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## UNIT 2 THE CONCEPT OF HEALTH

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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All of us talk about the importance of good health. However, despite the lip service, health continues to be a neglected entity and is often taken for granted. The value of health is not fully appreciated until it is lost. When we look at ourselves and people around us, we find that in most cases, efforts to maintain good health get a lower priority compared to efforts to gain wealth, power, prestige or knowledge. The situation is made worse by the fact that "health" is a term which is difficult to define and lacks a universally acceptable definition. In addition, there is no single yardstick to determine the health status of a person. During the past few decades, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of health and the need to have a definition of health that encompasses the whole quality of life.

In this Unit we will take a look at the meaning of the term "health", as it is understood today. We will also identify the importance of good health and the factors that influence our health.

#### Objectives

After studying this Unit, you should be able to :

- state the different interpretations of the term "Health"
- define "Health"
- analyse the definition of health
- briefly describe the various dimensions of health
- appreciate that health is a relative concept
- examine the determinants of health
- emphasize the importance of good health for the development of the child

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### 2.2 HEALTH—A CHANGING CONCEPT

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"What is health?" This has not been an easy question to answer. Health is not perceived the same way by all members of a community, including various professionals for example doctors, health administrators and social scientists, giving

rise to confusion about the concept of health. Let us briefly look at the changing concept of health.

Traditionally, health has been viewed as "absence of disease". In other words, if a person was not suffering from any disease, she was considered healthy. This concept, known as the *biomedical concept*, was based on the "germ theory of disease", which dominated medical thought from the end of the 19th century onwards. The medical profession looked upon the human body as a machine and disease as a consequence of the breakdown of the machine, primarily brought about by germs. The biomedical concept of health has been considered unsatisfactory as it ignores the role of environmental, social, cultural and psychological determinants of health. This concept of health was found inadequate to explain some of the major problems of mankind, such as malnutrition, chronic diseases, drug abuse, mental illness etc. Deficiencies in the biomedical concept gave rise to other concepts of health, like the ecological and psychosocial concepts.

According to the *ecological concept*, health is a state of harmonious equilibrium between human beings and their environment, and disease a state of mal-adjustment of the human being to the environment. For example, destruction of forests on a large scale has brought about changes in the climate leading to famine/floods and starvation with consequent disease problems. It is argued that better adaptation of human beings to natural environments leads to a longer life expectancy and a better quality of life.

Development of social sciences has led to the *psychosocial concept* of health. This concept is based on the ground that health is not only a biological phenomenon, but also a social one. Factors such as psychological, socio-cultural and economic also influence health. There is a great role of social customs and practices on the health status of the individuals, such as those relating to diet of a pregnant or lactating woman, feeding an infant, and marriage between relatives.

The most acceptable concept of health is the *holistic concept*. This, in fact, is the synthesis of all the above concepts. The holistic concept of health implies the well-being of the person in the context of her environment. This view corresponds to the ancient view that health implies a sound mind, in a sound body, in a congenial family, in a good environment. The holistic concept thus recognises that all sectors of society have an effect on health, and emphasises the protection and promotion of health.

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### 2.3 DEFINITION OF HEALTH

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The above concepts of health are embodied in the World Health Organisation's (WHO) (1948) definition of health, which is as follows :

*"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity."*

In recent years, this definition has been expanded to include the ability to lead a "socially and economically productive life".

While the WHO definition of health is one that is most widely accepted, it also has some limitations. Can you identify them? Yes, one drawback is the absence of measurable terms. For instance, can we measure the "mental well-being" or the "social well-being" of a person and decide if it is complete? Well, not really!

Another criticism is that health cannot be defined as a "state". Instead, it must be seen as a *process* of continuous adjustment of people to the changing environment and demands of life.

Further, many consider that health, as defined by WHO, is an idealistic goal rather than a realistic one. There are times when we are suffering from an infection or have a headache. There are also times when we feel exhausted and incapable of

concentrating on our work, or worried about something. How often can we claim to be in a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being? Some consider the WHO definition irrelevant to everyday demands as nobody qualifies as healthy. That is, if we follow this definition, most of us are sick!

However, in spite of the limitations mentioned above, the concept of health as defined by WHO is broad and positive in its implications. It sets out the standard; the standard of "positive health", towards which all of us should strive.

