

Action Birth Card

Take ACTION to achieve 10 important steps for a happy, healthy pregnancy, childbirth and first two years of your child's life!



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How do I use this Action Birth Card?

Using the **A**ction **B**irth **C**ard is as easy as ABC!

This tool will help you plan to achieve 10 important steps for a healthy pregnancy, childbirth and first 2 years of your child's life:


1. Early antenatal care
2. Both partners HIV test in antenatal care
3. Attend 4 or more antenatal care appointments
4. Develop a birth plan and deliver at a health facility
5. Early postnatal care for mothers AND babies
6. Make use of postnatal HIV services for mothers, fathers, children and infants
7. Identity documents obtained
8. Post-partum family planning
9. Baby check-ups and immunisations up to date
10. Identification and early treatment of infections.

Each page of the Action Birth Card will help you to think about and plan for ACTION to help you achieve your steps.

If you have already passed one stage in your pregnancy, you can use this tool to look back and think about how you might improve things in the future.

Later, you will be able to show your child how you planned and acted to give them the best healthy start possible.

Become an 'ABC Ambassador' – share your experiences using this tool to help others in your community take action for a happy, healthy pregnancy, childbirth and first two years of their child's life.



Who can help me use this Action Birth Card?

You are not alone! There are many people in your community who can help you to take ACTION for a healthy pregnancy, childbirth and first two years of your child's life. As you plan, think of how some of these people or groups in your community might be able to help you...



Village Health Workers
Village Elders, Male Partners
Government and Social Services

Health Facility Staff
Traditional Leaders
Friends and Relatives

Religious Leaders
Community-Based Organisation
NGOs

Step

1



ANC before 14 weeks (around 3 months) is important for preventing mother-to-child (PMTCT) transmission of HIV and checking for warning signs in pregnancy.



Early ANC booking

Think About:

- How will you know if you are pregnant? – go to the clinic if you think you are pregnant.
- Early antenatal care helps to ensure a healthy pregnancy for you and your baby.

Act now!

My barriers to early ANC are:.....

.....

Who can help me in my community?

.....

What can I do to overcome these barriers?

.....

And later, reflect...

Did I go to ANC early?

YES NO

What would I have done better, or differently.....

.....

My partner was able to accompany me to my first ANC visit

YES NO

What would I have done better or differently.....

.....

Step 2



...BOTH parents should have an HIV test while a woman is pregnant for a happy, healthy family!



HIV Test in Pregnancy

Think About:

- Both parents – not just mothers – should know their HIV status. Talk to your partner.
- Knowing your HIV status is important so you can:
 - » Access services to prevent transmitting HIV to your baby if you are positive.
 - » Stay healthy.

Act Now!

My barriers to having an HIV test in pregnancy are:

.....

What can I do to overcome these barriers?

.....

Who can help me?

And later, reflect...

Did I have an HIV test?

YES

NO

What would I have done differently?.....

.....

Did I share my HIV test results with my partner?

YES

NO

What would I have done differently?.....

.....

Did my partner have an HIV test?

YES

NO

Do I know my partner's HIV status?

YES

NO

Step

3



...attending ANC 4 or more times is known to increase the health of mothers and their babies!



Attend 4 or More ANC Visits

Think About:

- At ANC you will be given important information about your stage of pregnancy.
- Warning signs will be checked.
- This is a time to discuss questions or concerns with your healthcare worker.
- Plan with your healthcare worker when to begin your stay at the Maternal Waiting Home if one is available in your community.

Act now!

My barriers to going to 4 or more ANC appointments are:.....

.....
.....

What can I do to overcome these barriers?

.....

Who can help me?

And later, reflect...

How many ANC appointments did I attend? ¹ ² ³ ⁴

My partner was able to join me ¹ ² ³ ⁴

What would I have done better or differently.....

.....

Step

4



...planning for the birth of your baby with your partner will be the first gift you give to your child.



Develop birth plan and deliver at a health facility

Think about:

- When is your expected date of delivery (EDD)? Talk to your health worker about your EDD and develop a birth plan.
- Birth planning should consider: arranging transport to facility at time of labour, staying in a maternity waiting home, essential items to bring with you to the facility, child care for young children at home.
- Prepare for the unexpected! What happens if you go into labour at night? How will you get to the facility?
- At what stage of labour will you travel to the health facility? Don't leave it too late.
- Who will accompany you to the health facility?

Act now!

My barriers to developing a birth plan are:

My barriers to delivering my baby at a health facility are:

What can I do to overcome these barriers?

Who can help me?

