

## CHRONICLE

### Zinc Pills are helping save lives in Ventanilla



Zinc pills are helping to save lives in Ventanilla, a marginal urban district located North of Lima where a large majority of the population lives in poverty and extreme poverty.

Children are habitually exposed to inadequate water and sanitation amenities, are in frequent contact with dirt and animals and consequently expose themselves to diseases.

Pedro Gabriel Chura is almost 3 years old and lives in the human settlement Felix Moreno in a very humble adobe and corrugated iron house on the base of a sandy hill in Pachacutec. 15 days ago Pedrito suffered from strong diarrhoea yet again. In the morning he drank some milk and by night his stomach ache began, followed by diarrhoea at daybreak. During the course of the morning the vomiting, fever and diarrhoea became more intense. Pedro's mother Santa, his sole guardian, took him to the health center where they were attended in the emergency ward. There he was given dissolved zinc pills and was instructed to continue the treatment for the following 9 days.

## CHRONICLE

During the course of the treatment he was visited by a health promoter who oversaw his recovery and provided Santa with advice on healthy habits such as hand washing, household cleanliness and personal hygiene.

The effect was immediate and the diarrhoea disappeared. Previously he never finished his meals and now he had started eating regularly. Santa is now happy because his weight and growth have improved. “If your child has diarrhoea I recommend the zinc capsules because, not only do they increase their appetite, I think it strengthens the children and it’s like a vitamin. Now my son asks for food. “

Something similar occurred in another sector of Ventanilla. Nataniel, a toddler of 1 year and 2 months got a severe stomach ache, diarrhoea and queasiness. Her mother Ermelinda went from Tahuantinsuyo in Pachacutec to the Health centre. While there they administered one zinc pill and 9 to consume at home. The diarrhoea disappeared the following day and inspired Ermelinda to complete the treatment knowing that they had helped relieve Naty of her previously frequent looseness of bowels. Similarly the health promoters visited on several occasions to see the treatment through.

Smiling Ermelinda says “I’m very happy because my daughter is healthy. I’ve told my friends about the benefits of zinc pills. She doesn’t get diarrhoea anymore and she eats more. “

**For more information, please contact Marilu Wiefold, tel 613-0706, cel. 997-573-218, email [mwiegold@unicef.org](mailto:mwiegold@unicef.org) or Sandra Esquen, tel. 613-0712, cel. 999-017-866, e-mail [sesquen@unicef.org](mailto:sesquen@unicef.org)**