







BABY & CARE

Child Health Problems



-  *Preparing for the Baby*
-  *Planning Baby Routine*
-  *Healthy Diet for Babies*
-  *Common Health Problems*

BABY CARE

*&
Child Health Problems*

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Publisher's Note

After publishing a number of books on Health and Fitness, V&S Publishers is now coming up with an exclusive and exhaustive book on *Baby Care & Child Health Problems*. We all are aware of the fact that a baby is the most precious gift of God to a Mother. However, babies are very delicate, innocent and easily susceptible to various diseases and infections if not properly taken care of.

Therefore, a mother starts the preparations for her newborn's arrival right from the day she conceives or may be before that. She has to plan her food habits, daily routine, and take care of herself and her baby from day one till the baby is born – experiencing the pleasures and pain of the nine-month long pregnancy period.

Even after the birth of her child, she has to take the utmost care of her bundle of joy, breastfeed him/her, keep the baby clean and happy and follow the doctor's (pediatrician's) advice of vaccinating the child periodically till the age of five years. These vaccinations, medications and drops make the child immune to a number of deadly diseases like Polio, Jaundice, Hepatitis B, Chicken Pox, Measles, etc.

The book, *Baby Care & Child Health Problems* deals with all the above mentioned factors elaborately and systematically with special tip offs and advices from pediatricians or child specialists.

So this book can be very helpful and serve as an asset for all those mothers, who are expecting their babies to arrive soon or are busy taking care of their precious ones.

Introduction

Remember that fateful day when you first held your tiny bundle of joy in your arms. Becoming a parent is the happiest day of one's life. The arrival of a new born brings delight and enthusiasm in parents' life and they look forward to see their baby grow. However, caring for your delicate baby can raise some obvious questions. A slight mishandling or carelessness can harm your baby and his/her growth and you may be left wondering where you went wrong. Apart from the regular feeding and nappy-changing, there are numerous insignificant little day-to-day jobs involved in caring for your baby the right way. Bathing and clothing him/her, breast-feeding and many such other activities require special care and attention.

Lack of proper care leaves your baby vulnerable to infections and other ailments. With low immunity, your baby is susceptible to other harmful substances in the environment. Minor skin conditions, such as heat rash, infant acne, etc may also arise as the baby's skin is thin and fragile. However, the right care can keep your baby hale and hearty, pleasant and healthy-looking and also build up his/her resistance against the above mentioned health conditions. For the lack of the right instructions' manuals, it is natural to feel baffled on how to provide the most loving and efficient care to your baby. Follow through the related chapters in this book to find the best tips and guidelines on baby care.

So help yourself and help your baby in healthy growing.

A New Life Begins

Child care begins even before you conceive. The mother is the most important person in a child's life. If you are not ready then you will not be able to enjoy your baby nor would the baby be happy. If you are ready both physically and mentally to go through your pregnancy then the rest of the path becomes much easier. A baby is very demanding. So unless you enjoy being a mother you will find it very tough to cope with the unavoidable stress that accompanies the arrival of your little one.

Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a unique experience. You and your partner are going to become parents. Your life takes on a new dimension when you start a family. Let's have a brief idea about how pregnancy occurs. Males and females have their separate reproductive organs. The female reproductive organs include the two ovaries, fallopian tubes and the uterus. The eggs (ova) are produced in the ovaries. At the time of puberty, lots of hormonal changes take place in a girl's body. With the result, the ovaries begin to release an egg (ovum) each month. This egg travels to the uterus through fallopian tubes each month. During copulation when the sperm manages to penetrate the egg while still in the fallopian tube, fertilization occurs. If the fertilization does not occur, the egg and the tissues lining the womb are shed periodically every month. This is called menstruation. If fertilization occurs, pregnancy is established. The fertilized egg reaches the uterus and establishes itself there. New hormones are produced and new tissues are built up in the uterus to sustain the new life. A simple urine test performed six weeks after the first day of the last menstrual test may be done to confirm the pregnancy.