Now what is *positive health* ? You know that the WHO definition of health envisages 3 dimensions of health—physical, mental and social. A person who enjoys health at all these three levels is said to be in a state of positive health. The concept of positive health implies the notion of "perfect functioning of the body and mind in the social environment". In such a state, biologically, every cell and organ of the body is functioning at optimum capacity and in perfect harmony; psychologically, the individual feels a sense of well-being; and socially, her capacities for participation in the social system are optimal.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

- 1) What is the World Health Organisation's definition of health? List two positive aspects and two limitations of this definition.

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- 2) How is the psychosocial concept of health different from the biomedical concept ?

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## 2.4 DIMENSIONS OF HEALTH

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Let us come to considering the physical, mental and social dimensions of health in greater detail. These are the components of health cited in the WHO definition. In addition, we shall take a look at some of the newer dimensions of health viz. spiritual and vocational. As we shall see, all these dimensions are closely related to, and interact with, each other.

### 2.4.1 Physical Dimension

Physical well-being implies a state in which every cell and organ is functioning at optimum capacity and in harmony with the rest of the body. It is a very important component of health. And in fact, in practical terms, generally when we say that a

person is healthy, we are referring to this dimension. Physical health is comparatively easy to identify and describe.

Some of the signs of physical well-being of a person are :

- Lustrous hair
- Healthy scalp
- Good complexion
- Clean skin
- Firm flesh
- Bright, clear eyes
- No malformations of skeleton
- Weight normal for height and age
- Well developed and firm muscles
- Smooth, easy, coordinated body movements
- Regular activities of bowels and bladder
- Good appetite
- Sound sleep

In such a state, the organs of the body are of normal size and function normally, and all the senses (such as sight and hearing) are intact.

Physical health can be assessed by measures such as clinical examination, dietary and nutritional assessment and laboratory investigations.

You must be aware that it is this dimension of health that has been receiving the most attention.

### **2.4.2 Mental Dimension**

Mental health is a vital component of total health. It is basic for dealing effectively with reality, with oneself and with others. Only a mentally healthy person is able to meet her life problems in such a way as to provide her with a feeling of personal satisfaction and to contribute satisfactorily to the welfare of the society. A person who is mentally healthy is one who

- is free from unsolvable internal conflicts and is able to arrive at decisions
- is confident about her own abilities but recognises her faults
- has high self-esteem
- assumes responsibilities according to her capacity and finds satisfaction in their accomplishment
- is not in the habit of condemning or pitying herself all the time
- is able to handle any situation without getting too upset or tense
- has good control over her emotions and does not give in frequently to strong feelings of fear, jealousy, anger or guilt
- adapts to situations and people
- is sensitive to the emotional needs of others
- deals with others with consideration
- is well adjusted and gets along well with others

It is difficult to determine just when a person is no longer mentally healthy, as also when she is—the boundaries are not that clear. What would you say about somebody who lacks self-esteem or is indecisive? The extent is obviously an important criterion. And as is true of health in general, mental health is not simply the absence of mental illness. So what is important is not just the absence of negative attributes, but the presence of positive ones. As things stand, our

knowledge of mental health is still incomplete and we do not have precise tools for measuring mental health.

The fact that mental well-being and physical well-being are interrelated is a common observation. It is also suggested by the ancient concept of sound mind in a sound body. Poor mental health affects physical health and *vice-versa*. Psychological factors play a major role in physical disorders like stomach ulcer, bronchial asthma and high blood pressure. Can you give an example of the reverse, that is, how physical ill-health can affect mental health? Think of a child suffering from a chronic kidney problem or a congenital heart condition. Her health condition is likely to influence her activity level, her schooling and her friendships.

### 2.4.3 Social Dimension

A person's health is not just her physical and mental well-being. A healthy person should be well adjusted in the community of which she is a part and should be able to function for the betterment of her community.

The social dimension of health includes the person's ability to see herself as a member of a larger community, the quantity and quality of her interpersonal relationships with others and the extent of her involvement with the community. She should fulfil her social obligations. These include obligations to the family as well as the community. In addition, she should be able to relate to others, that is, help others and get along well with them.

As in the case of mental health, while extreme forms of social ill-health are easy to identify, the same is not true of minor deviations. All of us would recognise criminals as socially ill individuals, and acts like theft and murder as manifestations of social ill-health, but when it comes to areas like fulfilling one's responsibility and ability to get along well with others, the line between normal and abnormal gets nebulous.

