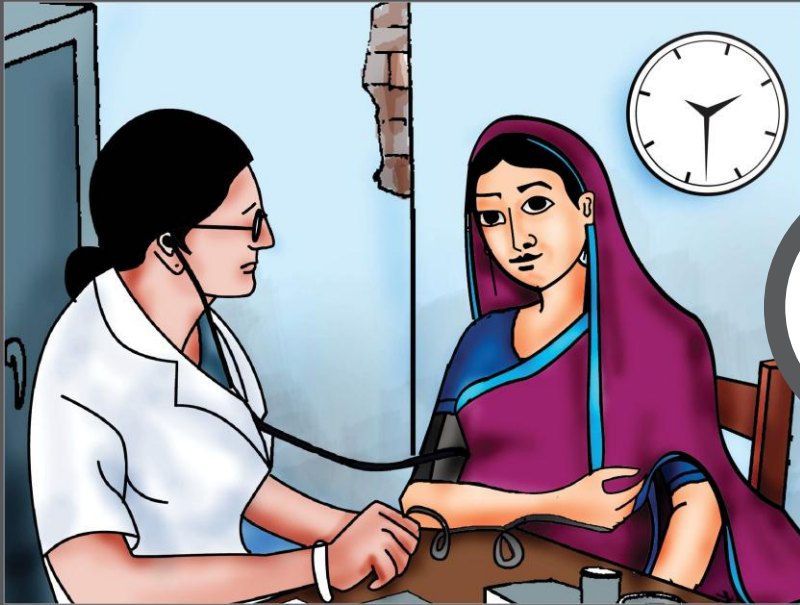
1

Antenatal Care

- **Antenatal care is important for ensuring that the pregnant woman is in good health throughout her pregnancy and that the baby is growing well.**
- **Antenatal care providers can also identify which women may have difficult deliveries because of way the baby is positioned. These women should always plan to deliver at hospital.**

1

Antenatal Care



Seek antenatal care from a trained health worker

- **The pregnant mother and her family should decide before the delivery whether she will deliver her baby at home or at hospital. Once the decision is made, the mother and family should prepare accordingly before the birth.**
- **If they are planning to deliver at home, the pregnant mother and her family should select a skilled/trained birth attendant who will provide delivery care and, if necessary, refer her to a hospital.**
- **The pregnant mother and her family should start saving money from the beginning of the pregnancy in case of an emergency.**
- **Either the family or the community will have to ensure the availability of a reliable transport to carry the pregnant mother to hospital if necessary.**
- **The family and community should find an available and willing blood donor of same blood group so that assistance is available in the case of an emergency.**

2

Birth Planning



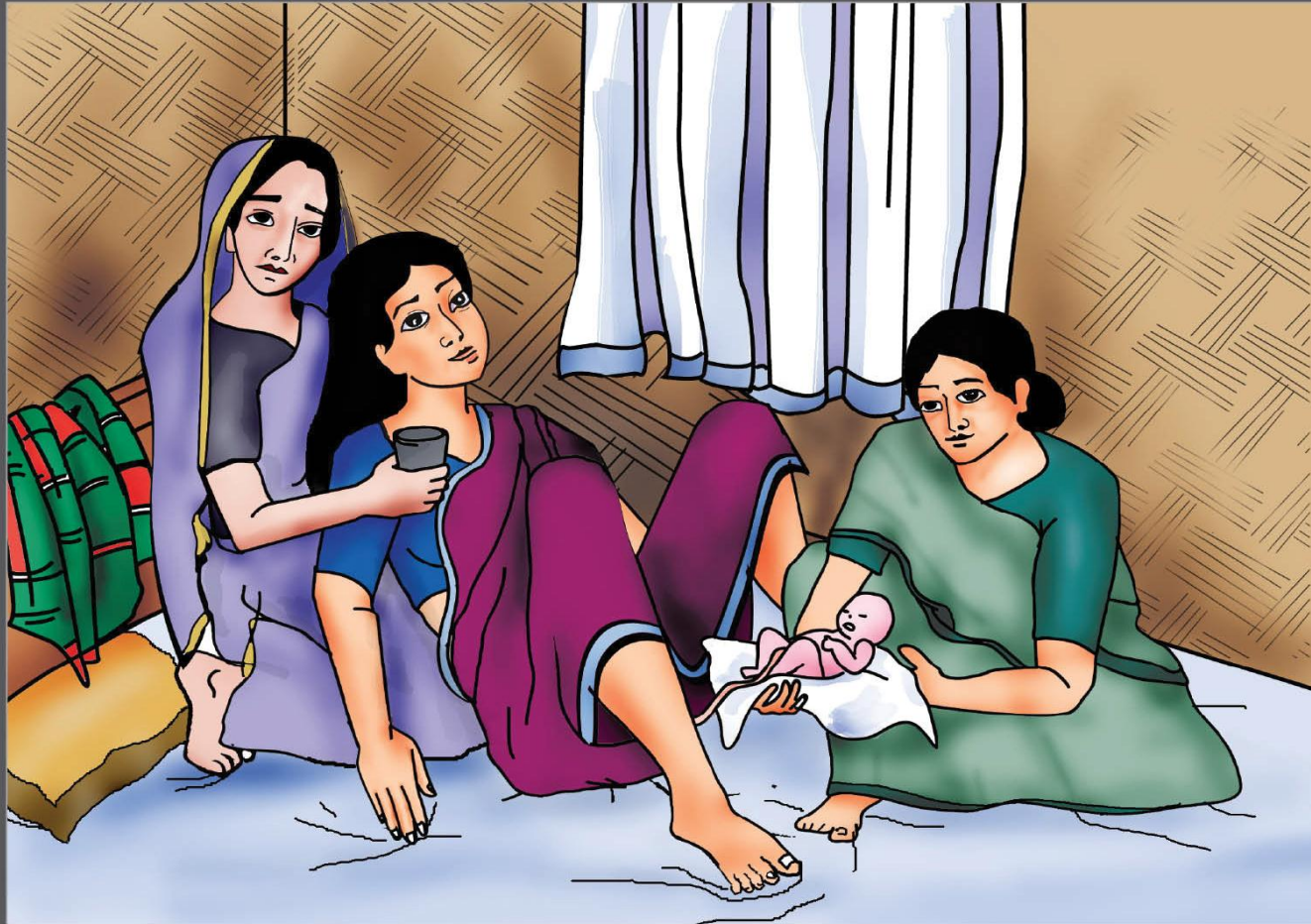
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Presence of skilled or trained birth attendant for providing care during delivery

