

JOURNEY OF THE FIRST 100 DAYS

FOUNDATION OF BRIGHTER FUTURE

PLANNING YOUR PREGNANCY

INTRODUCTION

If you are simply thinking about, or trying to have a baby, it is a good idea to start getting ready for pregnancy. A focus on pre-pregnancy health, nutrition, lifestyle and environment of the mother can increase chances of having a healthy baby, with a bright start. For some women, getting the body ready for pregnancy takes only a few months. But, for others, it might take longer. Whether this is your first baby or the next one, here are some extremely important steps to help you get ready for the birth and nurturing of a healthy, intelligent and sensitive child.

GOALS FOR THIS STAGE

1. PLAN YOUR PREGNANCY

In order to plan your pregnancy, discuss with your spouse and set a goal about how many children you want and when you want to get pregnant.

Here are some key points to help you make a better decision:

- Do not make a decision under peer or parental pressure.
- Avoid pregnancy before you are 18 years old.
- Maintain the recommended gap of minimum 2 years between pregnancies, for better nourishment of both your children
- You may need to arrange resources for the arrival of the little one.
- Prepare yourself or your spouse physically, mentally, emotionally and financially.
- Undergo a holistic health checkup.
- Adopt and maintain healthy diet, lifestyle and behaviors.
- Get your hemoglobin level checked. If it is less than 12 grams per deciliter, consult your doctor.

Ask yourself – Do you want a baby now?

- If yes, stop contraception at least 6 months before you start planning.
- If you decide to delay, consult a doctor/ANM/ASHA for a suitable contraception method for you and/or your spouse, use the contraception correctly and at all times until you are ready to be parents.

2. EAT HEALTHY FOODS

Food choices can prepare you for a healthy pregnancy. The baby in the womb is dependent physically, mentally and emotionally on the mother. Thus, the nutritional status of the mother, even before becoming pregnant, is critical to the early development of the baby.

Note : Prefer using variety of local seasonal foods, vegetables and fruits being grown in and around your area.

Make sure mother's diet includes one from each group -

- **Cereals** – Rice, Wheat, Ragi, Bajra, Jowar in form of chapati, halua, idli, dosa, upma, poha etc. Avoid white bread, biscuits and other foods made with refined flour (Maida).
- **Fruits and vegetables** – Eat seasonal fruits and vegetables liberally. Your diet must include 2 katoris green leafy vegetables, 1 katori of starchy vegetables like potato, beet , carrot and 1 katori of other vegetables, like lady's finger, brinjal, tomato, beans etc. The more colorful the fruit or vegetable, the more nutritious it is.
- **Protein** – If you are a non-vegetarian, choose fish, full boiled eggs, and cooked meat. If you are a vegetarian, choose any pulses like moong, masoor, tuvar, rajma, at least 2 katoris a day.
- **Milk and milk products** – You can choose between 2 glasses of milk, or 2 katoris of curd or 60 gm paneer.
- **Fat** – Try to get your fat intake from vegetable sources like mustard oil and rice bran oil. Use a mixture of mustard oil and rice bran oil or mustard oil and groundnut oil, to ensure adequate quantities of Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids in your diet. You can also consume flax seeds (Alsi) to get enough Omega 3 fatty acids in your diet.
- **Water** – Drink at least 10 - 12 glasses of water every day.

Along with a healthy diet, start exercising, learn to manage stress and be happy and positive!!

Consult your ANM/ASHA for nutritional supplementation with calcium rich diets and Iron & Folic Acid Tablets.

10 KEY NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE TIPS FOR PLANNING A HEALTHY

PREGNANCY :

1. Don't indulge in bad eating habits (such as skipping breakfast, late meals, snacking unhealthy fatty foods etc.)
2. Eat 3 regular meals with some light snacks in between. Have small frequent meals to help maintain healthy body weight.
3. Consume whole grains like whole, wheat chapatti, brown rice, oats, whole-wheat breads etc.
4. Include at least 2 to 3 serving of protein rich foods like milk and milk products, egg, pulses, dal, chicken, fish etc.
5. Include 3 to 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily.
6. Include vegetable oils rice bran, mustard oil in your daily cooking. Limit excess use of oil for cooking.
7. Limit trans-fat "bad fat" intake by reducing the consumption of pastries, biscuits, cake, chips. Reduce the intake of sugar and sweets.
8. Reduce intake of tea and coffee.
9. Avoid foods that may contain harmful bacteria that are linked to still birth and miscarriage e.g. raw uncooked meat, fish, egg, unpasteurized milk.
10. Consume fish or 2 full boiled eggs or 3/4th cups cooked legumes (Rajma, Matar, Moong, Masur) at least twice daily.

