



Health Tips For Women's Wellness

ISSUE: MARCH 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: What is flossing & why should you start it right away?

This Women's Day, let's pick a good habit that will go a long way in maintaining our oral hygiene. Flossing is an easy habit to start immediately and here is why you should do it.



Preconception Care: Obesity and pregnancy: Know the risks

Are you trying to get pregnant but concerned about obesity? The best way forward is to understand the risks involved and take steps to promote healthy pregnancy - here's how!



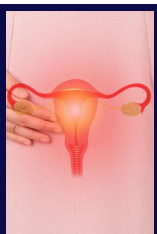
CareNine: Down syndrome and pregnancy

Down Syndrome, a genetic chromosomal disorder, impacts numerous babies around the world. What is it and who is at risk - read on to find out!



CareNine Beyond: Ways to encourage good mental health practices in children

Cultivating good mental health practices in children is a collective effort that involves parents, educators and society at large. How can you lay the foundation of a healthy life in your kids - find out here.



CareNine: What is genital tuberculosis and can it impact fertility?



Tuberculosis (TB), while typically affecting the lungs, can also silently impact the reproductive system, leading to genital tuberculosis (GTB). This potentially serious condition can further affect fertility in both men and women. Let's understand GTB



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Women's Health: What is flossing and why should you start it right away?

Let's celebrate this Women's Day with a healthy habit and start with flossing for the perfect radiant smile

We Indians surely love chai, pakoras and sticky Mithai. But what lurks between our teeth after enjoying these treats? Food debris and bacteria, forming a plaque disaster! With such diet practices, brushing twice may not be enough.

What is flossing?

Flossing is the act of removing food particles and plaque build-up between your teeth using a thin, flexible thread called dental floss. It removes food debris, plaque and bacteria that get lodged between teeth, where your toothbrush can't reach. This simple step helps prevent several oral health problems.

Why should you start flossing today?

- **Prevents cavities:** Plaque build-up between teeth can lead to cavities, especially in hard-to-reach areas. Flossing removes this plaque, protecting your teeth from decay.
- **Combats gum diseases:** Plaque also contributes to gingivitis (inflammation of the gums) and, if left untreated, can progress to periodontitis (severe gum disease). Flossing helps keep your gums healthy by removing plaque and reducing inflammation.
- **Fresher breath:** Food particles trapped between teeth can cause bad breath. Flossing removes these particles, leaving your breath feeling fresh and clean.
- **Boosts overall health:** Recent studies suggest a link between poor oral health and chronic health conditions like heart disease and diabetes. Flossing contributes to good oral hygiene, potentially reducing the risk of these diseases.
- **Preventing tartar build-up:** Regular flossing prevents the formation of tartar, a hardened form of plaque. Tartar can only be removed by a dentist and may lead to more serious oral health issues if neglected.

How to start flossing?

Before you start flossing, here are some basic information to keep in mind:

1. Choose the right flossing tool

- **String floss:** Classic and affordable, comes in waxed or unwaxed options.
- **Water flosser:** Electric device using pressurized water for a refreshing clean.
- **Floss picks:** Convenient option with a handle and pre-threaded floss.

2. Ace the technique

- **Get a grip:** Wind about 18 inches of floss around each middle finger, leaving a 2-inch cleaning section.
- **Curve it:** Gently slide the floss between teeth, following the curve of each tooth.
- **Gentle sawing motion:** Move the floss up and down, scraping the sides of each tooth to remove plaque.
- **Don't force it:** If floss snags, ease it out and try a new section.
- **Don't skip the back:** Back teeth are just as important as front teeth, so don't neglect them.
- **Repeat and rinse:** Floss each space between your teeth. Rinse your mouth with water afterwards.

3. Visit your healthcare provider

- Before you choose the floss type, visit your healthcare provider and take their suggestion.
- You can also ask them for personalized flossing guidance and recommendations.

4. Make it a habit

- Floss at least once a day, preferably before bedtime.
- Pair flossing with brushing to make it a part of your regular oral hygiene routine.
- You can also pick a flavoured floss for a more engaging experience.

