



Bloom

We are Here to Care



Foreward

Young girls and their parents often have difficulty in understanding the phase of menarche and are mostly unprepared for their first period. Gaining knowledge on menstruation and menstrual hygiene will help improve quality in health, reduce health risks, and promote healthy lifestyles as the girl child graces through puberty. Well-nourished adolescent girls are likely to have babies with healthy birth weight, low risk of infection and survive after childbirth. Getting pregnant and giving birth brings the essence of creation, but your efforts will be fruitful only upon gaining knowledge on prenatal care before planning pregnancy, following doctor's advice, and understanding the importance of breastfeeding.

Dr. Pragya Mishra Choudhary, Secretary General, Indian Society of Perinatology and Reproductive Biology (ISOPARB)

Menopause is a phenomenal milestone of women's life that marks transition to second adulthood but often affects women's self-image, sexual identity and quality of life. Menopause is the RIGHT TIME to take charge of your body, undergo preventive health check-ups, identify the red flags and seek advice and make an effort to develop a holistic lifestyle, if you're not doing it already. Together, we have curated a resource for you to educate yourself and answer all your concerns and to empower you to plan a healthy future.

Dr. Shobhana Mohandas, President, Indian Menopause Society (IMS)

Always remember, it's never too late to change and to start taking better care of yourself!!

Chapter 1 -Adolescent lifestyle, menarche, and nutrition

Taking care of your vaginal health is important. Here are a few tips for maintaining your menstrual hygiene.¹

Do's 

Use hands for cleaning

Use a small amount of soap substitute and water to clean the vulva

Pat dry with a soft towel

Wear loose fitting cotton underwear

Use a safe method of pubic hair removal and take care to avoid sensitivity and scarring

Change pads regularly during menses

Don'ts 

Use cloth/sponge and clean inside vagina

Use perfumes and deodorants frequently

Rub the area dry

Wear tight, synthetic clothing

Share shaving and depilation products

Use pads/pantyliners when not on periods

What is menarche?

Your first menstrual period is called menarche and usually occurs around 12 years of age.²

What to expect at menarche?²



Breast development



Body hair



Increase in height



Acne, body odour



Wider hips



Vaginal discharge



Periods

Seek doctor's advice, if menstrual periods that ³⁻⁴

- Have not started by the age of 14 in the absence of growth/development of secondary sexual characteristics ³
- Have not started by the age of 16 in the presence of normal growth/development of secondary sexual characteristics ³
- Do not occur for more than 3 months ⁴
- Last more than 7 days ⁴
- Require a frequent change of pad every 1-2 hours ⁴

Nutritional needs of a teenager ⁵

Consume vegetables, fruits, proteins, whole grains, and dairy daily.

Avoid junk, oily and sugary foods.

Chapter 2: Prenatal counselling and nutrition in pregnancy

What is prenatal counselling?

Prenatal counselling means a prior visit to the gynecologist before planning pregnancy. It helps to reduce the risk of adverse effects on mother as well as the baby.⁶

What to expect during prenatal counselling appointment? ⁶



Assessment of overall health



Advise on nutritional supplementation



Understanding medical/obstetric history



Genetic counselling

Going ahead with pregnancy ⁶⁻⁸

- Regular antenatal visits protect you and your baby from complications and ensures healthy mother and child ⁷
- Talk to your doctor about nutritional supplements to be taken ^{7,8}
- Eat balanced diet including fruits, vegetables, dairy products, proteins, and whole grains ⁶
- Do regular physical activity ⁶

Chapter 3: Tests, prevention, and medical advice during pregnancy

Tests advised by doctor during pregnancy ⁷



Blood and urine testing



Ultrasonography

Tips to prevent a high-risk pregnancy ^{6,7,9}



Avoid drugs/
alcohol/smoking ^{6,9}



Identify health
risks before getting
pregnant ^{7,9}



Maintain a
healthy body weight
before pregnancy ^{7,9}



Manage your
pre-existing health
conditions well ^{7,9}



Consult with the
doctor about the safety
of existing medicines
that you take ⁶



Avoid pregnancy
before 19 years of age
or over 35 years ⁹



Practice safe sex ⁶

Call your doctor if you experience any of the following signs/symptoms during pregnancy ⁷

Sudden swelling on the face/hands/fingers

Problems seeing/blurred vision

Severe or long-lasting headaches

Baby moving less/more than usual

Fever or chills

Vaginal bleeding/spotting/discharge

Persistent nausea or vomiting

Abdominal/chest pain or discomfort

Having discomfort, pain, or burning with urination

Passed your due date

Chapter 4: Breastfeeding and postpartum depression

Mother's milk is best for health and growth of your baby ⁷

Benefits infants by lowering the risk of ¹⁰



Asthma, obesity, type 1 diabetes



Ear infections



Necrotizing enterocolitis (preterm babies)



