

Pregnancy Care

A pregnant woman herself plays the most important role in preparing for the arrival of her new baby. Pregnancy is a good time to concentrate on your health, eat nutritiously, take regular gentle exercise, reduce your alcohol intake to a minimum and stop smoking.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING EACH TRIMESTER:

Pregnancy is one of the happiest times in women's life. Bodily changes will occur during these Nine Months. It is advisable to be aware of how your body will change to avoid any surprises.

FIRST TRIMESTER (Up to 3 months) :

- Nausea/ uneasiness can occur frequently at any time of the day(not just morning sickness) upto 14 weeks of pregnancy. This is because of hormonal changes occurring in your body during pregnancy.
- Swollen & tender breast, these are also due to hormonal changes preparing the breast for baby's feeding.
- Stuffy Nose occurs due to an extra lining due to added pressure changes. Pregnancy causes increased blood flow to nose.
- Increased Fatigue felt by many women is a result of tremendous amount of energy used by the body as a baby forms.
- Frequent urination occurs as uterus grows and presses on urinary bladder.
- Craving for starch food.
- Mask of pregnancy appears as a sprinkling of freckles over cheeks and nose. There is also dark colouration of these areas. This disappears after pregnancy. This is caused by hormonal changes & frequent Sun exposure.

SECOND TRIMESTER (3-6 months)

- Overall Healthy feeling returns as vomiting, nausea stops.
- Waistline thickens and the abdomen becomes round and firm.
- Heart burn increases. This happens because as the uterus grows it puts pressure on stomach narrowing the sphincter through which food

passes. Also stomach acid secretion increases under the hormonal effect causing bitter burps.

- Constipation is caused by the pressure of growing uterus on the intestines, which slows the movement of food. This is further increased by intake of vitamins & iron.
- Stretch Marks on breast and abdomen are caused by expansion of skin over the growing uterus. This causes itching sensation also.
- Darkening Skin around nipples and a thin dark line upto and beyond navel are normal pigmentary changes.
- Movement of baby is felt like tiny thumps after 22 completed weeks.
- Food cravings can include citrus fruits, which decrease heart burn and salty foods is felt.

THIRD TRIMESTER (6TH MONTH UP TO DELIVERY)

- Backaches are caused due to increased pressure and stretching on ligaments and muscles that support back and pelvis.
- Leg cramps occur while lying down. This is because volume of blood in your body increases and gravity pulls it down into the legs, putting pressure on leg muscles and leading to cramps.
- Shortness of breath occurs because baby presses against respiratory muscles, Also increased levels of hormones in pregnancy causes breathlessness.
- Baby movement is noticeable. Baby gains weight now and you can feel the kicks & hiccups of the baby.
- Difficulty in sleep is there due to frequent passing of urine & the discomfort due to weight gain.

REDUCING DISCOMFORT OF SWELLING:

There is nothing you can do to avoid swelling but there are few ways to minimize the discomfort...

- ✓ When sitting keep your feet elevated. Eg. If you are working at a desk, use two phone books or a short stool, or pull the bottom drawer and prop up your feet.

- ✓ At home, prop up legs as often as possible on a short stool, or sit sideways on a couch with your back against the arm rest and legs resting on sofa cushions.
- ✓ While lying down place one pillow below your thighs and second one under calves and heels.
- ✓ While standing, do foot circles with pointed toes, alternating the feet.
- ✓ Walking and mild exercise will also be very helpful.
- ✓ Wear low heeled comfortable shoes.
- ✓ If your hands also swell try sleeping with one pillow under each shoulder and wrist.
- ✓ Reduce the amount of salt intake. Don't eat snacks like chips.
- ✓ If swelling is abnormal please report it to your doctor.

Do's and Don't's of pregnancy:

Giving birth to a child is one of the greatest pleasures in women's life, but every prospective mother experiences apprehensions and doubt when faced with pregnancy, especially first time.

The following guidelines have been designed to alleviate some of these major fears and doubts. While using these guidelines, it is always advisable to first consult your gynaecologist, as he or she knows what is best for you.

