**Nigerian Antenatal Orientation (English Text)**

Our body system, during pregnancy, some people would say that the way they are feeling, they are not comfortable at all. But there are different stages and what we experience in our body system differs from one person to another. In the first trimester of our pregnancy, the body assumes a certain position. In the second trimester, the body assumes a different position and in the last trimester, the body also assumes a different position, particularly, in those who are having their first child. In the first trimester, what are the likely symptoms that we may experience?

1. The monthly period stops flowing
2. Some may begin to vomit
3. You may begin to feel some pain in the lower abdomen, isn’t it? Please respond!

We all may not experience what I have just listed. Some may be spitting all the time, isn’t it? Most of us have designated a tin or a bottle of Fanta/a bottle of malt for spitting.

Yes, it is normal because some substances in our body system are changing compared to what they were when we are pregnant. There are times that you feel mild pain in the upper region of the chest, it feels like ulcer. For those that have had such an experience, let me see your hands up, it could be just a feeling of pain in your chest or if you fail to eat early, you will begin to feel pain in your chest?

So, it is not a sickness at all but what we ought to experience due to the changes that our body is undergoing. Then, in this first trimester, what happens is that this foetus will begin to develop. Just so you know that its initial form was like an egg, it then begin to develop different parts of the body bit by bit, this period is called ‘developmental stage’. There is a calendar here that can be used for better explanation, let me fetch it. If you focus your attention on this calendar, it reads ‘Stages of Birth’. Can you see it? Look at this part below, ‘Development of Embryo’, this is the period where the baby is about to start developing the various body parts intermittently. Look at this, this is the sixth week, this is eight weeks, and this is three months, you will notice the little differences. Look at the head here, look at it here, you will notice that it is beginning to form up. At three month, what happened? The leg has form-up, the hand has form-up. A more reason why, at third month, if there is a miscarriage, it is possible for it do drop like this. When it comes out like this, it looks a bit like a baby. Some may say she gave birth to lizard or gecko, no, it is because the various parts of the body have been well formed. In the second trimester, look at it, this is three months, this is five month, this is seven month, look at the head of the child, the head is turned downward. In this second trimester, all the symptoms that we have been experiencing before, be it vomiting, or spitting will begin to dwindle gradually. Those who could not eat well will begin to eat gradually. This period, it is important to take your drugs, same with the first trimester. In the first trimester, there are some drugs that are meant for the first trimester because this is the developmental period of the various body parts, we must take some drugs during that period so that the baby can develop perfectly. Folic acid for example, whoever fails to use it in the first trimester, there are times that the child may develop congenital problem. And most of us do not come for registration in the first month talk more of using this drug. For the second trimester, you will notice that this period, the baby has left the lower abdomen, it will move up a bit. This same period, the second trimester, all those stomachache will stop for a while. Puking will also reduce for a while and we will begin to eat well. Now the last three month, that is the last trimester, this period, the baby has fully developed and will begin to prepare for delivery. If you look at it, you will notice that the whole body system has fully developed, that is the third trimester. Note that this period, when you are approaching the seventh to ninth month, the baby that had moved up initially will begin to move down slowly till the head is positioned within the cervix. For this period, what are the likely symptoms?

The pain in the lower abdomen that had stopped before now will start again because the baby’s head has displaced the backbone, we will also begin to feel pain here. That is why, when we try to get up sometimes, you will notice that you are feeling pains in the lower abdomen. This same period, you will begin to urinate almost all the time. Even if you take a small quantity of water, you will still notice that you are still urinating endlessly because the head of the baby has displaced our bladder and it makes it impossible to hold urine, hence the urge to urinate.

This same period, there are times you will notice symptoms of labor, it will come for a while and go. That is what we call false labor. That is Braxton-Hicks contraction, this is not to say that the child is ready for delivery but just preparing for it. Therefore, we feel like laboring and then it disappears. How many month does the baby stays in there before delivery? Please respond to me!

Chorus: nine months!

That is to say that between 37 weeks to 40 weeks, the baby may be delivered. If the baby is up to 37 weeks, our EDD, the timeframe given for the baby’s delivery, we can give birth to the baby two weeks before that day. If it is two weeks before our EDD, that does not mean that the child is premature, the time is up, it is already time for delivery. Now, if the time of delivery is 40 weeks upward, and it is well over 40 weeks, it has become a post-dated. The time of delivery is well overdue. This period, if we notice that the baby ought to have been preparing for delivery but reverse is the case, we may likely give you drugs or give you drip with drugs in it that will hasten your labor, and you will give birth comfortably. I hope I am clear? That is the more reason I used this calendar for us to have a better understanding. This is the direction of the baby’s head, this is the right position for the baby. But there are times that turning downward like this may not be comfortable for our baby, for some baby, rather than turn downward, some may turn their face upward, some may be horizontally positioned, some may turn their leg downward and have their head hung up. The size of the mother’s womb determines the position of the baby. So, it is not a spiritual attack from anybody. That is why, if the positioning of the child makes it difficult for natural birth, you may be informed that you will have to undergo caesarian session. That does not mean that witches and wizards are in control. How do you expect to be delivered of a baby that is horizontally positioned? There is no way out for the baby. A small opening will be made in the stomach and the baby will be exhumed. It is during this antenatal that you will begin to know all of these. Did you know that now that you have started antenatal, many of you are starting at the wrong time? Some are already 7 months away before they started, some will wait until 9 month before they come, but they do not know the importance of weight measurement. Many think that they are just being stressed unnecessarily because they do not know the importance. The very moment you find out that you are pregnant, we must come immediately for weight measurement. And what is weight measurement? You will notice that whenever you come, we do a mini interview to gather necessary information from you. The number of children you have, your last menstruation, so as to ascertain the exact month of the pregnancy you are carrying and other information about BP or maybe you have had a cesarean session before, so as to know how to go about the care giving or maybe you are under treatment, we will know how to go about it. Whenever you come, you will notice that we conduct series of test. We will check your BP, your urine will be tested to check for protein and glucose, and we also check your weight. There are reasons for all of these, it is not just a charade. During the weight measurement for instance, is when we write all other test that will be conducted. We will check your blood level (CTV). A pregnant woman whose blood level is below 30% has a shortage of blood. It could be due to lack of feeding or failure in doing the basic, that is, failure to take fruits or necessary drugs, the blood level has reduced. We will also check your blood group. What is blood group and why do we check your blood group? It enables us to know if you are Rhesus–positive or Rhesus–negative. As you all are aware, if the woman is Rhesus–negative, and the husband is Rhesus–positive, what do we do to such a woman?