Like mental well-being, our knowledge of social well-being is imprecise and we need better yardsticks to measure this dimension of health.

The three aspects of health, that is, physical, mental and social well-being, mentioned in the WHO definition, are closely interrelated. Change in any one of them is normally accompanied by changes in the other aspects too. For example, recall how your mental and social well-being had been affected when you had been ill! Similarly, if you are very tense about something, you may lose your appetite and gradually your physical well-being may get influenced. The way you interact with others may also get affected.

Let us now take a look at two more dimensions of health, which are not mentioned in the WHO definition. These are the spiritual dimension and the vocational dimension. Though still not precisely defined, these dimensions are fast gaining recognition. A few other dimensions have also been suggested such as philosophical, cultural, environmental and educational, but we shall not go into these.

### 2.4.4 Spiritual Dimension

With the increasing acceptance of the concept of holistic health, it is being widely believed that time has come to give serious consideration to the spiritual dimension and to the role it plays in health and disease. Spiritual health, in this context, refers to the striving to understand the meaning and purpose of life. It is that "something" which goes beyond physiology and psychology. As you can observe, spiritual health does not really lend itself to a concrete definition. But it does include integrity, principles and ethics, belief in concepts that may not have a scientific explanation, commitment to some higher being and a feeling of being linked to the whole universe to comprise, as mentioned earlier, a perception of the meaning and purpose of life.

You would have noticed that the spiritual dimension of health, because of being a relatively new concept and because of its very nature, has yet to acquire a precise, universally accepted definition. What is not in doubt however, is the need to pay attention to this aspect, particularly in view of the stresses and strains of modern life. A person has to be at peace with herself before she can be at peace with the world!

#### 2.4.5 Vocational Dimension

The importance of the influence of the vocational aspect of life on the health of the individual is now being realised. To understand the importance of this dimension, just think of the possible repercussions for the individual when she suddenly loses her job! When work that a person does for a living is adapted to the goals that she has set for herself, her capacities and her limitations, it often plays an important role in promoting physical and mental health, and hence the other aspects as well. In other words, it contributes to the total health of the individual. Doing the work well is a source of satisfaction and self-esteem.

For many, the vocational dimension may only be a source of income. To others, it may be the visible result of the efforts of the other dimensions and represent what the person considers "success" in life. For most, both are relevant. At the same time, it is not necessary that a person must earn money in order to achieve a sense of fulfillment. Many may find satisfaction in doing things that do not bring financial returns.

The vocational aspect influences and is influenced by the other dimensions of health. This, as you are well aware, is in fact true of each aspect of health. To take an example, consider a person who is unsatisfied with her job but is unable to find a better one. What effects is this likely to have as far as her overall health is concerned? Well, she is likely to feel frustrated all the time, with accompanying feelings of anxiety, anger and/or low self-esteem. Her constant state of tension may affect her physical health. Her likely irritability may also affect her social health. She is not likely to be at peace either with herself or with the world. This would affect her spiritual well-being. These are only possibilities, but these are strong possibilities. Don't you agree?

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### 2.5 HEALTH—A RELATIVE CONCEPT

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We have talked of "positive health" in Section 2.3. Many consider positive health not as an "ideal" state, but as a "biologically normal" state based on statistical averages. For example, the height and weight standards vary from country to country and state to state and also between socio-economic groups, but by and large this does not make one group biologically inferior to the other. The average weight of a newborn baby in India is less than that of a newborn child in developed countries. And yet, very often the Indian newborn compares favourably in health to her western counterpart. Many persons with normal appearance may have enlarged tonsils, abnormal X-rays, abnormal blood sugar or high cholesterol levels and still not show any signs of ill-health. Thus, health is a relative concept and health standards vary among cultures. This implies that instead of setting universal health standards, each country or state should decide on its own health norms for the given set of conditions, and look into ways for achieving that level.

In this context, it is important to be aware of the concept of *spectrum of health and sickness*. This concept denotes that the health of an individual is not static; it undergoes continuous change. A person's health may vary from optimum well-being to varying levels of dysfunction. In fact, health and disease lie along a continuum (Fig.2.1).

