

INDIA'S NO.1 PREGNANCY, BABY & TODDLER MAGAZINE

Mother &

baby

February, 2020

Single Parents Special

- Single, pregnant and strong!
- Feed solo
- Address your tot's awkward Qs
- Have an amicable conflict

LOVE
YOU
MOOMY

TAKE THE WHEEL

Our guide to driving
safely with baby

FAMOUSLY
S O L O
Celeb mums/dads
who took on their
roles like champs

me , myself & my daughter



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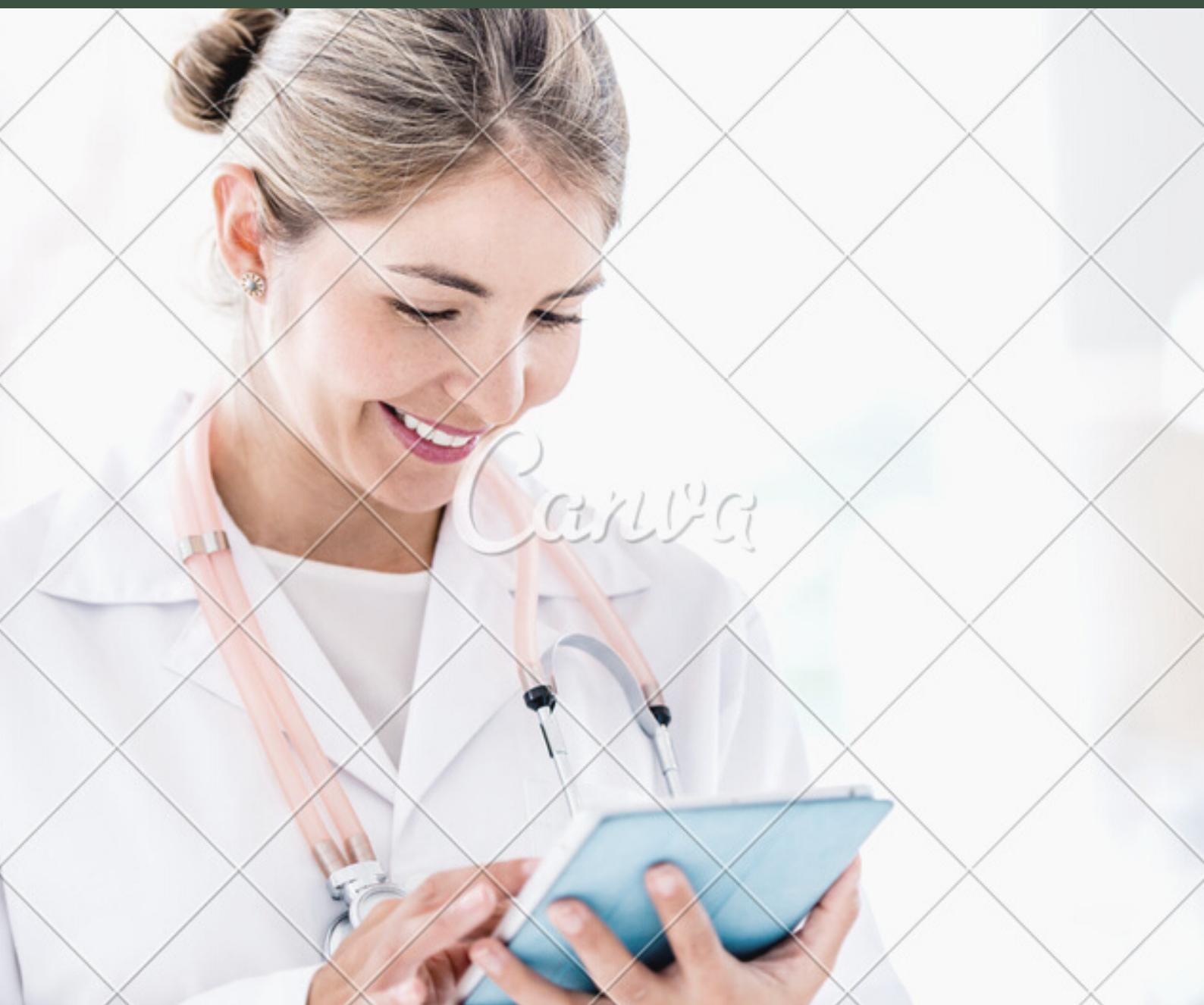
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The Winslow Medical Center Presents

WOMEN'S HEALTH & WELLNESS FAIR



March 1, 2020 | 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Conference Hall A and B, The Winslow Medical Center



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The guide for New mommy

You've dealt with the nausea and sickness of the first trimester, and the relative ease of the second one. You're now into the final trimester, and with that, a mile closer to bringing your baby into the world... and your home! The wait is finally over, and you are now nearing the end of the pregnancy journey, to step into a new role for several years to come. It's natural then, that this requires a whole lot of planning and prepping. Here's how to make the most of this time.

READY TO POP!

Though the third trimester begins with a breeze, as it progresses, your growing belly and baby put you through a little physical stress. It is, therefore, important to care for the mind

body and spirit. Make sure you do the following:

- A positive mental attitude is vital now. Listen to a birth preparation CD that may teach you breathing and relaxation techniques, as well as strategies for getting through the contractions.
- If you've started a prenatal exercise programme, continue to practice it gently and under supervision. Do not start one at this stage without expert guidance.
- Take out some time for yourself every day to unwind. You could get a pedicure, read a book, take a stroll or listen to music.
- Throw yourself a baby shower, go on a baby moon, arrange for a maternity shoot, celebrate your bump with a cast, or do all of these. You may soon find yourself missing your pregnan-

cy! Celebrate it while you can.