- All women should deliver with a trained provider who can recognize complications quickly and who recognizes when labour has lasted too long.
- If labour lasts more than 12 hours, the pregnant woman should be taken to hospital where skilled providers are available.
- If labour lasts more than 12 hours, an operation/Caesarean section may be needed to protect the health and life of the mother and the baby.

3

Presence of skilled or trained birth attendant for providing care during delivery



4

Using family planning methods

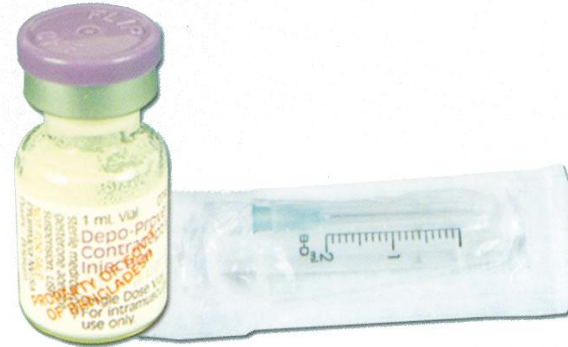
- Use family planning methods correctly to prevent pregnancy at a young age, pregnancy too soon or unplanned pregnancy.
- Use a family planning method after having a discussion with the family planning or health worker

4

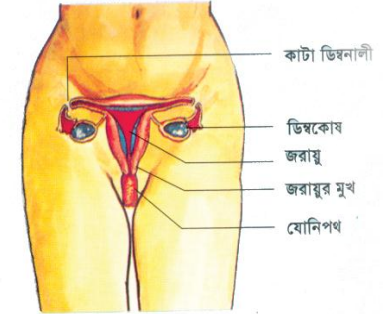
Using family planning methods



খাবার বড়ি



ইনজেকশন



টিউবেকটমি



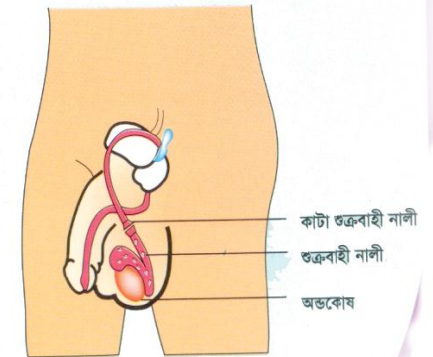
কনডম



ইমপ্ল্যান্ট



আইইউডি



এনএসভি

What do you think?.....

**Is it possible to prevent
obstetric fistula in your
area or society?.....**

Join us.....

If we try

And you try

You can help us make others aware...

**And together, we can all help prevent
obstetric fistula**

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