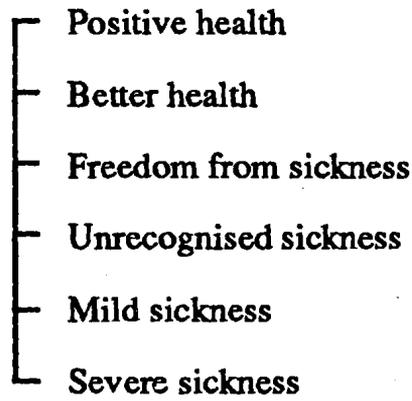


Fig 2.1 : The Health– Sickness Spectrum

One end of this continuum corresponds to the WHO definition of positive health, while the other end is serious illness. The transition from good health to bad health is often gradual but it can be sudden also. The same holds good for recovery from bad health to good. Thus, health is not a state that is arrived at for once and for all; it is constantly changing. A person may be absolutely healthy today, but may be at a diminished level of health tomorrow, or the other way round.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

- 1) List three characteristics each of physical, mental and social well-being.

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- 2) Why has the vocational aspect of life been accepted as a dimension of health ?

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- 3) What do you understand by the concept of "spectrum of health and sickness" ?

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## 2.6 DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

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Multiple factors influence the health of an individual. These factors can broadly be classified as genetic and environmental. As you have been reading in DECE- 1, the

genetic and environmental factors constantly interact, and these interactions prove to be harmful or beneficial to the person's health. Let us take a look at these determinants of health.

### 2.6.1 Heredity

The genetic factor or heredity has an important influence on the health status of an individual. You know that several physical and some mental characteristics of every individual are influenced by heredity.

The hereditary characteristics are transmitted to the child by genes. At the time of conception itself the genetic make up of the person gets determined; it cannot be changed subsequently. While we know that genes carry the codes of the biological development of an individual, let us look in greater detail at how it influences health.

A number of diseases are now known to be genetic in origin e.g. Down's syndrome and haemophilia. Down's syndrome is a genetic anomaly which produces severe mental retardation and characteristic physical features such as protruding tongue and small skin folds over the inner corners of the eyes. The incidence of motor problems, respiratory infections and defects in the heart and blood vessels in such children is high.

Persons with haemophilia are deficient in an element in the blood plasma needed for normal blood clotting. A child with this condition may bleed for hours from a small wound that would normally clot within five minutes.

There are, in fact, more than 1800 known inherited genetic defects in human beings. Their effect on the person's health is usually both direct and indirect. For example, the responses of other people may create a kind of social environment that leads to abnormal behaviour patterns and perceptions in the individual, as in the case of a child with haemophilia who is over-protected. These may, in turn, lead to multiple problems such as those relating to self-esteem and inter-personal relationships. What do you think would be the effects of Down's syndrome on the various dimensions of the patient's health?

Very often, heredity simply predisposes the person to developing the disorder. A person who inherits the predisposition is more likely to develop that disease. However, the environment plays a decisive role in such a case. Asthma and diabetes are examples of such an instance. The person's state of health, therefore, partly depends on the person's genetic constitution.

In the discussion so far, we have focussed on the disease component. What about the positive traits? The characteristics conducive to a person's well-being too are influenced by heredity. As was just said about disorders, each one of us has inherited the predisposition to develop certain strengths as well. Positive health implies that an individual should be able to realise the potentialities of her genetic heritage as completely as possible. This is possible only if the environment is conducive.

### 2.6.2 Environment

In DECE- 1 we had talked of the prenatal and the postnatal environment and how each influences the child. As you would recall, the postnatal environment may be divided into physical and social influences, with the physical environment encompassing the ecological conditions and the social environment referring to aspects like family, culture, religion and social class. Any or all of the environmental components can affect the health of a person. It is an established fact that environment has a direct impact on the well-being of those living in it. You would recall from Section 2.2 of this Unit that a harmonious relationship between human beings and environment is crucial to health. The environmental factors range from food, housing, water supply, sanitation, industry, health services

and social welfare services to psychosocial stress, family structure and cultural rules. Let us look in greater detail at how socio-economic conditions and lifestyle as well as health services influence health.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND LIFESTYLE