- Make sure you squeeze in some social activities to meet friends and family, and do things you usually enjoy indulging in.
- Get help to clean the house. Many pregnant women report a compulsive nesting instinct. So, it is important to set aside time and resources that would help you cater to that need.



- Start putting baby gear together. Make a list of things you will need. Choose a baby wrap, a pram and a car seat, depending on your preference and convenience.
- Put together the basics. You will primarily need clothes, caps, mittens, booties, burping cloths, swaddles, soft washcloths, baby toiletries, changing mats, barrier creams, gentle baby wipes, and good disposable diapers that are gentle to the skin, like MamyPoko Pants with superior absorption.
- Wash and put aside baby's clothes and sheets. Ready a little bag with baby essentials to take with you to the hospital.
- Keep husband's and your hospital bag ready. Make a list of things you need to put in it, and organise everything while you are upto it.

WELCOME BABY

Holding your baby for the first time is inarguably one of the most fulfilling moments for ever mum. And it is from this moment on that starts the process of getting to know her a little better every day. For the first few months of her life, your newborn has few needs—being fed, being cleaned, and being changed.



And though most people get a hang of it in time, there are so many questions that run through a mother's mind in the beginning. Here are a few tips that will answer most of your queries:

How can I ensure that I am not harming baby's delicate skin?

A newborn baby's skin is very delicate. Any harsh element will make the skin red and cause rashes. The bottom, especially, requires constant cleaning. Here's how you can keep the baby's skin soft and gentle.

1 Cleaning: You don't need to wipe the baby's bottom after she wets. Just put her into a new diaper. But after a bowel movement, you should clean the area with moisturising MamyPoko baby wipes.

2 Top to Bottom: Start from-washing the cleanest area to the dirtiest. This will ensure no impurities are spread.

3 Cream and lotion: Each time you clean the baby's bottom, apply a protective cream (preferable containing zinc oxide) to avoid any rashes. Changing diapers is no rocket science, and with our guide, you'll soon be able to do it with your eyes closed (although we wouldn't advise it!)

Bottoms up!

- 1 Make sure you have everything you need at hand, before you start
- 2 Carry a changing pad in your diaper bag for when you're out and about. Also, keep a changing mat in various parts of the home, so you have one handy all day!
- 3 Roll up your baby's vest out of the way before you open the diaper
- 4 Keep a tissue roll close by to clean up if she pees while her diaper is off
- 5 Seal or bag dirty diapers once removed, to keep the mess contained

Which diaper should you use?

1 Baby weight: The weight of your baby is really important when it comes to buying a diaper. If she is above the normal weight, then you would have to go for a diaper that is a size bigger. And vice versa. Now, there are pants style diapers like MamyPoko Pants that comes in two variants for newborn sizes.

2 Fit: Make sure the diaper fits properly. It doesn't slip up or down the baby's waist, but gent-

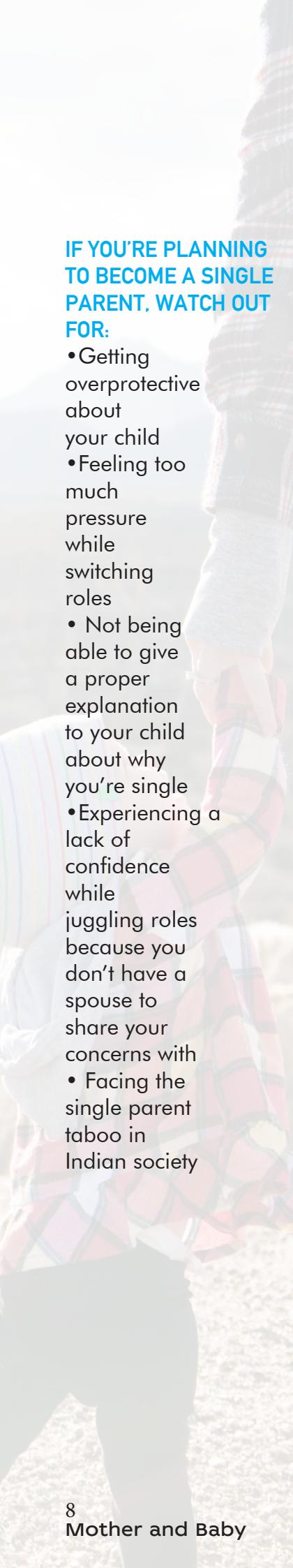
ly rests on it.

3 Absorbency: You should choose a diaper that has a soft, elastic waistband, without tapes, and great absorbency. MamyPoko Pants have higher absorbency when compared to most diaper brands—this ensures that the baby is dry and rash-free, thereby impacting the baby's sleep and comfort, and consequently overall growth.

Single in the city

“It’s becoming quite common,” says clinical psychologist Dr Seema Hingorany. “Some are young mothers who just want to adopt. Some don’t want to get married and want to have a child. And sometimes women get pregnant and want to go ahead with the pregnancy despite being unmarried. Some make the decision of not getting married because they feel they don’t want to ruin their life as well as their child’s, because they are commitment phobic. They don’t want to get into a relationship with a spouse but want to be a mother, just as actress Sushmita Sen did. People are coming to see me before going ahead with such a pregnancy or adoption and asking questions like ‘Will be able to raise the child well?’ and ‘What are the emotional hiccups the child will have if the child doesn’t have a father?’ This trend is really picking up now,” she observes.





