
UNIT 3 PREGNANCY

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- define pregnancy;
- describe process of pregnancy;
- explain the methods of confirmation of pregnancy;
- describing the PNDT Act and its features, and
- explain role of teachers and parents during teen pregnancy.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you have learnt about the structure and functions of Male and Female reproductive organs. In this unit you will be reading about how does pregnancy occurs, and care during various stages in detail and related issues. Let us have a look on some of the facts:

Despite 35 percent of the population being in the 10-24 age groups, the health needs of adolescents have neither been researched nor addressed adequately; particularly their reproductive health needs are often misunderstood, unrecognized or underestimated. Limited research shows that adolescents are indulging in premarital sex more frequently at an early age, the incidence of pregnancies among them is rising and most of them face the risk of induced abortions under

unsafe conditions, and contracting sexually transmitted infections including HIV. Awareness about reproductive and sexual health is required to make adolescent boys and girls responsible in their sexual behaviour.

This will enable adolescents to enjoy their reproductive and sexual rights, including their rights to information, education and services. Further being aware would facilitate adolescent girls and boys to use crucial skills that will help them negotiate life's more difficult passages. This unit on adolescence pregnancy will give you an overview for process of pregnancy and confirmation of pregnancy including PNDT act. Further the case of mother and new born is highlighted during pregnancy, delivery and after delivery. As our main aim is to prevent the Adolescent Pregnancy. Further section of unit emphasises the role of teacher and parents in prevention of adolescent pregnancy.

3.2 PROCESS OF PREGNANCY

Adolescents are distinct population group with particular needs and capacities. Sexuality is one of the most sensitive issues associated with adolescence. They should know the process of pregnancy and procedure to confirm the pregnancy. Pregnancy begins with conception. Conception is the physical and physiological process of a sperm fusing with the ovum. Pregnancy is described as a condition or a state from the time of conception up to the time of delivery. In this section, let us discuss the process of pregnancy.

During the first half of the menstrual cycle two hormones are released into the blood stream. Out of these, one hormone stimulates the process that results in the production of an ovum or ripe egg. The other hormone stimulates the lining of the uterus (womb), to thicken in readiness to receive a fertilized ovum. About two weeks from the end of menstrual cycle, the work of first hormone is completed and ovulation take place; that is, a ripe ovum (egg) is released from one of the ovary. Conception occurs if partner's sperm fertilizes this ovum. When a man ejaculates during sexual intercourse, millions of sperms are released into the woman's vagina. They move up the vagina and make their way to the fallopian tubes. Only one sperm among the millions can fertilize the egg.

The route to the egg is very hazardous. This is why sperm are produced in such large numbers. To stand a chance of fertilizing the egg, the sperm have to be able to withstand the environment of the woman's vagina & cervix. The acidity of the environment protects against bacteria & potentially dangerous infection, but it is hostile to sperm also. Weak or damaged ones will not be able to make journey to the egg.

Millions of sperm simply leak out of the woman's vagina, as few as 5% of them reach to the cervix. Of these only 200 or so make it as far as the woman's fallopian tubes. The last few super fit sperms now proceed to the outside of the egg. Of these sperm, just one will break through the surface, leaving its tail behind. This is the moment of fertilization occurs; the egg's surface becomes impenetrable to other sperms.

Fertilization of the egg may take upto 24 hours. It usually takes place in the fallopian tube that connects the ovary to the uterus. The fertilized ovum completes its journey to the uterus, where it implants into the thickened uterine lining. After two weeks, if there has been no conception the thickened uterine lining is shed and menstruation takes place.

Sperm can survive for quite a long time inside the woman's body, up to 48 hours – so fertilization can still take place even if the egg is not ready when they first reach the fallopian tube.

After fertilization:

The fertilized single cell egg multiplies and grows to become a ball which is known as embryo. Within the uterus the embryo is contained in the amniotic sac. Which is filled with amniotic fluid. The amniotic fluid is protective in function with the help of amniotic sac or bag.

