

**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**  
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[www.moh.gov.rw](http://www.moh.gov.rw)

## **Module 3: Pregnancy Care**

This module provides a comprehensive understanding of the stages and components of pregnancy care, equipping Community Healthcare Workers (CHWs) to support pregnant women through antenatal care, recognize potential complications, and promote healthy pregnancy practices.

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## **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this module, participants will:

1. Understand the stages of pregnancy and the importance of antenatal care (ANC).
  2. Learn to perform basic pregnancy assessments and screenings.
  3. Recognize warning signs of pregnancy complications.
  4. Provide counseling on nutrition, lifestyle, and mental health during pregnancy.
  5. Promote birth preparedness and emergency planning.
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## **3.1 Stages of Pregnancy**

**Pregnancy is divided into three trimesters:**

1. **First Trimester (Weeks 1–12):**
  - Key events: Fertilization, implantation, and organ development.
  - Symptoms: Morning sickness, fatigue, breast tenderness, and mood swings.
2. **Second Trimester (Weeks 13–26):**
  - Key events: Rapid fetal growth and organ maturation.
  - Symptoms: Decreased nausea, increased energy, and fetal movement.
3. **Third Trimester (Weeks 27–40):**
  - Key events: Final growth and preparation for birth.
  - Symptoms: Back pain, frequent urination, and Braxton Hicks contractions.

**Activity:** Create a timeline summarizing key milestones in each trimester.

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## **3.2 Antenatal Care (ANC)**

### **What is ANC?**

Antenatal care involves regular medical check-ups to monitor the health of the mother and baby, prevent complications, and promote safe delivery.

### Importance of ANC:

- Early detection of complications (e.g., hypertension, anemia).
- Promotes maternal nutrition and health education.
- Ensures vaccinations and preventive treatments.

### Recommended ANC Visits:

- **WHO Guidelines:** A minimum of 8 contacts during pregnancy for optimal outcomes.
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### Components of an ANC Visit

1. **Health History and Assessment:**
  - Collect personal and medical history (e.g., previous pregnancies, chronic illnesses).
  - Ask about symptoms like pain, bleeding, or abnormal discharge.
2. **Physical Examination:**
  - Check weight and blood pressure.
  - Measure fundal height to assess fetal growth.
  - Check for edema (swelling) in the legs or hands.
3. **Laboratory Tests:**
  - Blood tests: Hemoglobin levels, blood group, and infectious disease screening (e.g., HIV, syphilis).
  - Urine tests: Protein and sugar levels to detect preeclampsia or diabetes.
4. **Vaccinations and Preventive Care:**
  - Administer tetanus toxoid (TT) vaccine.
  - Provide iron and folic acid supplements.
  - Malaria prevention (in endemic areas).
5. **Counseling and Education:**
  - Importance of ANC visits and self-care practices.
  - Nutrition and hydration during pregnancy.
  - Warning signs requiring immediate medical attention.

**Activity:** Practice ANC check-ups using role-playing scenarios.

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## 3.3 Nutrition and Lifestyle During Pregnancy

### Key Nutritional Needs:

- **Proteins:** Support fetal growth and maternal tissue repair.
- **Iron:** Prevents anemia; found in meat, spinach, and fortified cereals.
- **Calcium:** Strengthens fetal bones and teeth; found in milk, yogurt, and leafy greens.

- **Folic Acid:** Prevents neural tube defects; found in beans, citrus fruits, and fortified foods.

#### **Healthy Lifestyle Tips:**

- Stay physically active with light exercises like walking or yoga.
- Avoid smoking, alcohol, and recreational drugs.
- Manage stress through relaxation techniques.

**Activity:** Develop a sample pregnancy meal plan in small groups.

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### **3.4 Recognizing Warning Signs of Pregnancy Complications**

#### **Danger Signs During Pregnancy:**

- Severe abdominal pain or bleeding.
- Persistent headache, blurred vision, or dizziness.
- Severe swelling of the hands or face.
- Decreased or absent fetal movement after 28 weeks.
- Symptoms of preeclampsia: High blood pressure, protein in urine, and severe swelling.

#### **Emergency Actions:**

- Ensure timely referral to a healthcare facility.
- Provide emotional support to the pregnant woman and her family.

**Activity:** Participants discuss real-life scenarios and identify appropriate responses to danger signs.

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### **3.5 Birth Preparedness and Emergency Planning**

#### **What is Birth Preparedness?**

Birth preparedness involves planning for a safe and smooth delivery, reducing delays in seeking care during emergencies.

#### **Key Components:**

1. **Choosing a Birth Location:**
  - Encourage facility-based births with skilled healthcare providers.
2. **Identifying Transportation Options:**
  - Plan for reliable transport to a healthcare facility.
3. **Arranging Financial Resources:**
  - Save money for delivery and possible emergencies.

4. **Recognizing Emergency Signs:**

- Educate families on when to seek urgent care.

5. **Packing a Delivery Bag:**

- Items: Clothing, hygiene supplies, baby essentials, and medical records.

**Activity:** Participants create a checklist for birth preparedness with their peers.

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### 3.6 Promoting Mental Health During Pregnancy

**Common Psychological Challenges:**

- Anxiety about delivery and motherhood.
- Depression during or after pregnancy.

**Supportive Measures:**

- Encourage open communication with family and friends.
- Refer to counseling services or mental health professionals if needed.

**Activity:** Discuss ways to provide emotional support to pregnant women in the community.

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### Conclusion and Reflection

- **Summary:** Pregnancy care is a continuous process that ensures the health of the mother and baby.
  - **Reflection:** Participants share their insights on how they can better support pregnant women in their community.
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