IF YOU'RE PLANNING TO BECOME A SINGLE PARENT, WATCH OUT FOR:

- Getting overprotective about your child
- Feeling too much pressure while switching roles
- Not being able to give a proper explanation to your child about why you're single
- Experiencing a lack of confidence while juggling roles because you don't have a spouse to share your concerns with
- Facing the single parent taboo in Indian society

Stylist Malini Desai feels that single parenting is not a trend but it's due to circumstances which vary from person to person. "For example," she says, "It could be a divorced parent, it could be a career choice or it could be due to death of a spouse." Sardesai also points out that rising divorce rates, which is one of the commonest causes of single parenting, is an urban phenomenon. "It's more common in bigger cities like Mumbai and Delhi and I believe it's because of the lifestyle of people which is less intrusive. In cities like Bengaluru and Kolkata, they are much more conservative," she says. An article published in the International Herald Tribune states that since 1990, the annual number of divorce petitions filed in Mumbai has more than doubled to reach 4,138 in 2007. This excludes the couples who have agreed to mutual separation in order to avoid legal hassles.

SINGLE DAD V/S SINGLE MUM:

Dr Hingorany feels that single mothers are more common than single dads. She explains, "There are single women who go in for adoption because they want to do a good deed and help a child.

In case of fathers, I think they get a little shaky when it comes to looking after a child. I know single dads who are divorced and take charge of their kids. Single men turned dads like Sandip Soparrkar are few and far between compared to single women turned mums. Somewhere, the men are not as confident about switching roles from carefree singleton to responsible single dad. Today's single women, because they are independent and able to venture out, are confident about juggling roles. I have had patients who come to me and say 'I'm confident about it. I'm independent and I can give the child my best. I can be the mother, provide nurturing and I can become the firm person. I don't need a man in my life to do that'."

Desai, however, doesn't completely agree. She avers, "If it's a divorce, women tend to get custody of the child. There's a presumption that the mother is more important than the father in the child's life and she'll do a better job looking after the children. It may not always be true but the court looks at it that way. One of my students was a air hostess and

her husband looked after the child while she was flying. They worked out a schedule and are still happily married. Also, if the man is widowed, he has no choice but to look after the child. In the West, I find it remarkable how many women are more into pursuing careers while men manage the house. Here, men may not change nappies because we don't have dignity of labour. Even when they are married, most men don't help the wife with cooking or cleaning the dishes. That's because of the cultural conditioning we have. But I feel that if a good support system is in place, either parent can manage well."

My son sees his grandmother as his mother. A year after Dhiraj was born we came to know he had autism. After my wife left, I tried my best to be there for him but work kept me busy. In the beginning, he used to cry for her and but since the time he has been to a special school, his behaviour has remarkably improved. But his interaction is limited to me, his grandmother and his teachers at the special school and he always craves for attention," says Anvesh



Mother's lap

[The safest place on earth.]



Desai says, "A lot of girls are willing to do it now especially if they are educated. I don't think today's girls are intolerant but they will not tolerate any sort of nonsense for the sake of the family, children and society. I think we should admire women from the lower strata of society as most of them lead a single life in spite of having husbands. I think they can do it because they face less social censure. We, on the other hand, are worried about what people will say. In their case, neighbours will comment 'Arre uska pati toh bewada thha, acchha hua chhad diya' (Her husband was a drunkard, it's good she left him), but in middle class and upper middle class society, the wife will be blamed for her husband's alcohol addiction or other vices."

Dr Hingorany points out that when both parents are working, the financial responsibility is shared between them. But where single parents are concerned, the onus is on the parent for raising the child. Also, there's pressure from society. She says, "People will say 'you brought up the child, you adopted, we are looking at you.' Even in schools, sometimes, the children of single parents don't get admission unless they have contacts. It's very difficult for a single parent to raise a child because it's one person who is taking all the responsibilities so definitely the stress is higher. The parent needs to be extra calm and composed because there are times when the child is not doing well in studies and there's no one to share this with."

Desai adds, "A lot depends on the financial position of the parent. Money plays a pivotal role. If the mother is well off or she is getting good alimony in case of a divorce and there is no acrimony between partners regarding the alimony, then things can be better. But it's not going to be an easy job taking on sole responsibility. In case of a widow, there's also an emotional aspect. The emotional vacuum will be there and how much you can fill it up by looking after your kids and how you cope will depend on your own strength and determination. I think a single man is most likely to get re-married than a single woman because women don't like to take a chance. They are a little wary, especially if they already have children. They wonder how the 'new' man in their life will treat the child. Women will give it more thought than a man."

MAN, WOMAN & CHILD:

Adults learn to deal with 'single' situation at one point or another but one can't expect the child to understand why he has to live with one parent and see the other on weekends. "Every school prefers that for the cognitive, emotional and social development of the child, it's important that the parents need to be there. Even we psychologists believe that, unless the single parent is very confident. We don't want the single parent to raise a child who ends up having 10 other problems," says Dr Hingorany. Rodrigues has noticed drastic changes in children's behaviour when one of the parents is not around. "Suddenly, the child becomes quiet. It's easier to get older children to open up but with smaller children it's difficult. The children are seeking attention in different ways. They become

quiet, throw tantrums or cry for no reason. The parent goes to work and the child is left with the maid so he tries to get attention from others." Remember the match-making kid Jonah from Sleepless in Seattle, who finds his widowed father a new wife? That was cute but reality is different and it is often noticed by psychologists that children don't easily accept a new person in their parent's life. "At times, if the single parent is having a relationship with someone, the child just refuses to accept. Many times we counsel the children and they say 'this is not my mother/father and I don't want this person in my parent's life'. So what option does the single parent have? I had a man who was divorced and had a young daughter. Seeing the father have a relationship with another woman, the child was undergoing emotional trauma. She didn't want this woman taking her mother's place," recounts Dr Hingorany. After counselling divorced, widowed and separated parents, she has found that, the problems faced by them with regard to dealing with the child is the same because ultimately the child needs both parents around. "In case of an adopted child, it's easier because the child is used to the single mother. If the mother and father separated when the child was 15 months or two years old, it's still better but if the child is older, let's say around eight or nine years, it becomes very tough," she explains. Dr Hingorany talks about another case where the father had to leave the family because he got a better job opportunity in Saudi Arabia: "After the father left, the child started

to throw temper tantrums and refused to go to school. The mother didn't know what to do because she was also having a hard time with the separation. I advised her to give the child some time because the child was used to seeing the father and now suddenly because of his absence, the child left behind. For a child, any divorce, death of the parent or separation of parents becomes very traumatic and he can undergo childhood depression. We conduct a counselling programme, play therapy and behaviour therapy for such children. It takes a lot of time to get them out of the emotional disturbances. Single parents also undergo low self-esteem. Sometimes, they don't know why child is behaving in a particular way. Especially for single fathers, it becomes very difficult." Single parenting doesn't have to be stressful 24/7 and you can figure out a way to enjoy time with your child. All it takes is a bit of patience. Dr Hingorany says, "Even parents as couples require so much support, so in case of single parents it's all the more important. Sometimes, they get into ego hassles with family and friends. My advice is don't be arrogant and say things like 'I don't need you'. You should take help when you need it. If you want to go on holiday, then leave your child with your family. Your life need not be revolving around the child all the time. Sometimes, single parents tend to go too deep and become over-protective of the child. One can always find a full-time good maid. Being a single parent is tough but our advice is don't be too tough on yourself.

Single & Famous

Here's your favourite celebrities who have taken on parenting solo, and have done it in style..

Being a parent is no walk in the park, and going through this journey solo is bound to have its challenges. But these famous mums and dads who did not conform to social norms, stepped up to the challenge, and set an example for many to follow. Here are some A-listers who manage to keep up with their demanding jobs and raise more than one kid, single-handedly, and they do it all with grace!



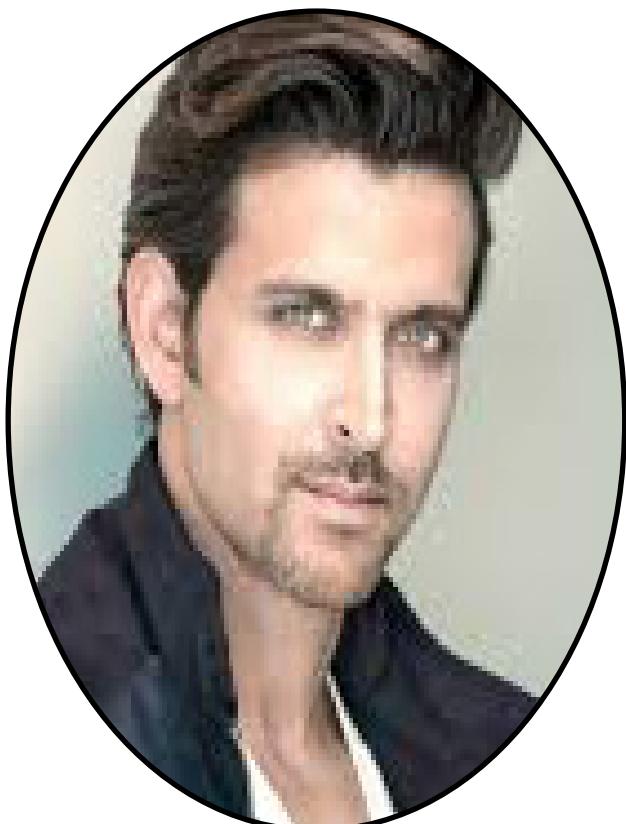
KARISHMA KAPOOR

Following a tumultuous split from her then husband Sunjay Kapur, Karishma has been the sole caregiver to her children Samaira and Kiaan. Since then, she took a break from acting to give her children a “normal” childhood, away from the public eye. To her, her children, motherhood, family values and running a home was and will always be priority. Now, the actress is all set to make her grand comeback with a parenting show titled Mentalhood. “Being a mom is a full-time job, but it’s my favourite thing in the entire world,” she said.



SUSHMITA SEN

Former Miss Universe Sushmita Sen set the ball rolling for single mums in the country, when she announced her decision to adopt in 2000, at the age of 24, when she was at the top of her game in the industry. The actress maintains that it was the “wisest decision she’d ever made” and that it brought stability to her life. She welcomed her second daughter Alisah in 2010, and has since then taken a break from films. She revealed that not being there for Renee’s formative years bothered her and knew that she didn’t want the same for Alisah. Although many questioned her adoption.



HRITHIK ROSHAN

Bollywood's favourite jodi Hrithik Roshan and Sussanne Khan called it quits in 2013, much to the shock of their fans. Although there has been much speculation about the reason for their split, the two have managed to keep it under wraps, and remain cordial co-parents to their boys Hridhaan and Hrehaan. Sussanne says that she has a “support system in Hrithik” and that they try to “set and example” for their kids by working hard. And despite his hectic schedules, They’re often spotted on a number of boys’ trips around the globe.