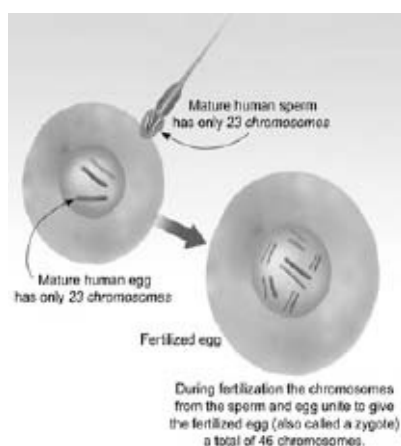


Pregnancy

Transformation

The cell formed by the union of egg and sperm is called zygote. After travelling from the fallopian tube to the womb, this cell gets attached to the lining of the uterus. With time, this zygote multiplies, matures and differentiates into various organs of the baby. The baby connects with the uterus through the placenta. Later on the placenta enlarges

and is connected to the developing baby by means of the umbilical cord. The baby gets oxygen and all the nutrition from the placenta and sends its waste products to the placenta via this umbilical cord. When the baby is born, this umbilical cord is cut and clamped around two inches from the baby's end. The placenta along with the rest of the umbilical cord is expelled from the womb. The baby's umbilical cord dries up and gets shed a few days later leaving behind the belly button on baby's tummy.



Formation of a zygote

Tests and Checkups



The missed periods are the first and most reliable sign for women to suspect the pregnancy. Consult your doctor as soon as possible who would confirm the pregnancy with a simple urine test.

After this, a physical examination by your doctor will be done to ensure your heart, lungs and other body systems are in perfect shape to bear the pregnancy. Throughout the pregnancy your blood pressure, heart condition and urinary status will be maintained under regular supervision for early detection of any complications. If not detected and controlled in time, they can seriously harm your baby and you.

Symptoms of Pregnancy

Here are certain features and symptoms of pregnancy which occur due to the hormonal changes and increase in the size of the womb. They are:

- ❑ The size of the breasts changes. There may be tingling and throbbing in the breasts. The veins on the surface of the breast may become more prominent. The size of the nipples increases and the surrounding area becomes darker and more prominent.
- ❑ Morning sickness in the first trimester is more common. However in some women, nausea with or without vomiting may go one further than the first trimester.
- ❑ There is a tendency of increased frequency of passing urine, especially at night.
- ❑ The bowel habits undergo change. There may be constipation.
- ❑ Your taste changes. You may develop a distaste of things which you always liked to eat and drink like tea, coffee, milk, flour, etc. There may be increased craving for things like clay, chalk or sour things.
- ❑ Some women feel emotionally drained and anxious. This occurs due to hormonal changes and it goes away on its own once the baby is born and the body reverts back to its normal form.

Development of the Baby

It is an accepted fact that the physical and mental health of the mother during pregnancy is related to the child's development, both before and after birth.

The nine months of pregnancy are divided into three parts of three months, each called trimesters.

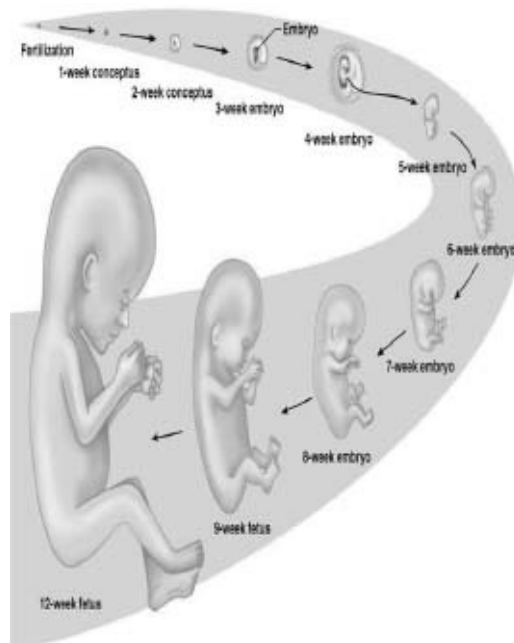


Exercising during pregnancy

- ❑ The first trimester is the most critical in terms of the formation of the baby's organs, brain, heart, kidneys, face, nose, eyes, limbs and other organs. It is during this period that most hormonal changes take place. Mild nausea and vomiting in the morning are fairly common during this trimester. To get rid of