To those of you that have taken the injection, what do we give them? Anti-Rhesus. We will give them injection so that the baby will be delivered in good health, also for the survival of the new baby and those unborn, not that you will give birth to them and they begin to die. I hope you understand what I am saying?

After that, we will check your genotype to know if you are AS, AC, or SS because our genotype also dictates the kind of treatment your body requires during pregnancy. So, all the test must be done. Hepatitis is also there, HIV too, we must conduct those test to know the required treatment. If the mother is HIV positive, there are available drugs for her to use before delivery and after delivery, there are drugs that the baby must use and there are drugs for the mother too.

If the mother is diagnosed of hepatitis, there are injections that she will take, if we notice, after proper examination, that the mother is has it or the baby is diagnosed of it after birth. All those examination results will be gathered to know what is happening within your body system. This will stop you from giving yourself the kind of treatment that is not deserving.

To other treatment that must be administered during antenatal, you will notice that we listen to the breathing of the baby, don’t we? When you come for weight measurement, there is this instrument we use to listen to the breathing of the baby to know if the baby is breathing normally. For a baby that has difficulty in breathing, something can be done about that. We may place the mother on drugs or admit her because of the troubles her restlessness is rubbing on the baby, to come and have some rest. There are times we will request the mother to have an ultrasound to know the positioning of the baby in the mother. After all this must have been done, you will be given a new date for appointment. For those of you that are coming to the clinic within your first trimester, or your pregnancy is within this period, there is a stipulated number of times that you will be given for appointment. You will be told to come back in four weeks. If you are in your second trimester, you will be given a period of two weeks for appointment. For the third trimester, if your date of delivery is close, you may be told to come every week so as to monitor the development of the baby. We do admonish you on the different forms of preparation that you must make during pregnancy. You are aware of the coming of this visitor for complete nine month, not a day. There are some preparation that you must make for the coming of the new baby.

This baby has not been to the world before, and we are the ones to welcome him/her. During pregnancy, there are import foods that we must eat, I have talked about the necessary drugs that we must take. Whatever food we want to take must be a balanced diet for the duration of that nine month. What are the supplements in a balance diet? It must contain carbohydrate, which is also known as an energy giving food, it must contain protein, it must have vitamins, it must have fat and oil and we must drink water regularly. Fruit and vegetables are also important during pregnancy. It is not just about eating noodles, or taking pap, or kúlí or róbó, no. A balance diet, with complete nutrients. If you intend to take pap for instance, you must support it with maybe moinmoin or àkàrà and milk. Please, ₦100 milk is not too much to buy. You should also consume egg, at least three times a week. You will get egg at the rate of ₦100, you will get that of ₦150 too that you can eat. And make sure you drink a lot of water, at least 4 litres of water before night fall, or 3 to 4 litres before night fall. How do you measure that? If you drink 8 sachet of water before night fall, it is not too much but you are always scared of the time to time urge to urinate. That you are constantly urinating does not stop you from taking water. You may pour it in a bottle of water to help you confirm that you are drinking enough water as required. You will notice that whenever we examine your urine, I do tell you that your urine is too yellowish, and that you are not drinking enough water. So, make sure you drink enough water. During pregnancy also, your wellbeing must be your priority. Make sure you bathe at least twice a day. Wash your underwear. The clothes you intend to wear but be very clean. Make sure your hair is done beautifully. We must take care of our surroundings too. Do not leave your homes in dirty conditions do not wait till you begin to prepare for delivery before you start taking care of your home. Your pregnancy does not stop you from sweeping your home, it does not stop you from sweeping your surroundings. I hope you understand what I am saying? It does not stop you from doing laundry, and it does not stop you from cooking. So, make sure you take care of your surroundings. Do not expose yourself to mosquitoes, that is why we gave you a treated insecticide mosquito net so that mosquitoes will not get the chance to feast on you. If you are down with malaria fever, there is a drug that we will prescribe for you. We will also give you some drugs like Fansidar or the three-capsule drug that we give you to use once a month. We will continue from here next time.

Thank you, we are grateful.

Drop your questions.