3.3 CONFIRMATION OF PREGNANCY

The first definite sign of pregnancy is a missed period or menses, but this is not the confirmed sign. It is therefore, best not to assume that girl is pregnant rather go for the following signs that are early indicators of pregnancy:

- Increased tiredness
- Feeling nauseous, particularly in mornings.
- Urinating more frequently than usual.
- Exhaustion or feeling sleepy.
- Tenderness in the breasts.
- Change in taste, such as a sudden craving for a particular food or a metallic taste in the mouth.

3.3.1 Pregnancy Test

Confirmation of Pregnancy can be done through urine test. Urine test can be done at home. Pregnancy test kits are available from any chemist. It is advisable to follow the instructions given on the kit as there are different types of pregnancy kits available



Fig. 1: Pregnancy test

The amount of HCG in a woman's body doubles every two or three days during the first six weeks of pregnancy. If a test is negative but if period still not started it is worth repeating the test in another week or so. If the second result is also negative, woman is probably not pregnant. Advise to see an obstetrician to find out the cause.

3.3.2 PNDT ACT (Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques)

Let us know the meaning of (Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques) PNDT Act:

“An Act to provide for the prohibition of sex selection, before or after conception,

and for regulation of pre-natal diagnostic techniques for the purposes of detecting genetic abnormalities or metabolic disorders or chromosomal abnormalities or certain congenital malformations or sex-linked disorders and for the prevention of their misuse for sex determination leading to female foeticide and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”

- The (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994, was enacted and brought into operation from 1st January, 1996, in order to check female foeticide. Rules have also been framed under the Act.
- The Act prohibits determination and disclosure of the sex of fetus. No person conducting procedure can tell the mother or any relative sex of the baby by word, sign or any other manner.

Hence, pre determination of sex of fetus is a punishable act. The procedure is done only for diagnostic purpose by qualified person only.

Check Your Progress 1

a) Define pregnancy.

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b) List down early indicators of pregnancy.

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c) What is the use of PNDT act.

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3.4 CARE OF MOTHER AND NEWBORN

With the increase of casualties of mother deaths in the country, there has been a need for addressing the issue on safe motherhood. Safe motherhood means ensuring that all women receive the care they need to be safe and healthy throughout pregnancy and childbirth. Newborn health and survival are closely linked to the health of the mother before and during pregnancy, as well as during labour, childbirth, and the postpartum period. As you have learnt that after conception pregnancy takes place, you will go through care of the mother (Wed/ Unwed) during pregnancy.

3.4.1 During Pregnancy

Antenatal care is the care provided to a mother from the time of conception till the starting of labour pains. If pregnancy test is positive and mother is sure of pregnancy, she should immediately go to the health Center/Hospital/Nursing home to get her self-registered and for antenatal advices and tests. The aim of antenatal care is to help and educate the mother to achieve optimum health, so that the outcome of pregnancy and childbirth is favourable for both the mother and her baby.

The mother should follow the instructions given by the doctor which includes:-

- Regular visits to the doctor,
- Supplements Balanced diet,
- Rest,
- Exercise and
- Get the required investigations done.

In case of any complication the mother should immediately contact her doctor.

In the last month of pregnancy the mother should keep a bag ready with things required for mother and baby. She can carry this bag with her when she is going for delivery.

- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs including prescriptions and over the counter medications.
- Take prescribed medication (iron and folic acid) to help ensure the health of unborn child.
- Avoid high heels shoes in later months.

3.4.2 Care during Delivery

During delivery of the baby certain points should be kept in mind. By the mother.

- She should follow the advices given by the doctors /nurse in the delivery room.
- She should not panick or get confused or have stress of any kind.

After delivery mother is advised to take adequate rest.

3.4.3 Care after Delivery

- Allow 8-12 hours of rest after delivery
- Maintenance of personal hygiene is very important. Advise mother to take bath daily and change her clothes.
- Advise mother to wear supportive bra and wash nipples before and after the feed.
- Advise her to go for a regular check up along with the baby.
- The mother should take extra diet as she is breastfeeding the child.