this morning sickness, avoid sudden movements and rise slowly in the morning from the lying position. It also helps to eat a dry toast or drink a cup of tea with lemon juice soon after waking up in the morning. Avoid fatty foods. Eat small but regular meals.

- During the second trimester, the pregnancy settles down and by the fifth month, you will feel the baby kicking. At first, it may not be like a pronounced kick but just a flutter or a tickle. As the months pass, you will find that the baby is more active and the frequency of movement increases.
- The third trimester is generally uneventful. Your bulge begins to show considerably. Simple yoga exercises should be done during this period for easy delivery.



Development of the embryo

Care during Pregnancy

It is important to have regular antenatal checkups during the nine months of pregnancy.

Do not take any drugs during this period, especially during the first trimester. If it is essential then take it with the consent of your doctor because some drugs taken by you can go across the placenta to your baby. This may be harmful and damage his developing organs leading to various defects in his heart, brain, eyes, ears, etc.

Eat a healthy, nutritious diet consisting of food items of all food groups so as to provide nutrition to you as well as to the baby. Calcium, vitamin D, folic acid and iron are very important for the formation of baby's bones and teeth and to keep your haemoglobin levels high. Deficiency of folic acid in the first trimester of pregnancy is closely associated with the development of neural tube defects in the baby.

Avoid smoking and alcohol completely during pregnancy. It is also advisable to not to expose yourself to cigarette smoke released by other smokers at home or at work.



Labour

The process by which the baby and the placenta are expelled from the mother's uterus is known as labour. These symptoms indicate the onset of labour:

During pregnancy, a protective plug of mucus blocks the cervix. When the labour begins, this mucus plug loosens and is discharged through the vagina with a little blood. This phenomenon is called the 'show' and it indicates the onset of labour.

At the beginning of the labour when the cervix dilates, the amniotic sac or the water bag surrounding the baby in the womb comes down and breaks leading out a sudden gush of watery fluid coming out of the vagina.

Then regular frequent uterine contractions occur which begin as mild and brief lasting for half a minute or so. They progressively become more frequent, strong and painful lasting for a longer period.

When the onset of labour is established then the actual process of birth begins. In the first stage, the mother gets regular uterine contractions every 3 to 5 minutes and the lower portion of the uterus and the cervix dilate in order to allow easy passage for the baby.

In the second stage, strong uterine contractions begin which result in baby's head presentation. The baby's head is the first part of his body to appear and emerge out of the vagina during labour. After delivery, the baby's cord is clamped and cut. Mucus is sucked out of the baby's nose and mouth and his body is dried and he/she is wrapped in a towel.

In the third stage, which is the stage of afterbirth, the placenta and the membranes are expelled soon after the baby comes out.

Normal, Forceps or Caesarian

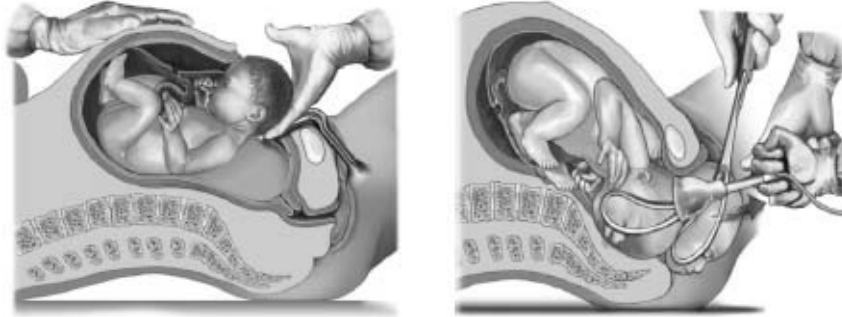
In normal labour, the contractions of the mother's uterus push the baby through her passage and deliver the baby out without any external aid. In case the contractions are not strong enough or the baby gets stuck in a difficult position and begins to show signs of distress, then the baby is delivered by forceps or vacuum extraction. The forceps' blades or the rubber cups of the vacuum extractor are applied to the baby's head. Then the baby is gently pulled out by an experienced doctor.