DO'S:

- **Diet:** Should preferably be light and nutritious. A mixed diet consisting of milk, cheese, eggs, butter, vegetables, cereals and bread supplemented by oranges, grapes and tomatoes is found sufficient to meet the daily requirements. Meat and Liver can be added to those accustomed to Non-vegetarian Diet. Small and frequent feeds help in maintaining nutrition also decrease the heart burn of pregnancy. Eating a healthy diet during pregnancy means that both mother and baby receive all the vitamins and minerals they need. A nutritious, well-balanced diet is one that is varied and includes a wide range of foods including:
 - starchy foods such as cereals, bread, potatoes and pasta
 - plenty of fruit and vegetables that supply vitamins and fibre

- foods rich in protein such as meat, fish, eggs and pulses
- dairy foods which supply calcium
- foods rich in polyunsaturated fats, such as oily fish like salmon and trout

It is best to avoid a lot of sugary, salty or fatty foods. A well-balanced vegetarian diet should provide all that is needed, but vegans may need to take advice from their GP about supplements such as calcium, vitamin D and vitamin B12.

- Folic acid: Folic acid is the only vitamin supplement that is recommended for women who are otherwise eating a balanced diet. Folic acid is needed for the development of healthy red blood cells, and taking enough of it decreases the chance of a baby being born with neural tube defects. A baby's brain and spinal cord are formed from the neural tube very early in pregnancy. One example of a neural tube defect is spina bifida, where an area of spinal cord is not properly enclosed. This can cause problems such as paralysis of the legs and incontinence.

It is best to start taking folic acid before pregnancy (ideally about three months before trying to conceive), or as soon as the woman realises she is pregnant. It should be continued for at least the first 12 weeks. 400 micrograms is the recommended daily dose, which is over the usual recommended dietary intake of 200 micrograms. Folic acid is found naturally in fresh dark green vegetables such as broccoli, peas, green beans and spinach. Many breakfast cereals and some breads are fortified with folic acid.

- Exercise: Practically all household duties can be carried out till delivery. A daily walk in open air throughout pregnancy is of great value. Walking is free plus and you will get added bonus of sunlight & fresh air which are great mood boosters.
- Clothing: Should be comfortably loose. All under garments should preferably be made of cotton. Synthetic materials should be avoided as they may cause infections.
- Care of breasts: In later weeks of pregnancy the nipples should be washed daily with soap & water. Any cracks should be attended as they will then be painful during feeding.

- Toilet habits: if not regular should be treated with Isabgol/leafy vegetables/laxatives.
- Bath: Warm water bath is preferred. Vaginal Douching should be strictly avoided.
- General: Please consult your gynaecologist should the following symptoms occur:
 - Bleeding from whatever cause.
 - Continuous headache.
 - Dimness of vision.
 - Severe cramps in legs or swelling in legs.
 - Painful contractions of uterus
 - Rupture of bag of membranes.

DONT'S:

- Diet: Some infections can be picked up by pregnant women and transferred to the developing baby via the placenta. Examples include toxoplasmosis, listeria and salmonella. Even though these infections are not common, they could lead to premature labour, problems with the development of the baby or illness of the baby after birth. Pregnant women are therefore advised to avoid the following foods:
 - unpasturised dairy products
 - soft or blue-veined cheeses
 - soft-whipped ice-cream
 - raw or undercooked eggs or shellfish
 - undercooked chicken
 - undercooked meat products in general

Women are also advised to avoid eating liver, liver pâté and cod liver oil in pregnancy as these contain high levels of vitamin A. Excess amounts of vitamin A can cause abnormalities in the developing baby.

- Smoking: Smoking while pregnant is proven to harm the developing baby. In particular, the baby's growth is likely to be affected and the baby's birth weight reduced. Smoking during and after pregnancy may also increase the risk of cot death (sudden infant death syndrome, SIDS).
- Alcohol: It is known that women who drink heavily risk their baby suffering from a collection of mental and physical problems known as "fetal alcohol syndrome". Women who are pregnant should avoid getting

drunk. Drinking one or two units, once or twice a week, is not thought to be harmful, but there is no proven "safe" amount.