5. Remember these additional tips:

- **Start slow:** If flossing is new, begin with a few teeth each day and gradually increase.
- **Be patient:** Bleeding gums may occur initially but it should improve with regular flossing.
- **Don't expect immediate results:** It might take a few weeks of consistent flossing to see and feel the difference.
- **Involve your family:** Encourage everyone in your household to floss together for a healthy habit everyone can benefit from.
- **Reward yourself:** Celebrate your flossing commitment with a small treat after a week or two of consistency.

Sources:

- NHS
- Healthline
- WebMD
- Hamilton Dental Clinic



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Preconception Care: Obesity and pregnancy: Know the risks

A high body mass index (BMI) during pregnancy can have several health implications for you and your baby. First of all, let's understand obesity and body mass index (BMI).

What is called being obese?

If your BMI is 30 and above, you are obese. A quick guide for your reference is:

BMI

Below 18.5
18.5-24.9
25.0-29.9
30.0 and higher

Body Status

Underweight
Normal
Overweight
Obesity

To measure your BMI, note down your most recent height and weight. Now, divide your weight in pounds by your height in inches square and multiply the result by 703. Alternatively, you can also divide your weight in kilograms by your height in meters square. There, you have your BMI!

Will a high BMI impact my preconception health too?

Indeed, having a high BMI can impact your fertility by obstructing the regular ovulation cycle. Even for women with regular ovulation cycles, a higher BMI indicates more time required to get pregnant. Several studies prove that obesity can be directly linked to higher rates of miscarriage, stillbirth and recurrent miscarriages. A high BMI also reduces your chance of holding a pregnancy through in vitro fertilization (IVF). Thus, if you are willing to get pregnant, it's better to visit a healthcare provider and take measures to reduce your BMI, before moving forward with conception.

What are the health risks that I can develop during pregnancy?

Being overweight and obese can have several health implications during pregnancy, like:

• Gestational diabetes

- Requiring a caesarean section or C-section
- C-section complications like wound infections
- Longer recovery time is needed
- Preeclampsia – high blood pressure during pregnancy
- Sleep apnoea
- Cardiac dysfunction

• Impact on the baby

- Your obesity can also affect your baby with risks like:
- Birth defects
- Childhood obesity
- Asthma
- Foetal Macrosomia
- Impaired growth

Will my healthcare provider talk to me about obesity?

Your healthcare provider will definitely monitor your pregnancy closely if you have a BMI of 30 or higher. They can recommend several tests like:

- Screening for obstructive sleep apnea
- Obstetrical fetal ultrasound
- Early diagnosis of gestational diabetes

How can I promote a healthy pregnancy with a high BMI?

Even though obesity can have a major impact on the health of your baby, you can ensure a better lifestyle by taking certain steps like:

- Have a preconception appointment with the registered dietitian who may help you reach a healthy weight goal before you get pregnant.
- Be in constant touch with your healthcare provider and seek regular prenatal care for any medical condition that you may have.
- Regulate your diet and include more quantity of iron, calcium, protein, folic acid and other essential nutrients.
- Consult a fitness expert for staying physically active with simple exercises like walking, running and swimming.
- Quit alcohol or any such drugs.

Having a high BMI can be a risk factor but that shouldn't stop you from being a powerful mother! Take charge to make a change in yourself now and enjoy a healthy pregnancy.

Sources:

- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- CDC
- Mayo Clinic
- NHS



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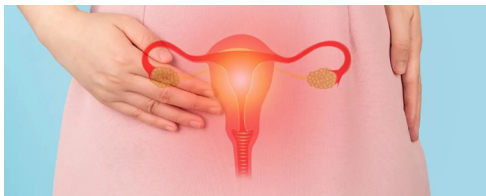
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CareNine:

What is genital tuberculosis and can it impact fertility?

Genital tuberculosis is a form of tuberculosis that affects the reproductive organs, particularly the fallopian tubes and uterus in women and the epididymis in men. It is caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the same bacteria responsible for pulmonary tuberculosis. Genital TB is a type of extrapulmonary TB or TB that occurs outside the lungs.