Also to avoid ragged perineal tears and damage to the mother during delivery, the doctor may make a small cut in

the perineum. This is also called episiotomy. This cut is later stitched and it heals quite easily.

In cases when normal delivery is harmful to the baby or the mother, the doctor may decide to perform a caesarian operation and deliver the baby. In this case, a small cut is made in the lower abdominal wall and the uterus of the mother. After the baby is taken out, the cut parts are stitched back.

Pregnancy is not an illness. Each pregnancy is unique yet it is a perfectly normal occurrence. Regular medical advice should be taken to ensure that the pregnancy runs smoothly. There may be ups and lows in your mood, but this is not unusual. Keep your mind occupied and look after your health.



Methods of child birth



Preparing for the Baby

The arrival of the baby is the most awaited moment of your life. You would not like to spoil by having to run here and there in search of right things for the baby at the last moment. Here is a list of things which you should keep ready before the arrival of the newborn.

For the Baby

- A crib with a soft but firm baby mattress.
- Baby blankets for winter
- Pillows (optional)
- Waterproof sheeting of plastic or rubber for the crib
- Soft bed sheets and covers
- Baby clothes which are soft and comfortable
- Baby caps, socks, mittens/gloves for winter
- Soft towels
- Diapers, which are soft, such as those made from old linen in the house are very soft and should be used for the first few days as baby's skin is very delicate during this period.
- Cotton cloth pieces and wipes
- Cotton and gauze for making cotton pads
- Cotton balls for wiping baby's eyes
- Baby towels
- Mild baby soap
- Baby powder
- Baby oil
- Baby cream
- Nappy rash cream (as and when required)
- Baby bath or tub with rounded edges
- Two feeding bottles and two nipples
- A tin of milk powder
- Brushes to clean the bottles
- Bottle sterilizer



Baby accessories

For the Mother

- Maternity clothes
- Hand and body cream
- Other toiletries
- Sanitary Towels
- Breast pump (as and when required)



Mother and baby accessories



Planning a Baby Routine

The first few weeks with your baby will seem nothing more than chaotic and emotionally volatile. It will take about a month for both the mother and the baby to fit into a comfortable routine. By this time, you would have learnt how many naps he/she takes during the day and their approximate duration. You will know how often the baby needs a feed and at what intervals. You will have an idea of how many times they wake up at night. The baby will learn that you are the main caretaker and that you will feed, clean and comfort him/her when he/she cries. Depending on the way you interact and react to the baby, they will expect you to be talkative, quite, upset, calm or irritated in different situations.

Babies will also be developing their own personalities and will be learning things from you. If your behaviour is not what the baby expected in a particular situation, he/she will be upset and cry because there is a sudden unexpected change in behaviour. Babies measure their worth by the response of their caregivers. As you feed, change, bathe, clean and talk to your baby, they will look attentively at your face, observing all the changes in your expression as you speak. The first few months of a baby's life are very important from the point of view of his/ her socialization. These months will form the basis for their interaction with the rest of the people. Therefore, the mother's interaction with the baby and her behaviour towards him/her assumes immense importance in the first few months.