"Lifestyle" is a general term used to refer to the way people live. It includes the person's social values and attitudes, behavioural patterns and persisting personal habits including food habits. Lifestyle is both a consequence as well as a determinant of health. For example, after having a heart attack, a man may give up smoking and drinking, modify his diet, change his stressful job and make a conscious effort not to lose his temper— factors which are likely to have precipitated the attack in the first place. Lifestyle as a determinant of health is gaining increasing importance because of its potential to prevent deterioration of health and promote good health. To stay healthy, you have to have a healthy lifestyle. Can you list a couple of examples of lifestyle factors that promote health? Yes, adequate nutrition, enough sleep, sufficient physical activity, hygiene and sanitation, clean drinking water, and so on. Lifestyle is usually related to the socio-economic conditions. When you take a close look, you realise that the health of a community is closely related to its economic status and its social and political organization. In many developed countries, it is the economic progress that has been a major factor in reducing the prevalence of disease, increasing the life span and improving the quality of life. On the other hand, major sections of the population in developing countries are stalked by poverty. What are the implications of this from the health point of view? The poverty related lifestyles which prevail in the majority of developing countries like India are by and large plagued with factors like lack of sanitation, lack of adequate shelter, lack of clean drinking water, poor nutrition, poor personal hygiene and prevalence of some customs and practices that are detrimental to health, such as very late introduction of supplementary feeding. Most of the infections and nutritional deficiency diseases common in developing countries are really diseases of poverty. Poverty, overcrowding and associated disadvantages are harmful to health, particularly in childhood. Poverty has been found to be related to a higher incidence of maternal mortality and infant mortality as well as death and disease during childhood years. Higher rates of chronic illness, respiratory infections, accidents and hearing loss have been found among children belonging to low socio-economic groups.

It is important to look at resources, particularly economic, available to the family (and for the child) and the quality and accessibility of health services available to understand how socio-economic deprivation has an adverse effect on health, particularly child health. Poverty and the generally low health status of the population often go hand in hand. Economic status determines the purchasing power, quality of life, family size and composition, and the pattern of ill-health in the population. It is also an important factor in seeking health care.

All this is not to say that affluence implies a healthy lifestyle. The lifestyle of the rich countries has its own set of health problems. Currently, many of the major health problems in developed countries such as heart diseases, smoking, drug addiction, alcoholism, obesity and vehicular accidents are tied significantly with the prevalent lifestyle.

Education and occupation are factors related to the economic status. As a matter of fact, wherever illiteracy prevails, poverty, malnutrition and ill-health are also found to be prevalent. However, there is a ray of hope. According to research studies, the effects of poverty on health are, to some extent, compensated by education as well as timely health intervention.

Do you recall how occupation influences health? Yes, the very fact that the individual is gainfully employed, particularly in the case of men, has a positive influence on his health; the unemployed usually show a higher incidence of ill-health. For many, loss of work may mean not only loss of income but also a blow to self-esteem; it may cause psychological and social damage.

Health is also related to the country's political system in that it has a major role in the planning of health services and allocation of resources. The kind of health services that are made available, the extent to which they are made available and how accessible they are to different segments of the population are, by and large, political decisions.

### **HEALTH SERVICES**

Health services include a wide range of services for treatment and prevention of diseases and promotion of health. The health of the people is strongly influenced by the quality and availability of health services. For example, immunization of children for diseases such as polio, diphtheria and tetanus can reduce the incidence of these diseases. Maternal and child health can be promoted by taking care of the nutritional and health needs of pregnant women and lactating mothers, as well as of newborns and older children. Provision of safe water supply can prevent ill-health due to infections that spread through water. Educating the community about the importance of personal hygiene and environmental sanitation as well as about eating a balanced diet does contribute to improved health status of the community. This is the preventive aspect of health services, that is, availability of these services will help in preventing diseases from occurring. Besides this, the health services have a curative dimension which refers to the medical care that is provided to help the person overcome the disease once she has been affected by it. The preventive services need to be adequate as once these are ensured, there would be much lower need for curative services.

To be effective, health services should be accessible to everyone in the population as well as be socially acceptable. Both these aspects are included in what is now termed "primary health care", about which you will read in detail in the next Unit.

It is important to reiterate once again that health is multidimensional. This, in turn, implies that good health cannot be achieved by the activities of the health sector alone. Rather, what is needed is coordinated effort of all sectors concerned such as food, agriculture, education, housing, industry etc. Equally important is adoption of economic and social policies that would help in raising the standard of living of the people, such as those related to providing employment opportunities and family support systems.