- Exercise: Violent exercise such as riding, Skating, Swimming, Cycling, and any form of exercise, which is unduly tiring, should be completely avoided. It is not advisable to take long automobile journeys especially on bad roads.
- Clothing's: Tight and close fitting garments should be avoided. Also very loose garments should also be avoided. High Heeled shoes should be avoided.
- Bath: Tub baths should be avoided due to risk of vaginal infections.
- Medications: It is very important that no medication or X-Ray test is undertaken without prior approval of gynaecologist.
- Sexual relations: It is better to avoid sexual relations where repeated abortions, premature deliveries have occurred in previous deliveries, or there is history of bleeding in this pregnancy.
- Toxoplasmosis: Toxoplasmosis can be caught from cat faeces. Pregnant women should avoid handling cat litter, wear gloves when gardening and wash hands afterwards.

The last eight weeks of Pregnancy.

Particularly if this is your first baby, you and your husband will probably have many questions about what is going to take place. This sheet has been prepared to give you both an idea of what to do and what to expect.

For instance, it is a good idea to pack an overnight bag about a month in advance. Babies often arrive as much as two weeks earlier (or later) than their approximate due date. Include nightgowns, a bathrobe, slippers, toilet articles, maternity brassiers, reading matter. The hospital will supply all of your baby's needs....until you are ready to take him home.

Clothing & Equipment for baby :

With enough diapers and receiving blankets, you could manage with no other clothing for the baby! So, unless your budget is generous, don't buy more than you really need.

Clothing:

3 to 6 dozen diapers : Bird's eye or guage, largest size. Get atleast dozen, even with diaper service or use of disposable.

4 to 6 shirts : Cotton, 6 month's size, front or side opening. Sleeveless, short or long sleeve, depending on season and house temperature.

3 to 6 nightgowns : Cotton knit or flannel, 6 months size, front opening. Some come long enough to cover the feet with ample kicking room.

1 or 2 sweater : Size 2, open down the front, Orlon, in case of wool sensitively.

6 receiving blankets : Cotton, one yard square, to wrap the baby in.

Bunting : Nice to have for the outdoors. But wait this is the present most people choose.

Bedding:

Firm crib mattress Folded pad can be use for bassinet.

Water-resistant mattress protector.

3 or 4 waterproof pads, 11 x 18 inches.

6 quilted pads, 11 x 18 inches.

3 crib sheets. Use pillowcases, or make them from old bedsheets.

3 or 4 cotton baby blankets, to add or remove for warmth as necessary. You may receive woolen blankets as gifts for crib or carriage.

Bath :

Soap dish, mineral oil, any pure unmedicated soap, talcum powder, absorbent cotton. Enamel or rubber bathtub. Best is Aloe tearless soap, used in U.K. labour wards.

What to expect as Delivery Nears :-

Lightening

During pregnancy, the uterus rises gradually out of the pelvis into the abdomen. By week 34 or 36, it will be right up under your ribs (shaded area). After that, it starts to descend and your baby's head drops into the pelvis (outlined area). You'll most likely know when this has happened because breathing will seem easier....and increased pressure in the pelvic area may cause more frequent urination.

Show

One of the signs that labor has started is the passage of a small amount of mucus, tinged with blood, from the vagina.

False Labor

The painless, irregular contractions you have been having until now may at times become painful during the last night weeks of pregnancy. Unless they are regular, closer together and more intense, don't be fooled. They are not the real thing. To relieve the pain, try changing your position. Walk about if you have been resting, sit or lie down if you have been on your feet. With false labor that wakes you out of sleep, you'll be able to doze off again. (Real labor will keep you awake. A show of blood also mean the labor is real.) In all cases, consult your physician if you have any doubt about your pains.

