



Health Tips For Women's Wellness

ISSUE: JULY 2024

CORD BLOOD AWARENESS MONTH JULY 2024



CareNine is a pregnancy support program structured to educate, guide and reassure 'mothers-to-be' with the help of counselling from specialists; all under one roof.



Women's Health: Bone marrow transplant: how does it work?

There's a lot of chatter about cord blood banking but what happens when someone needs a bone marrow transplant? This is a brief explanation of how bone marrow transplant works and why you



Preconception Care: How can irregular periods impact your pregnancy?

Your menstrual cycle is related to your fertility and any irregularity can significantly impact your chances of getting pregnant. Here is all that you should know.



CareNine: Navigating through postpartum contraceptives

Birth control can be a tricky subject to understand and deal with. Find a brief guide to postpartum contraceptive options here.



CareNine Beyond: Rainy season precautions for newborns

The rainy season is here with loads of germs and humidity. This season can be specifically crucial for newborns, so here are all the important tips new parents should know.



CareNine: Deworming & child health: how are they connected?

Worms are indeed detrimental to your child's health and they are more common than you'd think of them to be. Read on to find out more about prevention and treatments.





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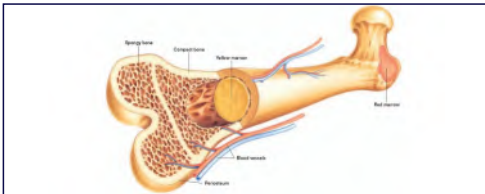
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Women's Health:

Bone marrow transplant: how does it work?

Bone marrow transplant (BMT) is a special medical procedure to treat patients with blood disorders and cancers. In BMT, cells commonly found in the bone marrow (stem cells) are filtered and given to the recipient. The purpose of BMT is to transfuse healthy stem cells to replace diseased or damaged bone marrow.

What is bone marrow?

- Bone marrow is the spongy tissue inside some of our bones, like the hip bones and ribs.
- Stem cells are blood cells that produce other blood cells. They constantly produce red blood cells (carry oxygen), white blood cells (fight infection) and platelets (help blood clot).

When is a bone marrow transplant needed?

Bone marrow transplants are considered when a person's bone marrow fails to produce enough healthy blood cells. It is also used if the patient's bone marrow has been permanently damaged due to exposure to chemotherapy or radiation. Some cases where bone marrow transplant can be required are:

- Blood cancers like leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma
- Aplastic anaemia, a condition where the bone marrow doesn't produce enough blood cells
- To replace stem cells that were destroyed by chemotherapy for cancer
- To replace diseased, ineffective bone marrow
- Add donor cells to find and destroy existing cancer cells

Types of bone marrow transplants

- **Autologous transplant:** By using patient's own stem cells. This is preferred as there is a lower risk of rejection. The transfused stem cells travel to your bone marrow and multiply it to produce healthy stem cells again.
- **Allogeneic transplant:** By using stem cells from a donor whose bone marrow closely matches yours. This may be necessary if the patient's own marrow is diseased or unsuitable. Prospective donors can be close family members like parents or siblings. In case the donor is an identical sibling with the same tissue type as yours, it's called syngeneic transplant. If you store your baby's umbilical cord, the stem cells from it can be used for transplant.

How does a bone marrow transplant work?

There are three main stages to a bone marrow transplant:

- **Preparing the recipient:** This involves intensive chemotherapy (strong medications) to destroy cancerous cells and suppress the immune system to prevent rejection of the new stem cells.
- **Stem cell collection:** Stem cells can be collected in two ways:
 - **Autologous transplant:** Patient's own stem cells are collected before chemotherapy and stored.
 - **Allogeneic transplant:** Stem cells from a matched donor, like a sibling or unrelated donor, are collected.
- **Transplantation:** The collected stem cells are infused into the recipient's bloodstream through a central venous catheter. These stem cells travel to the bone marrow and start producing healthy blood cells. This process, called engraftment, usually takes 2-4 weeks.

After a bone marrow transplant, patients need continuous monitoring and supportive care to prevent and treat infections, side-effects and further complications. This includes frequent blood tests, measurement of fluid input and output, daily monitoring of vitals, etc.