3. STAY ACTIVE

Women should stay active and reach a healthy weight before conception. This is important both for the mother and the baby. If you are underweight or overweight before becoming pregnant, it reduces your chances of becoming pregnant. Remember that working at home or in a job is not exercise, one should set aside time for regular physical activity, for Example, walking or yoga.

4. TAKE 400 MICROGRAMS (1 TABLET) OF FOLIC ACID DAILY

Folic acid is essential for both the baby and the mother. This prevents spinal and brain birth defects in the baby. you need to start once you have planned for a pregnancy and continue for 3 months after confirmation of pregnancy. You can get it free of cost from your ASHA/ANM or at a government clinic. However, if a 400 microgram tablet is not available, you can take a 5 mg tablet, apart from a diet rich in folic acid.

Note : If you are planning a baby, consult a doctor/local medical practitioner to know your ideal body weight.

5. AVOID HARMFUL CHEMICALS AND TOXINS

Toxic substances are chemicals and metals or materials that can harm your health. You may be exposed to toxic substances every day, for example, pesticides on fruits and vegetables, home cleaning products and lead-based cosmetics.. Exposure to toxic substances can harm you, making it harder to get pregnant and even small amounts of toxic substances during pregnancy can cause diseases in your child early or later in life. Here are a few steps that can help you prevent toxin exposure:

- Quit smoking and avoid people who smoke.
- Stay away from pesticides.
- To get rid of pesticides sprayed on fruits and vegetables, soak them in salt water, before cutting or peeling, for some time. Rinse well and throw the water.
- Remove your shoes before entering the house to prevent bringing lead-contaminated soil in, from outside.
- Avoid cleaning agents available in the market, instead clean your house with soap and water.

- Mop your floors instead of sweeping them. Sweeping or dusting can spread the dust into the air, which is a major source of lead.
- Use glass and stainless steel containers instead of plastic ones, to store and eat food.
- If you are exposed to toxic substances at work, request a change in your duties.
- If anyone in your family works with toxic chemicals, that person should change and shower after work.
- Exposure to lead during pregnancy can harm the brain development of the baby. Avoid products that may contain lead, such as lead paint and lead-based cosmetics.
- Do not use mosquito coils in closed rooms. Instead use mosquito nets.

6. PROTECT YOURSELF FROM INFECTIONS

Protect yourself against any infections by :

- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water, especially before cooking and eating.
- Maintain hygiene after using the toilet.
- Avoid people who are sick.
- Try not to share food, drinks and utensils with those who are sick.

7. TAKE THE NECESSARY VACCINES

Vaccinations are our best defense against many diseases. These diseases can cause serious health problems for the baby.

Rubella/German measles and Hepatitis B can seriously affect unborn babies. If you haven't been vaccinated against these, visit your doctor before you try to conceive and then avoid becoming pregnant for a month after taking the vaccine.

8. CONSULT AN ANM OR DOCTOR

Tell the ANM or Doctor that you are trying to get pregnant.

It is good to get your BP, Blood sugar, and other routine examinations and clinical checkup done. If you have suffered from any fleeting joint (Rheumatic fever) pains in your childhood, please inform your doctor.

If you have a pre-existing health condition, for example hypertension, diabetes, epilepsy and / or other condition for which you take medication, ask your doctor if you should continue taking them. Learn to manage your pre-existing health conditions better. It is good for you and your husband to get screened for Sexually Transmitted Diseases(such as HIV and Syphilis), thalassemia and sickle cell anemia.