KANIKA KAPOOR

The Babydoll hitmaker is mum to three kids aged 11, 10 and seven, however, their names are not known. She married her NRI husband when she was only 18, and the two filed for divorce in 2012 after 15 years of marriage. She admits that the marriage exposed her to a world that made her “materialistic, egoistic, and full of herself”. She revealed that she had hit rock bottom, and even had suicidal tendencies, and her divorce also took a toll on the kids’ lives—funding divorce lawyers left her with no money to even pay their school fees.



KARAN JOHAR

In 2017, Bollywood’s favourite director Karan Johar welcomed twins Yash and Roohi via IVF surrogacy, inspiring single fathers throughout the country. Johar’s films have nurtured a number of young actors and actresses to reach the peak of their careers today, so it comes as no surprise that he thought he “fits the bill perfectly”. He also maintains that being dad to his twins has filled the emptiness in his personal life.

Bump to Birth

0 - 4 weeks

A lot happens in the crucial first month of your pregnancy. Your embryo is growing by around 1 mm every day and by the end of the fourth week, it will be as big as the nib of a ballpoint pen, with its brain, heart, lungs, liver and kidneys already starting to form.

Focus on Foetal gymnastics

As early as nine weeks into her development, your baby is quite the little gymnast. She will use the walls of your uterus to bounce around inside you.

Focus on Gender

By around 10 weeks, your baby's sex organs will become more obvious. If your baby's a girl, her tiny ovaries will have already started to create eggs, while your baby boy's testicles will be starting to produce testosterone.

Focus on The heart

By the end of the third week, your baby's first blood vessels will start to grow. However, at this early stage, they'll be no thicker than a single strand of hair. Then, in the fourth week, the single cell that will become your baby's heart will kick-start, encouraging the surrounding cells to move to the same beat and divide into chambers.



13-18 WEEKS

Your 13-week-old baby is now the same size as an orange and weighs a little less than 200gms. She's currently gearing up for her biggest growth spurt, which will take place over the coming few weeks, when her eyes will move closer together and her eyelashes and eyebrows will start to develop, making her look more human. Up until now, a temporary membrane has protected her body, but she's now growing her first layer.

5-8 WEEKS

Over the next four weeks, your baby will become a complete human being with organs, limbs and muscles, and she will quadruple in length from around 4mm to being 16mm long. For the time being, her head will outgrow her body. At six weeks, she's only around the size of a kidney bean, but by eight weeks, she's the size of a walnut and is starting to move her tiny head and legs. Even at this very early stage in her development, your baby has already learnt how to yawn, suck and swallow.

9-12 WEEKS

Your baby has now passed the most important stage in her development and she's no longer considered to be an embryo. She's now a foetus. Her body is beginning to catch up with her head as her limbs straighten out and her skeleton forms. By 12 weeks, her bones will begin to harden and her fingernails will start to grow. She's now around the size of a squash ball and her body's most important structures are in place.

17-20 WEEKS

You'll probably start to feel your baby's movements around this time, although you might mistake the gentle, fluttering sensations for indigestion to begin with. Her urinary and digestive systems are maturing, and she's practising breathing, by swallowing the amniotic fluid and expelling it out of her lungs. By 18 weeks, her body will be covered by a fine layer of lanugo hair to keep her warm and a greasy white substance called vernix will cling to her skin to protect it.



Focus on

Cord play

At around 20 weeks, your baby might start and practises this skill by holding on to her feet, hands and the cord. She might even get it wrapped around her body – but don't worry, it's quite stretchy and isn't dangerous at this stage.

21-24 WEEKS

By 21 weeks, your baby is around 5½cm long – half her length at birth. She weighs around 454 gms and all her organs and bodily structures are completely formed, even though they're not fully grown. Over the next few weeks, she'll start laying down fat under her skin to keep her warm after she's born. Even at this young age, she's already practising her facial expressions by smiling and grimacing inside the womb.

Focus on

Ears and hearing

At 24 weeks, your baby's ears are now structurally complete, although researchers believe your growing baby might be able to hear sounds outside the womb as early as 16 weeks. The most prominent sounds she'll listen to are your heartbeat and tummy gurgles. Encourage your partner to talk to your bump – voices with lower frequencies are believed to penetrate the wall of your abdomen more easily, so she might hear his voice better.

Focus on

Cord play

By around 25 weeks, she'll start sucking anything she can get hold of. She's also now prone to sticking out her tongue.

25-28 WEEKS

Your baby's first taste buds are now starting to develop and she's drinking around two litres of amniotic fluid a day. It has no nutritional value but the action helps her learn how to swallow. She's becoming increasingly aware of sounds and light outside the womb, too, and if you shine a light directly on to your bump, she might kick back in response. Her eyes are now fully formed but, while she'll open them at around 26 weeks, the pigment responsible for the colour of her eyes won't form until she's exposed to natural light after birth.

Focus on

Listening to music

At 32 weeks, your baby can recognise a familiar piece of music and move around to the beat. Fast music will get her excited, while music with a tempo similar to your heartbeat will soothe her. She might even recognise her favourite song after she's born.



Focus on

Her beating heart

From around 26 weeks, get your partner to press his ear to your bump – he might be able to hear your baby's heartbeat, which beats at a rate around twice as fast as yours.