Rupture of the Membranes

A slow trickle or a gush of fluid from the vagina indicates the rupture of the membranous bag which contains the baby and the fluid surrounding him. This may take place during the first hours of labor, or not until the very end. Dry labors, which do not deserve their bad name, simply mean that membranes rupture before labor has begun. As you approach term, pressure of the baby's head on the bladder may cause an uncontrolled gush of urine.

Your doctor can make a simple test with chemically treated paper to identify whether the fluid is urine or amniotic fluid.

Timing labor Pains

In the beginning, cramp like labor pains is far apart and short lasting. You will feel them first in the small of the back, then in the front. Your doctor will tell you when to call him, either when the membranes rupture or when contractions became rhythmic. By keeping a record of the length and intensity of your pains, you will be able to report accurately when they are coming ten to fifteen minutes apart.

The Three Stages of Labor

- 1. The dilation period:** - In the first stage, each contraction stretches the cervix from within, through pressure by the baby or the fluid. With a first baby, it takes about ten to twelve hours to stretch the cervix open to maximum of four inches in diameter.

2. **The Expulsion period:** - When the cervix is fully dilated, the contractions of the uterus drive the baby through the lower birth canal. Bearing-down efforts play a part during this stage. Most babies are expelled after an hour and a half.
3. **The Placental period:** - Delivery of the afterbirth (placenta) takes no longer than fifteen minutes after the baby is born.

At the hospital

You may be taken first to the admitting office, then to the delivery floor or your own room. There you will undress and put on a short cotton gown. Your temperature, pulse, respiration and weight will be recorded. Either your doctor or the resident on duty will examine you. Next, you will be washed and either clipped or shaved (unless your doctor waives this step). You may have an enema. It is best to take your time with this in order to avoid expelling liquid material later during contractions.

Delivery

A delivery room is simply a small version of an operating room, complete with instrument table, anesthesia machine, and masked, gowned personnel. The delivery table is like an operating table, with special holders to hold the legs apart. You will be taken there as soon as your cervix is fully dilated. From here on, with each labor pain, the baby begins to be born. Because a vaginal tear is almost certain to occur, before the baby's head emerges the doctor will probably (not necessarily) make a simple cut in the area between the vagina and anus. This is called an episiotomy. The incision, made under local anesthesia, is easier to repair than a jagged tear. And vaginal tissues are less likely to become overstretched.

With gentle guidance by the doctor, the delivery of your baby is soon completed. After the baby receives proper attention, and is handed to a nurse, the doctor will repair any incision he has made, using absorbable sutures that will not have to be removed. With expulsion of the afterbirth, you've come to the end of your long,, long wait.

Recently “Birthing Rooms” have come into wide use. These are combination labor-delivery rooms which are furnished to appear more like home than a hospital.

A Look at your new born baby

Few Babies are “born beautiful” as parents are usually shocked to discover. Their appearance can best be described as “beat up,” Eyelids are swollen; the face is puffy, with blotches, scaliness, rash, or a mottled effect on eyelids, forehead and back of the neck. Blisters on the nose or forehead are plugged oil and sweat glands which will open without help. Dark-skinned babies may have areas on the back of deep-bluish color caused by extra pigment. Being squeezed during birth often gives the skull a very odd shape. Red spots in the eyes indicate tiny broken blood vessels. The genitals of both boys and girls may seem swollen. Hands and feet may be reddish-purple in color, enormous in size, shows hundreds of wrinkles and some of the toenails may not be visible!

But all these new born effects are perfectly normal and temporary. They will soon clear up completely. And your baby will suddenly look like a magazine cover!

SHOULD YOU HAVE “NATURAL” CHILDBIRTH ?

In the early part of this century, morphine and scopolamine were first used to produce “twilight sleep” during labor and delivery. Since then it has been conventional practice to administer extensive pain-relieving medication during childbirth.

Today, however, a new trend is taking place. Childbirth is a normal physiologic process, say many, and to sedate women during this process is to rob her of the joy of full participation in the greatest miracle of life. This thinking has led to popularization of psychological methods of minimizing pain variously known as “natural” or prepared childbirth. Chances are that you are in the midst of deciding whether “natural” childbirth is for you.