And later, reflect...

Did I develop a birth plan? Y/N

YES	NO
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Did I deliver my baby at a health facility? Y/N

YES	NO
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What would I have done better or differently?.....

If you give birth to your baby at a health facility you can get help if complications occur during labour or delivery. You are not alone!

Step 5

Clinic



...post natal check-ups are just as important for the mother as for the baby!
A healthy family is a happy family.



Early postnatal care for mothers and babies

Think About:

- Early postnatal care can help prevent most conditions and infections that make mothers and babies sick after birth.
- Mothers and babies should visit the clinic within 7 days of delivery and then at 6 weeks.
- The mother will get information on caring for her child (infant feeding, vaccinations, early warning signs of life threatening infections, PMTCT, growth monitoring, child development stages) and family planning and medical care for herself.

Act Now!

My barriers to early postnatal care are:

For myself:.....

For my baby:

What can I do to overcome these barriers?

Who can help me?.....

.....

And later, reflect...

Did I attend early postnatal care for myself?

YES NO

What would I have done differently?.....

.....

Did I attend postnatal care for my baby?

YES NO

What would I have done differently?.....

.....

Exclusively breastfeed your baby for the first six months

Step
6



HIV prevention, care and treatment is most effective if all family members know their HIV status and work together to stay healthy.



Make use of postnatal HIV services for mothers, fathers, children and infants

Think about:

- Take steps to prevent HIV infection while breastfeeding – talk to your partner, use condoms and know your status.
- All HIV negative women in ANC should receive another HIV test at 6 weeks postnatal, and every 6 months thereafter – male partners and other children in the family should also know their status.
- All HIV positive women should take their ARV medicines for life – if you are having problems taking your medicines regularly, talk to your health care provider.
- All HIV-exposed infants should receive:
 - » Daily Nevirapine (NVP) for the first six weeks
 - » Daily Cotrimoxazole (CTX) from 6 weeks
 - » An HIV test at 6 weeks after birth
 - » Another HIV test at 9 months if breastfed
 - » Another HIV test 6 weeks after breastfeeding has stopped.
- All women, regardless of HIV status are recommended to exclusively breastfeed for the first 6 months (only breast milk, no porridge or water)
- You can receive all of these services at your clinic – talk to your health worker.

Act now!

My barriers to accessing postnatal HIV services for myself are.....

My barriers to my male partner and other children accessing HIV services after delivery are.....

My barriers to accessing HIV services for my baby are.....

What can I do to overcome these barriers?.....

Who can help me?

And later, reflect...

Did I access postnatal HIV services for myself? Y/N

YES	NO
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Has my partner had an HIV test since I gave birth? Y/N

YES	NO
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Did I exclusively breast feed for the first 6 months? Y/N

YES	NO
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Did I access postnatal HIV services for my baby? Y/N

YES	NO
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What would I have done better or differently.....

Step 7



... both parents; ensure your child has a birth certificate by 6 weeks after delivery.



Obtain identity documents by 6 weeks

Think about:

- Obtaining a birth record and birth certificate are important ways you can help ensure your child can access education, health care, social assistance, ID document and rights as a citizen of Zimbabwe.
- The following are identity documents you need for your baby:
 - » **Birth record:** obtained from the health facility following delivery.
 - » **Child health card:** provided by the facility where you give birth.
 - » **Birth certificate:** a permanent and official record of where your child was born and who his/her parents are is obtained at your local Registrar's office. To obtain a birth certificate you will need to bring your infant's birth record, your marriage certificate if legally married, IDs of both father and mother.
- All of these services can be accessed free of charge before 6 weeks of age – so be sure to obtain all identity documents early and store them in a safe place.

Act now!

My barriers to obtaining identity documents for my child are.....

What can I do to overcome these barriers?.....

Who can help me?.....

And later, reflect...

Did I obtain a birth record for my child?

YES	NO
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Does my baby have a child health card?

YES	NO
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Does my child have a birth certificate?

YES	NO
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are my child's identity documents stored in a safe place where they cannot be damaged?

YES	NO
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What would I have done better or differently.....

Both parents ensure your child has a birth certificate by 6 weeks after delivery.

Step

8



...dual protection means condoms PLUS another method of contraception.



Family planning after Delivery

Think about:

- Pregnancies in the first year after birth hold the greatest risk for mother and baby. It is recommended that couples wait 24 months before becoming pregnant again.
- Preparation is key! Plan ahead and be aware of your family planning options before delivery.
- Talk to your health worker about your family planning options after delivery before leaving the clinic and choose the best method for yourself then or at your 6-week check up.
- Dual protection (use of hormonal contraceptive/IUCD and condoms) is the only way to prevent unintended pregnancies and prevent HIV transmission.

