

LIFE BEGINS

L.No	Title of Lesson	SKILLS	Activity
17	Life Begins	Empathy, Problem Solving , Decision Making, Coping with Stress & Emotion	Care of the pregnant women, foetus and infant

Summary

A foetus remains in the mother's womb for about nine months (280 days). This is called the **prenatal period**, which begins with conception and ends with birth. Pregnancy can be divided into **three trimesters** – 3 periods of 3 months each. During each trimester distinct changes take place and rapid growth and development takes place. The growing foetus, although well protected inside the womb, is affected by certain factors. Pregnant woman becomes extremely vulnerable during the period of pregnancy and child birth. Therefore, she needs a lot of care and support from the people around her. She should get regular medical check up, eat nutritious food, do regular exercise and get adequate rest.

The baby should be delivered in a **health institution**, which can be a hospital or public health centre (PHC or a private nursing home) or by a trained health attendant. All the rules of cleanliness should be followed at the time of delivery.

Care after the delivery is also important for both newborn baby and the mother. The baby needs to be **immunized** against preventable infectious diseases. Besides observing the rules of cleanliness for both mother and the baby, their feeding also needs proper attention by the family. The baby should be fed mother's milk from the first hour after birth till at least 6 months thereafter. Babies who are fed breast milk are healthier, grow stronger and have good immunity. Mothers should have an adequate and balanced diet while they are breast feeding.

Planning your family means that the parents can decide when to start and multiply their family. It also means that there should be an adequate age gap between two children in a family, so that both, mother and children stay healthy and raising children is a stress-free process for the parents.

Principal Points

During pregnancy, the family must ensure that the following are taken care of:

1. Regular medical check-up,
2. Adequate nutritious food
3. Ideal increase in weight,
4. Timely and regular intake of medicines
5. Appropriate clothes i.e. comfortable & free-flowing
6. Regular exercise and proper rest

After Child birth, the family must ensure that the following are taken care of:

1. Hygiene for the baby and mother
2. Immunization
3. Nutrition
 - Balanced & Nutritious diet for the mother
 - Breast feeding for the baby

Build Your Understanding

Pregnancy is an important period in any woman's life. Adequate care of the woman is crucial during pregnancy, delivery and after the child is born. Support from the family and community to the pregnant woman is essential for the health of the mother and the baby.

What's Important to Know?

- The growing foetus, although well protected inside the womb, is affected by certain factors:
 - Mother's emotional state:** A happy mother gives birth to a happy baby.
 - Mother's diet:** A mother must take a nutritious diet so that her baby gets proper nutrition to grow.
 - Age of mother:** The right age to have a baby is when the mother is between 20 and 35 years of age.
 - Medicines:** Prescribed medicines from a good doctor helps mother and baby to be fit and healthy.
 - Disease, germs that affect the foetus:** Mothers must be careful during pregnancy and avoid catching infections.
 - Drugs, alcohol and smoking:** Smoke from cigarette or 'bidi', chemicals from alcohol or drugs like 'afeem' (morphine) can cause major damage to the foetus as well as mother.
- Delivery by trained health personnel is important.** It should be preferably in a health centre. During delivery 5 'C' rules should be followed, which are:
 - Clean hands and fingernails;
 - Clean surface for delivery;
 - Clean sheet;
 - Clean all items to be used for delivery with antiseptic solution;
 - Clean cutting of the umbilical cord with a new blade and tying with new (fresh) thread.

Evaluate Yourself

- Savitriji's daughter-in-law is pregnant. List four things that she and her family should do to ensure the birth of a healthy child.
- List the vaccines recommended for a new born baby under the National Immunization Schedule. State the diseases that they prevent.

Did You Know?

- The sex of a foetus is determined by the combination of sex chromosomes of mother and father.
- Expected Date of Delivery can be calculated by adding 9 months + 7 days to the first day of last menstrual period.
- An ultrasound is a safe technique where sound waves of very high frequency are used to check the growth and development of the foetus. Some parents and doctors misuse this facility to determine the sex of the foetus and terminate the pregnancy if it is found to be female. This is called **female foeticide**. This practice is legally banned in our country.
- Acute heartburn, swelling of the lower legs, diabetes or hypertension during pregnancy may lead to severe pregnancy complications and cause maternal or foetal deaths.
- A mother's breast produces yellowish fluid called '**colostrum**' for the first few days after delivery. It is very important to feed colostrum to the baby for a good health in life.

Extend Your Horizon

Care of the newborn (first one month after birth) and later in the year is very essential. This includes keeping the baby warm after birth, exclusively breastfeeding, and timely and completed immunization.

Maximize your marks

Do the activities suggested in the lesson to get clear understanding of the topic. Learn the National Immunization Schedule table.