9. AVOID TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, AND NARCOTIC DRUGS

Smoking, drinking and using narcotic drugs can cause problems for the mother, such as difficulty getting pregnant, separation of the placenta from the womb too early, and the water may break too early. Problems for the baby include being born too small, being born with low birth weight, dying before birth or after birth, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and possible birth defects. Adopting a healthy lifestyle to ensure a healthy home environment is important for the baby.

10. ORAL HEALTH

Get dental checkup done and improve your dental health by regularly brushing your teeth twice - in the morning and before bed time for at least 2 minutes.

If you are suffering from gum and teeth disease, pay close attention to your oral health and discuss concerns with your doctor.

Note : Pregnant women with gum and teeth (periodontal) disease may have a higher risk of delivering a preterm or low birth weight baby.

11. EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Manage and reduce stress

Stress of any kind can cause anxiety, sadness, loneliness in you. It can cause your baby to develop problems at birth or later in life. Father and family members can help the mother by creating a positive and safe home environment.

Say NO to Domestic Violence

Your baby may suffer, or even die, as a result of domestic violence. If you are a victim of domestic violence,

- tell someone you trust or talk to your ASHA
- find someone to help you
- try to leave safely
- your local Women's Helpline number

Tip : Care and support by husband and mother-in-law gives emotional support and confidence in dealing with the process of child bearing. Mother-in-law can share their experience to reduce anxiety.

BUSTING MYTHS AROUND CONCEPTION AND PREGNANCY

Is the mother responsible for giving birth to a baby girl or baby boy?

First of all, in today's world having a boy (male) or a girl (female) child should not matter. Girls have equal potential to excel in any field. Hence, they can become good doctors, engineers, scientists, poets, painters or sports persons. This can only happen when they are encouraged and treated equally to boys. However, some of us continue to underestimate the potential of a girl child and blame the mother for her birth. In this process, the society loses out on our girls reaching their full cognitive potential.

The father determines the sex of a child though it is not in his control. Here's why:

A baby gets chromosomes both from the mother and father. These chromosomes determine the sex of the child. The mother has two sex chromosomes known as "XX". The father also has two sex chromosomes, but they are different than those of the mother: they are the "XY" chromosomes. It is the Y chromosome which determines the male sex of a child which the child gets from father. However, there is no way for the father to ensure which chromosome will get passed on to the child! Once XX or XY is decided on the first day of primitive child, one cannot change the genetic makeup.

Can you choose the sex of a child? Is there a medicine or treatment to change the sex inside the womb?

The answer is no, you cannot choose the sex of a child. Even though the father's chromosome determines the sex of the child, he has no control

over which chromosomes are carried by a particular sperm and which sperm will fertilize the egg.

There are no medicines or drugs which can change the sex of your child. Any medicines that claim to do so may harm the child's brain and other organs

NUTRITION

INTRODUCTION

The mother's nutrition, while planning the pregnancy as well as during pregnancy and breastfeeding, plays a significant role in influencing the baby's physical growth and mental development.

Knowing what and how to eat is beneficial for the health of the mother and the child. Pregnancy and childbirth may challenge the mother's body more than anything experienced before. Physical and mental preparation is important for the parents' as well as the baby's well-being. This chapter gives specific advice about essential nutrients, adequate diet, safe exercise and rest, during pre-pregnancy, pregnancy and breastfeeding.

ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS FOR A PREGNANT WOMAN

Iodine

What happens if a pregnant, or breastfeeding, woman doesn't get enough iodine in the diet?

The main concern of mild iodine deficiency during pregnancy and breastfeeding is its effect on the brain of the unborn child and growing

infant, in particular, reducing the intelligent quotient (IQ). The daily iodine requirement is 220 micrograms.

Note : Taking iodine, when you are pregnant, can boost your baby's brain.

Check whether your diet contains:

- Spinach
- Potato with skin
- Iodized salt
- Milk
- Curd
- Fish
- Boiled Egg

If I am taking iodized salt, can my baby still suffer from iodine deficiency?

Yes. There is a loss of iodine during storing and cooking of iodized salt. To ensure you meet your daily requirements, you need to take –

- 2 tsp of iodized salt every day.
- 2 glasses of milk / 2 katori of curd / 2 full boiled eggs with 1 katori of spinach every day.
- Sprinkle salt on food after cooking. Add salt either in the later stages of cooking or after cooking.
- Avoid storage of salt in hot and humid conditions, such as the cooking area.
- Once opened, store salt in an airtight glass jar.