The material on this sheet has been prepared to help you make that decision. It will probably tell you a number of things you don't already know. So read it, Let your husband read it. Discuss it with your obstetrician. Then think what's best for you.

Remember : "natural" or conventional childbirth will make no difference to your baby... nor to your doctor either. It is only important that you (and your husband) be comfortable with your decision-so that you can look forward to the birth of; your child with confidence and peace of mind.

What is "natural" Childbirth?

It is three things:

1. A technique of minimizing discomfort...based on the principal that fear of pain tensing the muscles in response to pain, and concentration on pain only make the pain worse.
2. A philosophy that seeks to change the woman's role from helpless, passive patient to confident and active participant.
3. A way of eliminating the clinical isolation that used to accompany childbirth in the hospital.....accomplished by including the husband as part of the obstetrical team to provide love, companionship and emotional support.

If you choose "natural" childbirth, you and your husband will most likely enroll in a special class. There you will be given a thorough understanding of the labor and birth process. For instance, you will learn what labor contractions are...how long they last...that the rest periods between contractions are longer than the contractions themselves...that contractions in the second stage of labor are actually less violent than the ones that went before. Thus educated and aware of what will happen, you'll have less fear of pain and the unknown.

You will be assigned physical exercises. These will not only tone up your body for easier labor and delivery, but will teach you control you never thought possible over muscles in the abdomen, diaphragm, vagina and pelvic floor. You will also learn to relax facial and other body muscles while contracting those that aid in birth.

You will be taught to distract yourself from the perception of pain by concentration on breathing. And unlike the “huffing and puffing” of untrained women, the varied breathing patterns you learn will actually serve a purpose. Learning to “pant and blow,” for instance, will help you hold back the powerful urge to push down when it is the wrong time for pushing down. Or the rapid panting breaths you are instructed to take will help minimize damage to vaginal tissues as the baby is born.

It is of course possible to have “natural” childbirth without your husband. (Some men are understandably squeamish about attending the birth process). But if he does not choose to participate, your husband will be your “coach”. In class and at home, he’ll help you practice your exercise and breathing techniques. During labor and delivery (where hospital policy allows) he’ll time your contractions, help pace your breathing, massage your back and abdomen during strong contractions and generally offer you loving support.

And when finally the long life creating process which the two of you began nine months before comes to an end...when finally you both watch the baby’s head emerge, see its body follow, hear its first plaintive cry, the shared satisfaction and excitement you’ll feel will be their own incomparable reward.

What if the pain gets too great?

A widespread misconception regarding “natural” childbirth (and the reason many prefer the term “prepared” childbirth) is that it rejects the use of analgesia and anesthesia. This is untrue. Since the time of Hippocrates and before, the science of medicine has sought to relieve human suffering and discomfort. And to have come this far only to reject the fruits of medical progress would be a very silly notion indeed.

If your labor is fairly rapid and uncomplicated...if your attitude toward discomfort is reasonably stoic, chances are you will need little help from drugs. But labor and delivery are different in every woman. And depending on the size of your baby, its position, your general physical health and your tolerance for pain...your degree of discomfort will be different from other women’s as well.

You will be encouraged to ask for medication if you feel the need. And you shouldn't hesitate. With many of the pain-relief agents and techniques used today, you can still be wide awake to help with and witness delivery. What's more, the very fact that you are knowledgeable and prepared means you'll probably require much less than the usual amount of medication. But the best reason of all: relieved to severe discomfort, you'll be better able to concentrate on the joys of your baby's birth.

And what about conventional childbirth?

If you have not chosen "natural" childbirth, some form of pain medication will most likely be administered to you once your contractions have become sufficiently frequent and intense.

Chances are you will receive a pain-deadener...or possibly some combination of scopolamine (an "amnesic" that erases the memory of what you feel) and a sedative or tranquilizer. You may doze fitfully, awakening when a contraction comes; On the other hand, depending on the combination and amount of medication used, you may be wide awake during the entire thing.