Three weeks old baby

As you have a new baby whose care will take up most of your time, it is better you make a plan and have a daily routine in place. Since you will have to take care of the baby, you may not be able to pay much attention to the rest of your family. You have an additional responsibility now that needs maximum attention and care on your part. Accept this and make changes at home to make things easier for you. Make a realistic plan that you are able to follow without much difficulty and distress. It is important to remember that you will have to plan your day around your baby. We have compiled some tips from different parents on how to manage your home and your baby in those initial days.

Tips to Plan the Baby Routine

- If you can afford it, hire someone, to help with some of the chores around the

house like cleaning, ironing, shopping, etc.

- ❑ Try to keep the baby awake in the early evening time, so that he/she sleeps for a longer duration in the night. You will also be able to sleep sound if the baby doesn't wake up frequently in the night.
- ❑ You should also try to schedule the other activities of your baby, such as baths and play time along with naps and eating.
- ❑ Make sure that you stick to the same schedule during the week and on weekends. This will make it easier for the baby to fall into a set pattern.
- ❑ Take time to do something that you enjoy and that makes you happy every day. It can be talking to a friend, watching TV, or listening to music. If you are happy and relaxed, you will be able to take better care of your baby.
- ❑ On the weekends, you and your partner can take turns in looking after the baby, so that you get some time off.
- ❑ Cook your dinner early, as you will be exhausted by the evening and will have to begin cooking all over again. At least prepare most of it, so that you have very little to do later.



Mother putting her baby to sleep



Mother, father and their child

By the age of six months, most of the babies begin to develop a rather predictable schedule for sleeping, feeding and playing. You just have to solidify those patterns by introducing your baby to a routine that is comfortable for both you and him/her. Remember, no matter how hard you work, you may not be able to do all your household chores. The important thing is not to overburden yourself, to find time for yourself and to enjoy the new baby.



Part I
BABY CARE



Baby Diapers

You have just become a parent. The excitement of labour and delivery has taken you to the next step of beginning your life with your baby. For the next few years, diapers* shall become an important part of your life. You will now wonder whether you would be using cloth or disposable diapers for your newborn. Use either of the two; your baby is sure to be dirty about 10 in a day or about 70 in a week.

With the arrival of the newborn, there is a lot of joy in the air as well as lots of apprehension concerning his/her care and hygiene. For any new parent, the very thought of diapering your little one can be a scary idea. You will be amazed to see how often your baby pees and poops initially. Changing your baby after every leak is something that will command your attention most of the time. Diapers are a means to wick away wetness from your soft baby's skin, keeping him/her dry and happy. Changing your baby's diapers may seem to be a baffling chore at the start. However with a little practice, you will discover that keeping your baby dry is just a child's play. One of the important decisions that you have to make as parents is to whether put your baby on cloth diapers or disposable ones. While disposable diapers are handier and easy to use, cloth diapers are certainly the best bet. Cloth diapers are economical, environment-friendly, reusable, washable and quite easy to make.

Diapering a baby calls for some guidelines and precautions to ensure that your baby is comfortable and happy for the next few hours. If not attended well, diapers can lead to diaper rash which, when ignored, can worsen the condition. This chapter of baby care deals with the aspect of teaching new parents how to use diapers or nappies for their newborn. You will find how to make and fold cloth diapers, and pack a diaper bag. It also includes the use of disposable diapers and training a parent to tie a nappy.*

1. Making Cloth Diapers

Cloth diapers are back in vogue and are being favoured by an increasing number of parents today. Traditional cloth diapers are definitely enjoying an upper hand now, as opposed to their disposable counterparts. Apart from being economical and eco-friendly, cloth diapers are easily washable and can be reused. Also, the soft, airy feel of real cloth reduces any risk of your baby suffering painful rashes. Most parents often find it troublesome to fold a cloth diaper into a proper fit.

Choose a Style

You can begin by choosing a style for your diapers. While all-in-one (AIO) diapers are the most convenient option that comes without any pins or covers, pre-fold diapers are easy on your pockets. In case you wish to go for fitted diapers, you can sew them as per your preference.

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