Tip : The loss of iodine during cooking may range from 7% to 70%. It depends upon type of cooking method and cooking time. Maximum loss is during pressure cooking and boiling and less in deep frying.

Folic Acid

What happens if the pregnant woman doesn't get enough folic acid in her diet?

Folic acid deficiency can lead to a child born with birth defects, involving the brain and spinal cord. Good sources of folic acid, consumed especially 3 months before you conceive, and during the first 3 months of pregnancy protect your baby. The daily requirement of folic acid is 400 micrograms.

Check whether your diet contains :

- Cabbage
- Spinach
- Ladies finger
- Carrot
- Beans and Peas
- Orange
- Fish
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Iron

What happens if the pregnant woman doesn't get enough iron in the third trimester?

Even mild iron deficiency, that may go undetected at times, negatively impacts the child's mental development. But with supplementation, the child's mental development improves, even if the woman continues to have iron deficiency.

Check whether your diet contains:

- Red Spinach
- Spinach
- Cabbage
- Radish
- Mustard
- Gur (Jaggery)
- Boiled egg
- Chicken

Vitamin B12

What happens if the pregnant or breastfeeding mother's diet is Vitamin B12 deficient?

Vitamin B12 deficiency is found in those mothers who are strict vegetarians. This may lead to an increased risk of birth defects including brain and spinal cord. The daily requirement of Vitamin B12 is 1.2 micrograms.

Check whether your diet contains:

- Soymilk
- Peanut
- Milk
- Curd
- Fish
- Boiled egg
- Chicken

Vitamin D

What problems can Vitamin D deficiency cause in a pregnant or breastfeeding woman?

Vitamin D deficiency occurs in mothers who are not exposed to sufficient sunlight or do not eat food containing Vitamin D. This would affect the foetal bone development. The daily requirement of Vitamin D is 400 IU.

Check whether your diet contains:

- Mushrooms
- Almonds
- Milk
- Curd

- Fish
- Boiled egg
- Sunlight (although this is not a food, it is essential for adequate Vitamin D).
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Omega 3

What happens if the mother's diet doesn't contain Omega 3 ?

If your diet doesn't contain sufficient omega 3, this would impact the child's brain and vision development. Fish is good source of this kind of fat. Vegetarians should use a mixture of mustard and rice bran oil or mustard and groundnut oil as a cooking medium. You can also consume flax seeds.

Check whether your diet contains:

- Leafy greens
- Walnuts
- Beans
- Chia Seeds
- Mustard Oil
- Rice Bran Oil
- Fish

Cooking Tips for the Pregnant Woman

DO's :

- Wash your hands with soap before you begin cooking or eating.

- Wash all utensils before use. You can use one tsp of household bleach in 1 liter of water to clean them. Rinse utensils well.
- Soak all vegetables and fruits in salt water for some time, rinse and wash, before peeling and cutting. Throw the salt water used for soaking.
- Eat 3 meals and 2-3 snacks everyday that are low in sugar and salt.
- Enjoy variety of foods from 4 food groups everyday – grain products (wheat, rice, ragi, bajra, jowar), milk and alternatives, vegetables and fruits, fish/meat or soybeans/mushrooms/lentils.
- Use a mixture of mustard oil and rice bran oil or mustard oil and groundnut oil, to ensure adequate amount of Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids in your diet.

DON'Ts :

- DO NOT keep raw or cooked food at room temperature for longer than 2 hours.
- DO NOT keep cooked food in the fridge for more than 2 days. Reheat food well before eating it.
- Limit food with very high content of fat, sugar, or salt, like potato chips, achar, mithai, samosa, kachori, deep fried foods. DO NOT re-use or overheat oils. Limit use of Dalda.
- Avoid foods containing trans-fat, such as packaged namkeens, chips, cakes etc.
- DO NOT consume raw or half boiled eggs/ unboiled milk.
- DO NOT take more than 2 cups of tea or coffee in a day.