Act now!

My barriers to choosing a family planning method by 6 weeks are

.....

What can I do to overcome these barriers?.....

.....

Who can help me?.....

And later, reflect...

Did I initiate a family planning method before 6 weeks?

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Did I use a family planning method from birth to 2 years?

My FP choices from birth to 2 years:

Secure (lactating)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Implant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Control (post-lactating)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vasectomy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injectable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tubal ligation	<input type="checkbox"/>
IUCD	<input type="checkbox"/>	Condom	<input type="checkbox"/>

What would I have done better or differently?.....

.....

Step 9



... monthly growth monitoring and up to date immunisation is your child's right!



Baby check-ups and immunisations up to date

Think about:

- Bringing your infant in for monthly growth monitoring check-ups is important to ensure your child's health.
- Up-to-date immunisations will help infants be healthy now and into the future!
- Keep track of your baby's stages of development on your child health card together with your health worker – discuss any concerns you have about your infant's health.
- Exclusively breastfeed your baby for the first six months and then talk to a healthcare worker about how to ensure best nutrition for your growing baby using locally available food.
- Children thrive through love, cuddles and attention from both mothers and fathers – play with your baby and enjoy this special time together as a family.

Act now!

My barriers to bringing my child to monthly growth monitoring (and recording this on his/her health card) are

My barriers to accessing timely immunisations for my infant are.....

My barriers to keeping track of my baby's stages of development are.....

My barriers to ensuring good nutrition for my baby are.....

What can I do to overcome these barriers?

Who can help me?

And later, reflect...

Did my infant have his/her growth monitored every month from 1–24 months.

YES	NO
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Did my baby receive all of the recommended immunisations?

YES	NO
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What would I have done better or differently?

Step
10



... early identification and treatment of childhood infections reduces illness and death in children under the age of two years



Early identification and treatment of infections - check warning signs and seek help

Think about:

- Did you know? Many infant and child deaths can be avoided if children are brought to the clinic **early** for treatment.
- **Care-seek early:** If any child in your household shows any of the following symptoms they should be brought to the clinic within 24 hours:
 - » **Fever:** raised temperature
 - » **Diarrhoea:** three or more loose or watery stools per day or more than normal for your child
 - » **Respiratory illness:** cough with rapid or difficult breathing due to what you think is a problem in the chest or both a problem in the chest and a blocked nose
 - » **Other danger signs in children:** blood in stool, convulsions, difficulty drinking or feeding, vomits everything, unusually sleepy or unconscious, swelling in both feet

Act now!

My barriers to accessing health care for my baby within 24 hours are.....

What can I do to overcome these barriers?

Who can help me?.....

And later, reflect...

Did I identify any infections or warning signs in my infant from 0-2 years?

Y/N

Which ones? (check):

Fever

Diarrhoea

Respiratory illness

Other (describe)

Did I bring my child to the clinic within 24 hours to be checked?

YES

NO

What happened? (describe)

What would I have done better or differently?.....

Congratulations!

You have achieved the 10 steps for a happy healthy pregnancy, childbirth and first two years of your child's life!

Taking action for the health of your family does not end here!

There are other important steps you can take for your own health and the health of your family.

How will you plan to take action to achieve these steps? Who can help you?

Family Health Care Steps:

- **Prevent infections:** many infections can be prevented. Talk to your village health worker or clinic healthcare worker about:
 - Ensuring household WASH – water, sanitation and hygiene
 - Frequent hand washing under running water
 - Sleeping under insecticide treated bed nets
 - Maintaining good nutrition for yourself, your partner and children using locally available foods.
- **HIV prevention and care:**
 - Prevention of HIV infection if you are negative – use condoms
 - If you or other members of your household are HIV positive make sure they take their ARVs.
- Lead a healthy lifestyle – avoid alcohol, drugs and smoking
- Early care-seeking in case of illness for all family members
- All children in your household have access to education
- Support youth sexual and reproductive health – prevent early pregnancy and early marriage in girls
- Zero tolerance for violence in the household.



Your Notes Page

'Healthy Families, Happy Families'

Creating a happy, healthy, loving and supportive environment for your family by achieving the 10 steps in this book will take the effort and commitment of everyone in your household and individuals in your community.

Ask for help when needed and don't give up if you face challenges.

You are strong!

You are capable!

You can achieve these steps and more!



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Designed and laid out by