29-32 WEEKS

Your baby is now starting to prepare for birth; her immune system is growing stronger, she has a thick layer of fat under her skin and has lost almost all her lanugo hair. She spends around 90 per cent of her time asleep but, when she's awake, a loud noise might trigger her startle reflex and make her throw out her arms and legs. She kicks and hiccups like a newborn. When she's asleep, 4D scans have revealed that your baby experiences rapid eye movement (REM), a sure sign that she's already dreaming.

33-36 WEEKS

By 34 weeks, your baby weighs a little over 2 kgs and is starting to change position to get ready for delivery. If you were to give birth now, your baby would stand an excellent chance of survival. However, her lungs aren't yet fully developed and she might struggle to breathe on her own.

37-40 WEEKS

Your baby's lungs are now ready to start breathing air and her hearing is acute, she has the capacity to learn and has developed the senses of taste, smell and touch, although her eyesight will continue to develop after the birth. Her head makes up a quarter of her total body length but is still small enough to squeeze through your pelvis. Your womb, which has kept your baby warm and comfortable over the last 40 weeks, has now become cramped – she's ready to come out.



some common pregnancy woes

Too Sick to eat?

HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES

Symporicarpus

Dosage: 10 drops in half a cup of water. In severe cases, threefour doses can be taken every twohours.

Nux vomica

This is one of the most effective remedies, especially if nausea and vomiting is triggered by spicy food.

Ipecac

If nausea continues throughout the day and if it is triggered by smell

Phosphorus

This remedy is for pregnant women who feel nauseated while looking at water.

Arsenicum Alb

A very good remedy for vomiting at the slightest sight or smell of food. Patient feels thirsty but can only have sips of water. If there is excessive burning (due to acidity), then warm drinks will help too.

Pain in the vein! IS IT A SERIOUS PROBLEM DURING PREGNANCY?

Most of the time, varicose veins won't caus you serious problems. However, if you have varicose veins in the area between your vagina and back passage (perineum) then your ob-gyn will watch them closely as you give birth. She'll want to make sure that when you reach the pushing stage of labour, your perineum doesn't tear, as this could cause severe bleeding. She'll encourage you to push slowly and to use positions such as being on your hands and knees that will take pressure off the area. If you've had varicose veins for a few years, it's worth knowing about problems that over a varicose vein can become very thin and may bleed a lot if bumped or cut. It can be difficult to stop the bleeding and you may need to get medical help. The skin over your varicose veins may suffer a lack of oxygen and nutrients, because cause waste products to build up, leading



to eczema, skin hardening or ulcers. If you think you're developing any of these, see your doctor. Some mums worry that they may get a blood clot and develop a deep vein thrombosis (DVT), because they have varicose veins. This rarely happens, but going through pregnancy and birth itselfcan put you at risk of DVT.

Feeding solo

It is not uncommon to find singleparent families globally, most of these families being headed by women. Between earning a living, and child rearing, breastfeeding can pose a challenge to these young single mums. Add exclusive breastfeeding to mix, and this challenge can be overwhelming, to say the least. For young mums today, self-care and recovery from childbirth seems to be severely neglected. This is where traditional wisdom comes to play, with postpartum rituals and routines of caring for a young mum, nourishing and nurturing her with herbs, and traditional warm foods. Therefore seeking postpartum services or any help from family or friends to allow a period of rest and nourishment can be helpful.

Meet the Expert



Effath Yasmin is India's leading International Board Certified lactation Consultant (IBCLC), Biodynamic CranioSacral Therapist, internationally certified lactation educator and the founder director of Nourish & Nurture Lactation Care & Parenting Education, an outreach clinic for mothers and families seeking professional clinical lactation management and parenting counselling. Yasmin sits on the board of directors and National Advisory Board of Birth India, an NGO striving for safe and supported birth in India

Night feeds and baby care:

are the most exhausting for young parents. It is desirable and normal for a baby to feed a couple of times during the night, and often milk producing hormones are on a surge during the nights. Not having help around can be extremely overwhelming, especially if a baby is being bottle fed. Exclusive breastfeeding can provide more rest for the mother and baby. Co-sleeping on the same bed can make it easier to support exclusive breastfeeding, and keeping baby close provides deep bonding and responding to baby's natural cues of hunger and other needs a lot easier.

Planning is the key: In urgent situations, it'll be hard to run out and get medicine since you can't leave your baby home alone—and you might not want to take them with you to the pharmacy in the dead of winter at three in the morning! Make sure to have extras of everything you might need for emergencies. Once you've done that, it also helps to have extras of non-emergency items so you have everything you need on hand. Always keep a bottle of dry nuts and seeds. These provide packed energy anytime with no need for preparation.

Staying honest to priorities:

Being a single mother means having to manage all baby care, finances, home care and other needs all alone with no partner to share responsibilities including handling emergencies. Keeping the list of priorities

and absolute musts is critical to have stress-free days and keeping calm to provide an emotionally safe environment to baby. Accepting help can give you an opportunity to even just have a bath or comb your hair or have a meal.

Use of technology:

From mother support groups such as BSIM or online shopping, sometimes technology can help in significant ways to reduce stress, saving you immense amount of energy.

Yoga Nidra:

Nidra or sleep is an ancient practice to calm your nervous system and resource you immensely physically and emotionally. You can lie in bed and listen to it, so that you and your baby can feel a wave of calm. This is facilitated by Mirabelle D'Cunha, and you can choose from Hindi and English.

Always know you are never alone in this. There is always help just a call away either in your circle of friends, family, Lactation consultant or counsel, Facebook group or even mother to mother support groups.