Symptoms of genital TB

While genital TB mostly doesn't exhibit any symptoms, couples who are trying to get pregnant may experience infertility.

Depending on other factors, you may also experience symptoms like:

- Pelvic pain
- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Testicular pain
- Swelling or lumps in the private parts
- Heaviness in the testicles
- Irregularities associated to menstrual cycle
- Slight fever
- Fatigue
- Weight loss

How can genital tuberculosis impact fertility?

Fallopian tube blockage:

- Genital tuberculosis can lead to the formation of scar tissue in the fallopian tubes.
- Scarred tubes can hinder the passage of eggs, preventing fertilization and increasing the risk of ectopic pregnancies.

Uterine involvement:

- In women, the infection can affect the lining of the uterus and make it hostile for embryo implantation.
- This may result in recurrent miscarriages or infertility.

Premature ovarian failure:

- Genital TB can impact one or both ovaries, causing premature ovarian failure.
- In this condition, the ovaries can stop functioning. It affects the quality of eggs or sometimes stop releasing eggs.

Epididymal obstruction:

- Men with genital tuberculosis may experience blockages in the epididymis, affecting sperm transport.
- Reduced sperm motility and count can contribute to male infertility.

Inflammation and fibrosis:

- Chronic inflammation and fibrosis caused by genital tuberculosis

can disrupt normal reproductive processes in both men and women.

- These changes may compromise the overall fertility potential.

Diagnosis and treatment

- Diagnostic tests may include imaging studies, laparoscopy, Nucleic Acid Amplification Tests (NAATs), histopathological examination, endometrial biopsy and microbiological tests.
- Treatment involves a prolonged course of anti-tubercular drugs, typically lasting several months.
- Surgery might be needed in some cases to remove blockages or scar tissue.
- Assisted reproductive techniques (ART) like IVF may be considered after successful TB treatment.
- Surgical intervention may be necessary in cases of severe damage or complications.

Prevention and awareness

- Timely diagnosis and treatment are crucial for minimizing the impact of genital tuberculosis on fertility.
- Couples experiencing difficulty conceiving should seek comprehensive fertility evaluations, including screening for genital tuberculosis.
- Increased awareness among the people is essential to ensure early detection and intervention.
- Following good respiratory hygiene, especially in public spaces, is a good way to prevent the risks of TB.
- Avoid close contact with any person who has been recently diagnosed with tuberculosis.
- Practising safer sex is also recommended.
- If you have TB or experience fertility issues, consult your healthcare professional immediately.

For those looking forward to being parents, understanding the potential implications of genital tuberculosis is key to maintaining reproductive health. Recognizing the symptoms, seeking prompt medical attention and adopting preventive measures are vital steps in mitigating its impact.

Sources:

- Healthline
- Queen's Gynecology
- Sitaram Bhatia Institute of Science & Research
- Medcover Hospitals



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CareNine: Down syndrome and pregnancy

Down syndrome is a genetic condition in which a baby has an extra chromosome. Chromosomes can be described as small units of genes and human babies are typically born with 46 chromosomes (23 pairs). But the babies suffering from Down syndrome have an extra full or partial copy of chromosome 21. This chromosome can impact the development pattern in babies and increase physical and mental challenges.

Common physical features of Down syndrome include:

- Small ears
- Tongue sticking out of the mouth
- A single line on the palm instead of regular three lines
- Short neck
- Small head
- Relatively shorter hands and fingers with small feet
- Flattened face, especially a flat nose
- Loose joints and decreased muscle tone
- Tiny white spots on the iris of the eye

Children with Down syndrome struggle with learning, start talking late and face difficulty in caring for themselves. Alongside cognitive anomalies, kids with Down syndrome often exhibit heart and gastrointestinal complications. As most of the physical features are shortened, individuals with Down syndrome can grow up to be of average size but they'll have a slower rate of growth.

What causes Down syndrome?

