

# Zinc Saves Kids®

Life-changing stories....from Peru

## Zinc tablets save the lives of Pedro and Nataniel



Pedro drinking a glass of water with a dissolved zinc tablet.



Ermelinda and her daughter Nataniel.

In Ventanilla, an urban district situated north of Lima, a large percentage of the population lives in extreme poverty. Most children do not have access to safe water and sanitation and are at risk of contracting infectious diseases due to living in close contact with animals and mud.

Two-and-a-half-year-old Pedro Gabriel Chura lives with his parents in a very modest house with corrugated sheeting and straw mats on the floor. One day Pedro started suffering from severe diarrhea. After his regular night bottle of milk, he started having stomach aches, diarrhea, vomiting and fever. As his symptoms got worse, his mother Santa took him to the emergency of the local health centre. There, Pedro was given a zinc tablet dissolved in water and his mother was instructed to give him one tablet per day for nine days. During that time Pedro was visited three times by a community health worker who checked that the therapy was followed properly and who also educated the mother on some basic health care practices, including hand-washing and keeping the house clean.

The effect was immediate; the diarrhea stopped and Pedro began to eat normally whereas before he never finished his meal. His mother is very happy and proud now because her son's weight and height have increased. "If your son or daughter suffers from diarrhea, I recommend giving them zinc tablets," she said with a beaming smile. "Not only will the zinc tablets cure them, it will also improve their appetite. I believe that zinc strengthens the child. It is like a vitamin, now my son eats all his meal."

About the same time, something similar occurred in another part of the district. 20-month-old baby girl Nataniel suffered from stomach pain, severe diarrhea and vomiting. Her mother Ermelinda rushed her to the health centre, where the baby was administered a zinc tablet and was given nine more for the following days. After one day the diarrhea stopped, encouraging Ermelinda to give her daughter all the tablets because she realized that they would help Nataniel not suffer from those frequent diarrhea episodes. A health care worker also visited Ermelinda and her baby daughter several times to ensure the therapy was followed properly and that Nataniel was improving.

Two weeks later, a smiling Ermelinda stated, "My daughter received the tablets and her stomach recovered rapidly. I recommend these tablets because they are effective. Thank you for the tablets which help the children who need them. Thank you for everything."



Information and photos provided by UNICEF Peru

[www.ZincSavesKids.org](http://www.ZincSavesKids.org)