Severe lower respiratory disease



Stomach infections

Benefits mothers by lowering risk of ^{10,11}



High blood pressure



Type 2 diabetes



Rheumatoid arthritis



Cardiovascular diseases



Ovarian cancer



Breast cancer

Postpartum depression occurs in many women after delivery ¹²

- Know more about it and seek medical advice if any of the symptoms last for 2 or more weeks ¹²

Postpartum blues (2 weeks or less)¹²

Mood swings

Feel sad, anxious, or overwhelmed

Have crying spells

Lose your appetite

Trouble sleeping

Postpartum depression (2 weeks or more)^{12,13}

Feeling restless/moody/sad/overwhelmed

Having thoughts of hurting the baby/yourself

No interest/connection with the baby

No energy/motivation

Eating/sleeping too little or too much

Trouble making decisions/memory problems

Withdrawing from friends and family

Headaches, aches, and pain, that don't go away



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Chapter 1: Know about perimenopause

What is perimenopause?

- Women in mid-40s, usually enter a phase called perimenopause. During this phase, the menstrual cycle begins to change. This may last from ages 45 to 55, although the timing may differ from person to person.¹
- If you have not had your periods (menstrual cycle) for 12 consecutive months, you've reached menopause.¹

Know about contraception

	Women younger than 50 years	Pregnancy can occur, thus contraception should be used for 2 years after the last menstrual period.²
	Women older than 50 years	Contraception can be stopped as you may not get pregnant if you haven't got periods for 12 months.²

Important tests that the doctor may recommend around midlife³

Screening mammography	Bone density
Pap smear	Eye tests
Tests to check calcium, magnesium, and vitamin D levels	Tests for diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol

Chapter 2: All you need to know about menopause

As you are nearing menopause, you may experience 1 or more of the following symptoms^{3,4}

Irregular periods or periods heavier/lighter than usual	Dry skin	Inability to sleep	Hot flashes/ night sweats
Sore/tender breasts	Stress/irritation/ mood swings	Muscle and joint pain	Weight gain
Vaginal dryness /itching/discomfort in sex	Low sex drive	Bladder problems/urinary incontinence	Unable to concentrate /forgetfulness

Visit your doctor if you experience one or more of the following situations ^{1,5,6}

Heavy bleeding during your periods

Bleeding that is heavier or lasts for more days than usual

Bleeding/spotting between the period or sexual intercourse

Emotional or depressive symptoms affecting daily tasks

Chapter 3: Osteoporosis and menopause: Are they connected?

Osteoporosis is common and about 1 in 2 women suffers from it.⁷

○ As you age, what changes occur in your muscle and bone mass?⁸

At 25 years

Muscle & bone mass is built

At 35 years

Plateau phase

After 35 years

You lose 0.5 to 0.75% bone and muscle mass every year which increases to 4-5% every year till menopause

Signs and symptoms you may experience if you have osteoporosis⁹



Getting shorter in height by one and half inch or more



Stooping/ bending forward posture



Chronic back pain



Bone fractures

Osteoporosis can be controlled with physical activity that will help to prevent fractures.¹⁰

○ Aim for 2.5 hours/ week of physical activity

○ Weight bearing and resistance training exercises are the most beneficial activities

Chapter 4: Lifestyle changes to ease through menopause and keep your bones healthy

To maintain good health and minimise the risk of osteoporosis, ensure adequate nutrition

- Eat healthy: Fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products ¹¹
- Eat protein daily: Necessary for bone strength and prevention of age-related bone loss ¹²
- Consume phytoestrogens e.g. pumpkin/sunflower/flax seeds, oats, wheat bran, apples, almonds etc.¹¹
- Take nutritional supplements as advised by the doctor ^{11,13}

Adopt healthy lifestyle

- Reduce sugary foods ¹¹
- Quit smoking and limit alcohol ⁷
- Exposure to sunlight between the hours of 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. will promote vitamin D production in the skin, year-round ¹⁴
- Do regular physical activity like yoga, meditation, pranayama, walking, and deep breathing exercises ^{3,8}
- Have caffeine in moderation ¹¹

Care for your emotional and mental well-being ^{15,16}

- Improve your social well-being by engaging with family and friends
- Identify symptoms of depression and seek help from the doctor
- Engage in a creative outlet or hobby that gives you a sense of achievement
- Get enough sleep
- Avoid tranquilizers and alcohol

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