Recovery after a bone marrow transplant

Recovery after a bone marrow transplant is a long process that can take months or even a year. Patients are closely monitored for infection and need medications to prevent graft-versus-host disease (GVHD), a serious condition where the donor's immune system attacks the recipient's body.

The recovery period also involves frequent visits to your healthcare provider to keep all complications in check. It is gaining popularity in India due to its efficacy and now parents here are also opting for cord blood banking. This is a good step towards ensuring the health and well-being of our loved ones.

Sources:

- Johns Hopkins Medicine
- Mayo Clinic
- UT Southwestern Medical Center
- WebMD



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Preconception Care: How can irregular periods impact your pregnancy?

It's common to have menstrual cycles of varying length. A fluctuation of 4-5 days in the cycles is normal. When your menstrual cycle goes out of this normal range, then it's considered to be irregular.

A cycle shorter than 21 days and longer than 35 days is considered to be an irregular menstrual cycle. Also, if your periods are completely skipped a month, that's irregular. Many women also experience unpredictable flow and cycle duration if they have irregular periods.

How to accurately count your cycle?

Many women struggle with counting their cycle correctly. Consider your first day of bleeding as day one. Wait till the next time you get your periods. Now, the last day before your bleeding starts is the last day of your menstrual cycle. This should be between 22-34 days to be called regular.

How are irregular periods related to fertility?

Ovulation, the release of an egg from the ovary, is crucial for pregnancy. Irregular cycles can make it challenging to predict ovulation accurately.

Ovulation occurs a few days before the start of your period. Having regular unprotected intercourse during fertile window increases your chances of conception. But the unpredictability caused by irregular periods can directly impact fertility. Previous uterine scarring or hormonal imbalances can cause irregular bleeding without ovulation as well.

Irregularity can be a symptom of hormonal imbalances like Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) that might affect ovulation and egg quality. In PCOS, excess androgens (sometimes called "male" hormones) can prevent mature eggs from developing and being released.

Causes of irregular periods

Several factors can lead to irregular periods, such as:

- **Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)**
- **Thyroid Issues:** Hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism
- **Stress:** Emotional or physical stress
- **Weight Fluctuations:** Rapid weight gain or loss
- **Excessive Exercise:** Intense physical activity
- **Medications:** Certain drugs can disrupt menstrual cycles

Planning a pregnancy with irregular periods

- **Track your cycle:** Even with irregularity, some women experience a pattern. Note down period dates for a few months to identify any trends.
- **Consider ovulation predictors:** These kits detect hormonal changes indicating ovulation.
- **Consult your healthcare provider:** Discuss your concerns and medical history. They can help identify potential underlying causes and recommend solutions.

Treatment options for irregular periods

Depending on the cause, your doctor might suggest:

- **Lifestyle changes:** Maintaining a healthy weight, managing stress and regular exercise can regulate hormones.
- **Hormonal medications:** Birth control pills or medications can help regulate ovulation.
- **Addressing underlying conditions:** If PCOS or thyroid issues are present, treating them can improve your chances of conception.

Getting pregnant with PCOS

PCOS is a common cause of irregular periods. While it can make pregnancy more challenging, treatment options are easily available to improve your chances of conceiving.

By understanding the connection between irregular periods and fertility, tracking your cycle and consulting your healthcare provider, you can have a healthy conception. Early evaluation and addressing any underlying issues is crucial, hence it is advised to seek proper preconception care guidance.

Sources:

- WebMD
- Medical News Today
- Healthline



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CareNine: Deworming and child health: how are they connected?

Intestinal worms, also known as parasitic worms, can infest children's bodies, causing health issues. Deworming is a crucial process to eliminate the parasitic worms from a child's body. These worms, often found in the intestines, can cause significant health issues. Regular deworming and preventive measures can help maintain children's growth, development and overall well-being.

What is deworming?

- Deworming involves giving medication to a child to eliminate intestinal worms.
- These worms live in the gut and feed on the nutrients from the food children eat, causing a lack of nutrition in the kids.
- Common types of worms in children include roundworms, hookworms, pinworms, tapeworms and whipworms.

Why is deworming important?

Worm infections can lead to malnutrition, stunted growth and poor cognitive development in children.