Fig.2: Postnatal Exercises

Care of the New Born

- The baby should be put on breast feeding within half an hour to one hour after delivery. In case of any problems, follow the doctor's advice.
- The yellow coloured milk should be breast fed to the baby. This is the milk that comes out immediately after delivery. Normally mothers do not feed this milk to the baby considering it not good or simple water. The fact is that it contains the essential nutrients for developing the newborn's immunity.
- The mother should give breast feed to the baby on demand till six months of age, nothing except the breast milk should be given to the baby.
- Take great care of the personal hygiene of the baby.
- Hand wash before handling the baby.
- Keep the baby warm.
- Do not give bath until the body temperature is normal.
- Dress the baby according to the season.
- Keep the baby's environment clean and tidy.
- Use only clean clothes for the baby.
- Change napkin immediately when soiled.
- Do not apply powder in excess on skin.
- Talk to the baby, enhance skin to skin contact.
- Complete the immunization schedule on time to protect the baby from killer diseases.



Fig. 3: Breast feeding

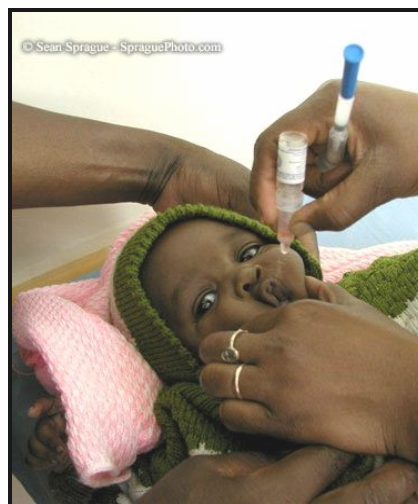


Fig.4: Immunization

Check Your Progress 2

a) Define safe motherhood.

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b) What advices are given to mother during antenatal period.

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3.5 ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TEACHER IN ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY

Teachers can play a very significant role in prevention of teenage pregnancy. A teacher can act as a guide, counsellor and facilitator.

- Teachers should have positive attitude towards the adolescent & should feel free to discuss any aspect. She should clarify their doubts or refer to the school health team or a health centre.
- Conduct health education programmes with the help of school health team/ NGOs etc. or youth awareness camps. These health camps build up confidence and help to identify early symptoms.
- Try and answer any question that the young student is going through or direct them to someone who can help. Work as a guide.
- Be non-judgmental and do not discriminate.
- Arrange counselling session for students who are in need.
- Discuss responsibilities of parenthood and cultural practices.
- Be a supportive person for the adolescents rather than authoritative figure.

3.6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS IN PREVENTING ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY

Teachers play an important role in a child’s life, but parents are the backbone to each child. Thus the parents also should take active involvement in the growth and development of a child:

- Parents can play a major role in preventing the teen pregnancy. They should talk to them openly - girls and boys - about love, relationships, and sexuality.
- Educate the child about adolescence and related aspects.
- Providing healthy environment at home for the development of the child
- Providing emotional support.

- Keep a watch on the activities when s/he is taking on the phone, working on the net. At this age, kids go from being children to being [young] adults. Parents should acquaint themselves with friends of their children, as peer group has a very strong influence on the child's mind.
- Parents should know with whom and where their children are going out. Parent should advise the child not to go out alone or with a stranger. They should move out with their friends in a group.
- Keep an eye on the child's activities when he is talking on the phone or surfing the net. It's good that parents know what children see, read and hear. Television, magazines, and radio may contain messages that could confuse and even harm young people. Be up-to-date on the information son/daughter is receiving, and take advantage of these moments to clarify such messages.
- Parents must help teens to set goals and explore options for the future. Ask children about their interests, what they want to be, what they want to accomplish.
- The parents should spend time with their children at home.

Check Your Progress 3

a) Enumerate teacher's role in prevention of adolescent pregnancy.