Like your "natural" childbirth counterpart, you too will probably help during the second stage of labor by bearing down when the doctor tells you to. No more sedation will be given to you at this point because it could decrease the force of

Your pushing and slow the baby's progress. However, sometime before the baby is actually delivered, some form of anesthesia will probably be administered. Unless there is some medical reason to do so, you will probably not be put to sleep (i.e. given general anesthesia). More likely, you will be given some form of regional anesthesia. This serve to block pain impulses around the lower pelvis so the baby's emergence causes a minimum of pain. Again depending on the combination of medication you have received, you may well be awake and able to watch in a mirror as the entire marvelous event takes place.

So which is for?

If you are the type that likes to live life to its fullest...to experience what you can, you've probably already made your decision in favor of "natural". But even if you are a less adventurous sort and still undecided, preparing for "natural" childbirth can be useful. It will educate you. And the shared participation with your husband will be an infinitely rewarding experience. If once you get into the labor room, you feel the need for medication-fine! You only need request it...without shame or disappointment.

If, however, the very prospect of pain causes you intense distress, conventional childbirth is most likely the best choice for you. It has been the course of millions of women over the years. And if it gives you a feeling of security...adds to your peace of mind in the months preceding delivery, that's precisely what your doctor would want for you.

A Bigger Part for New Dads

There was a time when dad's role in the birth and infant tending processes was limited to getting the prospective mother to the hospital, pacing in the waiting room, and providing the proverbial cigars. Those days appear to be gone forever. And you know what, dad? You're bound to be glad they are.

What will I feel as a new father?

This is not a simple question by any means, and of course each man's response to fatherhood will be unique. Yet there is some predictable feeling, even in our rapidly changing society.

Chances are you have attended natural childbirth classes with you wife. Perhaps, if your baby has already arrived you were there for his or her birth. If so, you can be counted among the growing number of fathers who report. "That was the most wonderful experience of my life." And like fathers throughout the ages, you are likely to melt the first time you cradle your marvelous little creation in your arms.

This active involvement of fathers in the birthing process has done much to dispel some deeply entrenched notions that nurturing a baby is a mother's exclusive domain. It's possible, and quite natural, for you to have doubts that too much involvement in caring for a new infant is out to sync with your traditional role. This is not all surprising considering past stereotypes and prejudices widely held in our society.

You may not to do more for your baby, including tasks that have traditionally been the mother's. This, too, is entirely natural. According to leading child development experts, you "should go with these feelings", for the mutual benefit of your baby, your wife, and yourself.

Superdads of the 1990s

At one end of this new trend towards "superdading" are those fathers who take extended leaves of absence from work to care for their new infants.

Others, because their type of employment allows it, opt to work at home. These "Mr Moms," as they are sometimes called, still represent a small percentage of father's. Most however, provide glowing reports on the rewards of such an arrangement. Sometimes, in such cases, it is the mother who reports feeling envious of the stay-at-home father.

Take an active part.

The most valuable lesson is that, with the exceptions of giving birth and breast-feeding, there's nothing a mother can do for a child that you can't.

Even if you won't be staying home to care for your child, it is not unusual for today's dad to take a short leave of absence after birth of a child. This is not only of great value to your wife. Who needs your help and support, but a good opportunity for you and your baby to develop deep, lasting bonds.

With a little practice, you'll be diapering and bathing your baby like apro, and the rewards will vastly outweigh the energy expended in the learning process. Don't forget, if this is your first baby, your wife is as new at these tasks as you

are: you can learn together. If your wife breast-feeds you can take part in nurturing your child in her absence by bottle-feeding the breast milk your wife has expressed ahead of time.

How will I measure up?

At some time during your wife's pregnancy you probably started wondering what kind of father you would be. This soul-searching is likely to continue after the birth of your child.