Children with worm infections may experience:

- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhoea
- Weight loss
- Anaemia (lack of iron)
- Restlessness and irritability

When should children be dewormed?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends deworming all children between 1 and 14 years in areas with high worm prevalence (like India).
- Some regions may have specific deworming programs in schools depending on the risk level of worming.
- Consult your doctor to determine the best deworming schedule for your child.

How is deworming done?

- Deworming medication is usually a single-dose tablet given orally.
- Depending on the type of worm infection, one or two doses might be needed.
- Always follow your healthcare provider's instructions for dosage and frequency.

Worming symptoms to look out for

Despite strict measures, your child may exhibit worm symptoms. Here are some common indications:

- Consistent stomach pain
- Weakness or exhaustion
- Anaemia
- Nausea

- Frequent urination
- Constipation or diarrhoea
- Blood in stool
- Burning sensation while urination
- Sudden weight loss
- Irritation on the buttocks
- Low appetite

If your child exhibits these symptoms, seek professional medical guidance.

Preventing worm infections in children

• Good hygiene is key:

- Teach children to wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after using the toilet and before eating.
- Encourage regular showering or bathing.
- Keep fingernails trimmed to prevent dirt accumulation.

• Sanitation:

- Dispose of faeces hygienically in toilets to prevent worm egg contamination in the environment.
- Discourage open defecation even by pets, especially near water sources.

• Safe food and water:

- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly before consumption.
- Ensure proper cooking of meat, especially pork.
- Drink clean, treated water.
- In the case of young kids, you can try providing only boiled water to them for maximum safety.
- Don't allow your kids to drink water from any public tanks unless you're fully sure of their cleanliness.

• Discourage pica:

- Pica is a condition where children eat non-food items like soil. This behaviour is common in kids while playing outdoors, so always keep an eye out for such trends.
- Consult your doctor if your child exhibits pica behaviour.

• Deworming pets:

- Regularly deworm pets like dogs and cats to prevent them from becoming carriers of worm eggs.

Deworming is a simple yet powerful tool to safeguard your child's health. By combining deworming with good hygiene practices, you can significantly reduce the risk of worm infections in your child and keep them healthy.

Sources:

- WHO
- Medover Hospitals
- Apollo Cradle and Children's Hospital



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CareNine: Navigating through postpartum contraceptives

Family planning is a crucial aspect. Many young parents wait for the first delivery to start thinking about it, so the next best time would be after childbirth.

Postpartum contraceptives help new mothers manage their reproductive health better and make informed choices.

Why choose postpartum contraception?

- **Spacing pregnancies:** Spacing births by at least 18 months allows your body to recover and ensures optimal health for both you and your baby.
- **Reduced maternal health risks:** Closely spaced pregnancies can increase risks of anaemia, preterm birth, and low birth weight.
- **Improved breastfeeding experience:** Some contraceptive methods don't affect breastfeeding, allowing you to continue nourishing your baby.

Keeping all these factors in mind, it is necessary to choose a postpartum contraceptive that aligns best with your preferences. Your healthcare advisor would guide you the best towards the most suited option, but you should have a brief idea of all available options.

Factors to consider when choosing postpartum contraception

- **Breastfeeding:** If you plan to breastfeed, some methods are more suitable than others.
- **Desired future pregnancies:** Consider how soon you'd like to conceive again.
- **Medical history:** Discuss any pre-existing health conditions with your doctor.
- **Lifestyle and preferences:** Choose a method that aligns with your comfort and ease of use.

When to start contraception

Contraception can be started immediately after childbirth or after a few weeks, depending on the method chosen and individual health conditions.

Postpartum contraceptive options

- **Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM):** It is a natural method that relies on exclusive breastfeeding (frequent and on-demand) to suppress ovulation. It is effective with proper adherence but might not be suitable for everyone.
- **Progestrone-only Pills (POP):** POP is safe and effective for breastfeeding mothers. You should start it within the first week after delivery (non-breastfeeding) or 6 weeks (breastfeeding).

- **Injectable contraceptives:** Injections like DMPA (Depo-Provera) provide long-term protection (3 months) and are safe for breastfeeding.
- **Intrauterine Contraceptive Device (IUD):** Copper IUDs are highly effective and don't interfere with breastfeeding. It can be inserted immediately after delivery or within 6 weeks.
- **Condoms:** Condoms offer protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and can be used alongside other methods.
- **Female sterilisation (tubectomy):** It's a permanent birth control option through a minor surgical procedure. Consider this only if you're sure about not wanting future pregnancies.