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## **2.7 IMPORTANCE OF GOOD HEALTH FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD**

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Here, we would like to emphasize the importance of good health for the optimum development of the child. The physical, mental as well as social well-being of the child has to be provided for, otherwise there is likely to be a negative impact on development. In this context, it is important to remember the interactive nature of the various dimensions of health. Just think of the influence of a condition like blindness on the physical capabilities of the child, and the repercussions with regard to her mental and social well-being! A child suffering from a prolonged illness may have low stamina and may tire easily, find herself unable to concentrate on any task including her studies, become short-tempered and irritable, and so on. The poor health status of a child is likely to cause listlessness and negatively influence her ability to learn and her responsiveness. A sick and malnourished child may be delayed in reaching her developmental milestones. A child's growth can be slowed from its genetically predetermined course by illness and dietary deficiency. Once the problem is alleviated, the child's rate of growth usually accelerates and gets back to the genetically determined pattern. However, if the illness is chronic and the nutritional deficiency lasting, or if these have already resulted in a handicapping, irreversible condition, one obviously cannot say the same thing about the individual's catching up.

You have read about critical periods in DECE- 1. Maintaining good health during these critical periods is especially significant, as ill-health at these junctures is particularly detrimental to the child's health. In addition, the harm done is likely to persist. Let's take the instance of ill-health during pregnancy. There is a very close link between maternal and child health. If the expectant mother contracts German measles, syphilis, gonorrhoea, poliomyelitis or any of a number of viral diseases, she may suffer a miscarriage or the result may be malformations and developmental defects in the child, causing the child to be blind, deaf, mentally retarded and the like, particularly if the disease was contracted during the embryonic and early foetal stages of prenatal development. The same may happen in the case of a chronic condition such as diabetes. Illness, complications of pregnancy, nutritional deprivation and acute emotional stress during pregnancy are all likely to harm the child. Many studies relate mental stress during pregnancy to increased incidence of miscarriages, premature births, stillbirths, delivery problems and a variety of behavioural disturbances during infancy and early childhood. Nutrition is another very important factor. An adequate diet both before and during pregnancy as well as during lactation is essential for the optimal growth and health of the baby. We will read more about these and other related aspects in the coming Units of this Course.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 3**

- 1) For each of the following statements, state the reason why it is true:
  - i) Heredity has a significant influence on the health status of the individual.  
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  - ii) The effects of poverty on health are, to some extent, compensated by education.  
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  - iii) It is important to provide for the child's physical, mental and social well-being.  
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**2.8 SUMMING UP**

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Health is a changing concept which has been perceived differently at different times and by different people. The prominent viewpoints include the biomedical concept, the ecological concept, the psychosocial concept and the holistic concept. Although health lacks a universally accepted definition, its definition given by WHO continues to be the most widely accepted one. According to this definition, "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity". While this definition is broad and positive, it too is fraught with limitations such as lack of measurable terms. In addition to the dimensions of health cited in the WHO definition viz. physical, mental and social, many more dimensions are being recognised. Two of the important more recent dimensions of health are spiritual and vocational. The views that health is a relative concept and that the health status of an individual changes continuously are also gaining prominence. Coming to the determinants of health, heredity and environment are identified as important influences on health. Environment is taken to include the socio-economic conditions and lifestyle as well as health services. The Unit concludes with a discussion on the importance of good health for the development of the child.

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## 2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) WHO has defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity".

Positive aspects of the definition; mention any two of the following:

- i) adopts a holistic view of health
- ii) is broad and positive in its implications
- iii) sets out the standard

Negative aspects of the definition; mention any two of the following :

- i) does not define health in measurable terms
- ii) defines health as a state instead of a process
- iii) is idealistic rather than realistic

- 2) According to the biomedical concept, health is the absence of disease, the main cause of disease being germs. This view ignores the role of other factors like environmental, socio-cultural and psychological in determining the health of the individual. However, the psychosocial concept considers health not only as a biological phenomenon but also as a socio-cultural one, taking cognisance of the influence of psychological, socio-cultural and economic factors on health.

### Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Refer to Section 2.4.
- 2) Because of its influence on the overall health of the individual. Give examples of this influence.
- 3) Health and disease lie along a continuum, and the individual's health keeps varying from positive health to different levels of ill-health.

### Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) (i) Heredity predisposes the individual to develop certain illnesses as well as traits that are conducive to good health.
- (ii) Education makes one more aware of how poverty related factors like poor personal hygiene and sanitation and poor nutrition adversely influence health, and enable one to take corrective measures to some extent.
- (iii) Otherwise the child's health status and development would be adversely influenced.