Will you be the type of father your father was? Much of what we bring to our own concept of parenting comes from what we ourselves experienced as children. Chances are, when you were a child, your father was not expected to take as active a role in raising a child as you may be. The choice is yours; you're starting with a clean state and can become as involved as you wish.

The work-late syndrome

New fathers frequently experience doubts about their ability to provide substantial financial security for their families. These doubts may stem from a real, increased need to provide for "another mouth to feed" or they may arise as the result of very high goals you may have set in an effort to give your child "the best of everything".

Some new fathers begin to extend their work day later and later into the evening. Despite the ambitious intentions, experts in the field of child development will tell you that new babies don't need expensive material things. They do however, need their father's attention.

Quality time

The term "Quality time" has become popular over the last several years; although some people may not be clear on exactly what means. "Quality time" is any time spent with your child in whom your child knows that he or she has your complete attention. This may include feeding time, bath time, or the few minutes it takes to tuck your child into bed and read him or her story. You may quickly forget these times, but your baby will cherish them for a lifetime.

If you really must be away from home much of the time, make sure the moments you share with your family are memorable ones. Plan weekly outings, especially with toddlers and older children. Make sure they know that this is their special time, and tell them how much you look forward to it.

If your wife is working mother expect to share not only the, household chores, but also day-care activities. Every once in a while, you could even take an afternoon off from work and volunteer at the day-care center. You won't believe the sense of pride a toddler feels when his or her daddy visits. The staff, too, will probably welcome an adult male on the scene.

It's up to you, dad. You may have to spend some extra time in the beginning to learn new tasks; and you may even have to spend a sleepless night or two. But if you try it, you may learn that there's no substitute for seeing your child's early development with your own eyes and no greater sense of satisfaction than knowing you helped play an active role in it. Mothers have known this for centuries; now it's your turn.

ENJOY!!!!

EXERCISE FOR NEW MOTHERS

A trim body will keep you healthy. Here are a few exercises suggested to tone up your body and to keep trim.

What are the benefits?

Regular exercise can improve your blood circulation, help your heart work more efficiently and can help control your weight. It helps you to relax and makes you feel better. The main benefits include:

- ✓ Psychological and social benefits, bringing a sense of well-being.
- ✓ Reduction in aches and pains of pregnancy, e.g. backache, cramp
- ✓ Increased circulation minimizes varicose veins and swelling

- ✓ Improved stamina, giving you more energy to cope with the growing demands of pregnancy
- ✓ Improved posture and body awareness
- ✓ More controlled weight gain
- ✓ Reduction in the minor ailments of pregnancy such as stiffness, tension, constipation and insomnia
- ✓ Quicker post natal recovery
- ✓ Improves ability to cope with labour and childbirth

4. **Pregnancy Yoga Exercises**

Yoga sanas or exercises are ways of moving or holding the body in different positions.

Yoga has several exercises or postures that work wonders on a woman's health and in pregnancy conditions. Varying widely in application and style, these exercises (postures) gently stretch and explore all parts of your body.

During pregnancy, yoga sanas is a gentle way to keep active and supple. The remarkable effects of these postures in pregnancy show the power of yoga for ensuring a smooth pregnancy, natural childbirth and restoration of body shape after childbirth.

How Pregnancy Yoga Exercises Can Help?

- * Relieving edema (fluid retention) and cramping which can be quite common in the last months.
- * Influencing the position of the baby and turning it in advance if needed. Strengthening and massaging the abdomen which help stimulate bowel action and appetite.
- * Raising the level of energy while also helping in slowing the metabolism to restore calm and focus.
- * Helping to reduce nausea, morning sickness and mood swings in combination with pranayama's (yogic breathing).
- * Focus on relieving tension around the cervix and birth canal.
- * Focus on opening the pelvis to make labor easier and quicker.

How Yoga Can Help in Post Natal Care

- * Restoring the uterus, abdomen and the pelvic floor.
- * Relieving upper back tension and breast discomfort.

We have segregated these yoga exercises into trimester-wise sequences. However, it is recommended that you follow these under expert guidance. (Keep Link Of our Garbha sanskar page here)