

HANDOUT 12.1. THE STORY OF RUTI AND HER SON DAN

Ruti was 20 years old and lived with her sister, Helen. Ruti worked as a casual labourer in a factory 20 minutes from their home. Because her wages were low, she and her sister had little money to buy food.

Ruti was diagnosed with HIV when she attended antenatal care (ANC) with her first pregnancy. During ANC Ruti was counselled on feeding options for her baby. She chose to breastfeed exclusively for the first 6 months and then to introduce complementary feeding with continued breastfeeding until her baby reached 2 years old.

Ruti's baby Dan was born weighing 2.7 kg. Ruti took him to the child care clinic every month, and he received all his immunizations. Despite her decision to breastfeed Dan exclusively for 6 months, when he was 4 months old she abruptly weaned him off breastmilk and began feeding him cow milk. Dan soon got severe diarrhoea and then got pneumonia when he was 5 months old. When he was taken to the health facility to treat the pneumonia, the nurses tested him for HIV, and he tested positive.

When he was 9 months old, Dan was admitted to the nutrition rehabilitation clinic with severe malnutrition. After 60 days he was discharged. His weight had increased to 4.8 kg. Before discharge, the nurses taught Ruti about the Essential Nutrition Actions. A month later Dan was registered in a paediatric ART programme. The nutrition rehabilitation clinic did not follow up on Dan's progress. Four months later, Ruti became ill and was cared for at home. Dan suffered from diarrhoea again, and his Aunt Helen took him to the health facility, where he was treated and she received education on hygiene and diet planning for the child. A few days later Ruti died. Helen took over Dan's care.

Now Dan should be about 3 years old. The nutrition rehabilitation clinic has asked you to make a follow-up visit to find out how he is doing. When you visit the house, Helen tells you that Dan died 8 months ago.