In addition to these, your male partner can consider getting a vasectomy which is a low-effort procedure with high efficacy and permanence. Again, you should only go ahead with it if you're completely sure of not having another baby.

Consulting your healthcare provider

- Discuss your postpartum contraception plans with your healthcare provider during pregnancy or soon after delivery.
- Don't hesitate to ask questions and clarify any doubts you might have.
- If you're still not sure about another baby, start with temporary contraceptives and wait for a few years to make the right decision.

Starting postpartum contraception

- Some methods can be initiated very soon after delivery, while others require waiting for a few weeks.
- Make sure to communicate your specific needs to get the best possible solution. In the end, postpartum contraception is a personal choice that fully matches your personality and lifestyle.

Navigating through postpartum contraceptives is vital for new mothers to manage their reproductive health effectively. Don't delay it further as there are plenty of options available and you'll find the best fit for you.

Proper contraception use ensures better health for both mother and child, allowing families to plan and space pregnancies according to their needs and preferences.

Sources:

- UT Southwestern Medical Center
- Grace Obstetrics and Gynecology
- FIGO (International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics)
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists



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The monsoon season has finally brought relief from the scorching heat but it also poses unique challenges, especially for newborns. If you're a new parent, it's time to get extra cautious with your baby. Here are some essential monsoon healthcare precautionary tips for newborns to ensure they have a healthy start in life while enjoying the cool, monsoon breeze.

1. Maintain hygiene

- Regularly clean and sterilise baby's feeding bottles, pacifiers and toys to prevent bacterial growth.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before handling the baby to minimise the risk of infections.
- Keep the baby's surroundings clean and dry to avoid fungal and bacterial growth.
- Try not to use diapers and nappies in the monsoon, to avoid rashes. Wet diapers are a common breeding ground for fungal infections too.
- Keep some baby wipes handy all the time to clean your baby frequently. Wipe the moisture-trapping areas like ears, armpits and genitals frequently.

2. Protect against mosquitoes

- Use mosquito nets or screens to cover windows and cribs to prevent mosquito bites.
- Dress your baby in light-coloured, long-sleeved clothing to reduce exposure to mosquitoes.
- Apply a baby-safe mosquito repellent lotion or cream on exposed skin.

3. Ensure proper ventilation

- Maintain good air circulation in the baby's room by using fans or air conditioning, as excessive humidity can lead to discomfort and skin rashes.
- Avoid overcrowding the room with furniture to allow for better air circulation.

4. Prevent waterborne diseases

- Use boiled or filtered water for drinking, preparing formula and bathing the baby.
- Avoid taking the baby outside during heavy rainfall to minimise the risk of waterborne infections.
- For newborns, dry the umbilical stump carefully after every bath to prevent infections.

5. Dress appropriately

- Dress your baby in lightweight, breathable fabrics such as cotton to prevent overheating and skin irritations.
- Avoid overdressing the baby, as excessive heat and humidity can cause discomfort.

6. Keep allergies at bay

- Clean and dry your baby's clothes, bedding and towels thoroughly to prevent the growth of allergens.
- Dust and vacuum the house regularly to reduce dust mites and other allergens.
- Avoid exposing your baby to damp or mouldy environments.

7. Ensure proper nutrition

- It's best to continue breastfeeding as it provides essential nutrients and strengthens the baby's immune system.
- If formula feeding, prepare and store it as per instructions and discard any leftover formula after feeding.
- Introduce complementary foods cautiously, following the advice of your healthcare provider.

8. Be vigilant for signs of illness

- Monitor your baby's body temperature regularly and seek medical attention if there is a fever.
- Look for signs of respiratory distress, such as rapid breathing or persistent coughing.
- If your baby shows any signs of illness, consult a medical expert without delay.

When stepping out of home, keep your baby away from the crowd and carry their food at all times. Also, discuss with the healthcare provider to keep the babies fully vaccinated during this season.

By following these rainy season precautions, you can create a safe and nurturing environment for your little ones. Remember, prevention is key to stay away from the monsoon troubles.

Sources:

- CordMe India
- Narayana Health
- Care Hospitals
- Nashoda Hospitals