Truth or Scare

Barely a week goes by without a worrying pregnancy health story hitting the headlines. But what's the truth? M&B sorts fact from fiction

There's nothing like being pregnant to send your worry genes into overdrive. Can you eat this cheese? Is your tea too strong? Should you be using your mobile phone? Yes, pregnancy can be a really anxious time—especially when newspapers carry stories of the latest piece of supposedly 'helpful' research, which, more often than not, is frightening rather than reassuring. Of course, there are things we know it's wise to steer clear of. But often the 'new research trumpeted in the press is no more than a tiny study or some pretty woolly survey, which makes it hard to get a sense of perspective. So how should you react to the next big scare? "If you hear something from an informed source that promises to improve the health of your baby, then my advice is to follow it—but don't drive yourself mad," says consultant Tim Draycott, spokesman for the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. "Your doctor and your midwife are there to help you, so if you are at all concerned, talk to them," he adds. Here, our experts advise on recent pregnancy health scares

'Electrical appliances increase the risk of miscarriage'

A scientist in the US carried out a study of just under 1000 pregnant women. He found that out of the 159 who miscarried their baby, all but 20 were repeatedly exposed on a daily basis to microwaves, hairdryers and other domestic electrical appliances.

SCARE:

"Common sense needs to be applied here. After all, most pregnant women use some electrical appliances. If there was a link to miscarriage, I think we'd have heard more about it by now," says Sharon Simms, a midwife who works for Tommy's, the baby charity.

'Using hair dye while pregnant makes miscarriage more likely'

This idea was sparked by a Dutch study that compared pregnancy problems among hairdressers and clothing salespeople. The research found that hairdressers had a slightly higher risk of miscarriage.

SCARE:

"While there's been no real evidence to show that hair dye has any impact on an unborn baby, there's nothing to show it is completely safe, either," says

Sharon. "If you've just dyed your hair then found out you're pregnant, you shouldn't worry. The amount of chemicals absorbed by your body is tiny. But it's a good idea to minimise any contact you have with chemicals during early pregnancy, so avoid colouring in the first 12 weeks and after that ask your hairdresser about natural dyes," she says.

'Chlorine in swimming pools is linked to miscarriages and birth defects'

This issue was raised by scientists in London who suspected swimmingpool chemicals used in the chlorination process may be linked to miscarriage, low birth weight and birth defects in women who swam frequently.

SCARE:

Even one of the authors of the study admitted at the time the results were inconclusive and inconsistent. "I wouldn't worry at all about this piece of research. You can always make associations but just because a lot of women swim and a lot of

Mind Your Language



Arguments will always be a part of relationships. But having an impressionable toddler listening in could do more damage than you can imagine. Poornima Makaram tells you how to handle conflict amicably in the presence of your tot.

Get Your Happily Ever After

Breaking up is never going to be easy when little ones are involved, but there are ways to help minimise stress and sadness for your kids...

When you become parents, there's may be the hope that your lovely new addition will bring you both closer. But life doesn't always work like that – the latest UK national statistics show that 48% of divorcing couples have at least one child, and over a fifth have children under five. Much as this is a painful decision for adults, it can be confusing and upsetting for young children, too.

But there are ways to approach a break-up that will enable you to carry on parenting in the best way possible. And remember, the latest research suggests that while divorce affects children in the short term – often causing anxiety and anger – the majority of children will recover rapidly in the longer term, with only a small difference in long-term wellbeing between children of married and divorced parents – 70% of children whose parents separate grow up without serious problems. This is what you may be asking right now...



WHEN SHOULD I SIT DOWN AND TALK TO THE CHILDREN

This depends on what little ones have seen, heard and understood already. 'If children are four or older and have heard arguments or seen you angry, you need to have a chat immediately,' says Penelope Leach, author of *Family Breakdown: Helping Children Hang Onto Both Their Parents* (£9.09, Unbound). 'If you pretend everything's OK when it isn't, children will no longer trust you to tell them the truth.' Penelope says under-threes won't understand the concept of divorce, but will pick up on atmospheres and feel unsettled. 'It's best to acknowledge you've argued and you're trying to work out your problems.'

WHAT DO I SAY – HOW CAN I EXPLAIN WHY IT'S HAPPENED

not their fault. 'Reassure them that although Mummy and Daddy are going to live in separate houses, you both still love them and the reason for the separation is a grown-up decision, not to do with anything they've done,' says Nick Adams, therapist and head of Manchester's Psych Therapy Practice.

Don't over-share though, Nick warns. 'Speak with children together and present a united front. Planning a family dinner around your talk or discussing the issue over a meal can be positive ways to explain the situation. And it's a good idea to follow up with children individually, to see if they have questions and check they're OK.' And do this when it feels right for you... Joanne Graham, 32, a teacher from London, mum to Oliver, six, and Leo, five, postponed telling her kids

about her split until after Christmas last year: 'We didn't want to ruin their favourite time of year, so despite splitting in early December, we carried on living together, then told them in January.'

SHOULD I TRY TO STAY FRIENDS WITH MY EX FOR THE CHILDREN'S SAKE?

In the early months after a split, it might be hard to see your ex at all, but Penelope suggests you aim to 'co-parent' even if you're not friends. 'Mothers and fathers are equally important to children and having the best possible relationship with each is vital,' she says. 'This means being equally concerned, responsible and loving, and your personal feelings should not be allowed to get in the way.'