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b) Enumerate parent's role in prevention of adolescent pregnancy.

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3.7 LET US SUM UP

Proper antenatal care helps in good maintenance of mothers as well baby's health. Institutional delivery and presence of a support person helps the mother to pass through the labour process smoothly. Mother should be helped out to attain the responsibilities of new parenthood during postnatal period. Teachers and parents play a vital role in maintaining adolescent health and prevention of teenage pregnancy. Adolescents should receive adequate education, guidance and services that could have helped them to make smooth transition to adulthood. Thus this unit gave you a clear understanding of all the aspects related to pregnancy. Knowing these will help you to deal with reproductive sexual health issues with your student/children easily.

3.8 KEY WORDS

- Anus** : excretory opening at the end of the rectum lying between the buttocks
- Clitoris** : the female organ devoted entirely to increasing sexual tension, located just above the urinary and vaginal openings

Coitus	: sexual intercourse between a male and female, in which the penis is inserted into the vagina
Conception	: the penetration of an ovum by a sperm, resulting in the development of embryo
Ejaculation	: the discharge or expulsion of semen, usually at the climax of the sexual act.
Foreskin	: the skin covering the tip of the penis or the clitoris; also called prepuce
Hormones	: internally produced chemicals that regulate many different bodily functions
Hymen	: a mucous membrane that may partly cover the external opening of the vagina in most virgin females;
Intercourse (sexual)	: sexual union of a male and female usually in which the penis is inserted into the vagina.
Rectum	: lowermost part of the large intestine
Vagina	: the canal in the female, extending from the vulva to the cervix; passageway that receives the penis during coitus and through which an infant passes at birth, also the passage through which the uterus sheds blood and tissues during menstruation.

3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- a) Pregnancy is described as a condition or a state from the time of conception up to the time of delivery.
- b) Early indicators are:
 - Increased tiredness
 - Feeling nauseous, particularly in mornings
 - Urinating more frequently than usual
 - Exhaustion or feeling sleepy
 - Tenderness in the breasts
 - Change in taste, such as a sudden craving for a particular food or a metallic taste in the mouth.
- c) The Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act. Prohibits determination of sex of fetus. No person conducting procedure can tell mother or any relative sex of the baby by word, sign or any other

manner hence it is a punishable act.

Check Your Progress 2

- a) Safe motherhood means ensuring that all women receive the care they need to be safe and healthy throughout pregnancy and childbirth.
- b) The mother should follow the instructions given by the doctor which includes:-
 - Regular visits to the doctor,
 - Supplements Balanced diet,
 - Rest,
 - Exercise and
 - Get the required investigations done.

In case of any complication the mother should immediately contact her doctor.

In the last month of pregnancy the mother should keep a bag ready with things required for mother and baby. She can carry this bag with her when she is going for delivery.

- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs including prescriptions and over the counter medications.
- Take prescribed medication (iron & folic acid) to help ensure the health of unborn child.
- Avoid high heels shoes in later months.

Check Your Progress 3

- a) Teachers should have positive attitude towards the sex education and should not hesitate to Discuss with students.
 - S/he must seek to be a positive role model for the students and encourage class participation.
 - Conduct health education programmes or youth camps that can help young people who are making the transition towards independency.
 - Have good relationship with youngsters.
 - Be approachable and have open discussion with students.
 - Try and answer any question that the young student is going through or direct them to someone who can help.
 - Be non-judgmental and do not discriminate.
 - Arrange counselling session for students who are in need.
 - Discuss responsibilities of parenthood and cultural practices.
 - Be a supportive person for the adolescents rather than authoritative figure.

**Reproductive and Sexual
Changes**

- b) They should talk to them openly - girls and boys - about love, relationships, and sexuality.
- Start talking about sexuality from an early age, and often.
 - Supervise kids' activities without forgetting that they are no longer kids but rather, young adults who need a certain amount of independence.
 - Parents must help teens to set goals and explore options for the future.
 - It's good that parents know what children see, read and hear.