Stephanie Jones, 34, a florist from Lancaster, has worked out a steady relationship with her ex for the sake of her son Roscoe, five, saying, 'We split when Roscoe was two. Despite my heartache, I worked hard to put Roscoe's feelings first and stayed positive about his dad. Our son now has good relationships with us both and we parent him together.'

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILDREN COPE WITH THE CHANGE?

As anyone who's ever witnessed their child's distress at a new paint colour in the living room, or even when Mummy has a haircut, will know, children love routine and like to feel secure. It's best if you keep as many old routines constant as possible, and make your children the priority when forming new ones. Check out divorce.co.uk for excellent free

advice on all aspects of parenting well during a split. Another great resource is healthychildren.org. 'But remember,' advises Penelope. 'The more contact your child has with each parent, the better nothing should be allowed to get in the way of that. Relationships can't flourish if they spend months apart.'

SHOULD WE MAKE SURE OUR CHILD SPENDS TIME WITH BOTH OF US?

'It's in a child's best interest to see both parents and they should be allowed to do so as often as geography and logistics allow,' says Nick. Although some experts believe younger children need to have a predominant home. 'Most children, need to have a base,' explains Penelope. 'And for babies and toddlers, who so badly need continuity and security in this new situation, the base, at least in the beginning of the period of change, needs to be with the parent whose care they are most accustomed to.' This is something Debra Lyons, 29, from Canterbury, a stay-at-home-mum to Harry, three, agrees with. 'I'm there for the everyday – the bedtimes and the early mornings, my ex is there for the fun weekends and holidays,' she says. 'Although Harry loves his time with his dad, I'm his rock, his home.'

Let's stick together

Everything changes when you have a baby, including your relationships. We highlight good and the not so....



You've longed to meet her for nine months, and now your little bundle of joy has finally arrived, all you want to do is spend the days gazing into her eyes and playing with her tiny fingers and toes. But being totally wrapped up in your new baby doesn't have to mean leaving your other loved ones out. Let them share in this exciting time and your relationships with them could change in the most wonderful, and often unexpected, ways.

YOUR MAN

There's no denying that a baby will dramatically alter your relationship with your partner. "Before, there was only the two of you to worry about; now there's three – one of them is highly dependent and insistent, and for once it's not your partner!" says Gladeana McMahon, UK-based relationships expert. Then there's your baby, who leaves you sleep-deprived, low in energy and with no time to be totally dedicated to your man. But don't worry just yet. If you both get involved in your new baby's care, even changing nappies will see you reaping rewards. "You'll bond over your baby, and you may see hidden strengths in your partner," says Gladeana. That's something Harpreet Bhatti, mum to Rahul, 22 months, would agree with. "had a really hard time breastfeeding in the first four weeks because I developed mastitis," she says. "Rahul lost loads of weight and I found it so stressful – I was all over the place emotionally. Gurnam, my husband, took a month off work to help. He was there with me through it all. Even now Rahul's older, I'll never forget that." Harpreet adds, "Gurnam and I are even closer now; we have that amazing bond of having created something together. And the more I see just how much Gurnam loves Rahul, the more attractive I find him."

YOUR BEST MATE

As a new mum, you'll find you suddenly have more friends than your baby has booties. Not only will you make a new set of gal pals at mother and baby groups, but friends who already have babies will be delighted they can phone you up for four-hour chats about burping techniques. "It was like I was welcomed back into the fold by my best friend Anya when I had Laila last year," says Chitrata, 34.

a bit when she had her daughter, who's nearly five now; she spent more time with other friends with kids and I felt excluded. Now we're as close as we were before we both had babies," she says. But what about your childfree friends? If they're still out clubbing while your idea of a wild night is listening to FM Radio as you do the 3am feed, is it possible to stay close? Definitely, according to single mum, Joyita. "My friends were around when I had Maya. In particular, my best.

friend Ishita has been amazing. She drove from Pune to Mumbai when I went into labour, and stayed with me from 7am until Maya was born at 4am the next day." With a seven-month-old daughter and a full-time job, Joyita admits her friendships are a bit more 'take' than 'give' at the moment. "Friends drop in on me at the weekends for a gossip and my neighbour brings me stuff she's cooked," she says. But don't feel guilty about being a selfish friend for a while, says expert Gladeana. She says, "You need more support when you have a baby, and single friends are perfectly placed to help as they've got plenty of free time. And maybe there will come a time when you can put in more effort as you'll have more time – friends do that."

YOUR MUM

If you thought shopping on a Saturday afternoon was the ultimate mother-daughter bonding experience, wait until you have a baby. "Sharing an experience with your mum that she's also been through makes you start thinking about what being a mum really means," says Gladeana. "You might start remembering your childhood, and maybe become more understanding. For instance, if you recall times when your mum was tired and more irritable than you'd have liked her to be, you'll now realise why. Also, your mum is able to share information with you that you'll find really helpful."

Sarah Tyagi definitely found her relationship with her mum changed for the better when she had her baby, Niyashi, 11 months ago. 'Before, I thought my mum was over-protective and interfering, while she thought I was flighty,' says Sarah. 'But mum has shown me the ropes and been fantastic with Niyashi. We definitely have a more mature relationship now. I'm less selfcentred, and I don't see her as just my nagging mum any more but as a spectrum of different things. I admire her as a mum, a friend and a grandma. And I'd never have admitted it before, but now I like to say I'm not just closer to my mum since having Niyashi, I'm closer to becoming her, too!'

Having a baby can give you and your mum a clean slate, and the chance to wipe out any misunderstandings in the past and move to a new, more grown-up mother-daughter relationship.





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