As explained earlier, humans commonly have 23 pairs of chromosomes, each pair coming from the mother and father. Down syndrome occurs due to an abnormal cell division that results in having an extra full or partial chromosome 21. There are three different types of Down syndrome as per the genetic variations:

- **Trisomy 21** - 95% of Down syndrome cases are caused by trisomy 21 where the individual has three copies of chromosome 21. This is caused due to an abnormal cell division during the development of the egg cell or the sperm cell.
- **Translocation Down syndrome** - Down syndrome can also occur when a part of chromosome 21 gets attached or translocated to another chromosome before or during conception. These

individuals have one pair of chromosome 21 but also an additional genetic material attached from chromosome 21 to another chromosome.

- **Mosaic Down syndrome** - This form of Down syndrome is very rare and the person has only a few cells with an extra copy of chromosome 21. There is a mosaic of normal and abnormal cells. It is caused due to abnormal cell division during fertilization.

Who is at risk factor of delivering babies with Down syndrome?

One thing to remember is that Down syndrome isn't inherited. It is caused due to abnormal cell division during foetal development and cannot be genetically transformed.

Some parents are at a greater risk of having a baby with Down syndrome, such as:

- Parents who are genetically capable of translocation for Down syndrome.
- Women who are trying to conceive after 35 years of age
- Parents who have already delivered a baby with Down syndrome

Infants born with Down syndrome face several complications that tend to get more prominent as they grow older. Along with the other mentioned complications, these kids are also at risk of having immune disorders, spinal problems, sleep apnoea, leukaemia, dementia and obesity.

Is there any prevention?

Sadly, there is no way to prevent Down syndrome. Parents can have prenatal screening during pregnancy to detect whether the baby will have Down syndrome or not. But Down syndrome is a lifelong condition and with proper care and medical intervention, babies can grow to live a long life, delivering their full potential.

Sources:

- Medline Plus
- Penn Medicine
- Women & Infants Hospital
- UCSF Health



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Good mental health is the foundation of a healthy life. If you can prioritise mental health in your kids, you allow them a space to grow emotionally. Here are some ways to encourage good mental health practices in children:

Building a strong foundation:

- **Open communication:** Encourage open conversations about feelings, worries and experiences. Actively listen without judgement.
- **Positive reinforcement:** Celebrate their achievements, big and small. Focus on effort and positive qualities, fostering self-esteem.
- **Healthy routines:** Establish consistent sleep schedules, balanced meals and regular physical activity. Routines offer stability and reduce stress.
- **Safe space:** Create a safe and supportive environment where they feel loved and accepted unconditionally. Teach them the importance of respect to develop healthy self-esteem and self-love in them.

Fostering emotional intelligence:

- **Identify and express emotions:** Help them understand and label their emotions (happy, sad, angry, etc.). Teach them some healthy ways to express them.
- **Problem-solving skills:** Encourage them to identify problems, brainstorm solutions and make decisions independently, building resilience.
- **Coping mechanisms:** Teach them healthy coping skills like deep breathing, mindfulness exercises or creative expression to manage stress and difficult emotions.
- **Empathy and kindness:** Foster empathy by discussing others' feelings and encouraging acts of kindness towards family, friends and even strangers.

Navigating challenges:

- **Open communication about tough topics:** Discuss sensitive topics like bullying, peer pressure and body image openly and honestly, addressing their concerns.
- **Seek professional help:** Don't hesitate to seek professional help if you notice persistent changes in mood, behaviour or face any difficulties in coping.

- **Understanding the adult world:** Part of being an adult is staying aware of everything that happens around. Don't expose your child to global news as much as you consume it but slowly make them understand how the world operates.

Remember:

- **Every child is unique:** Tailor your approach based on their individual personality, needs and age.
- **Be patient and consistent:** Mental health practices are ongoing, not one-time efforts.
- **Focus on strengths:** Celebrate their strengths and encourage them to develop healthy habits they enjoy.
- **Lead by example:** Practise healthy coping mechanisms, self-care and open communication in your own life. Always have a problem-solving approach to inculcate its value in kids.
- **Look out for troubling signs:** If you notice your child being continuously sad and withdrawn, changes in their weight and eating patterns, avoidance of normal activities and erratic behaviour, instantly address the issue without blaming them. Try to be their friend and simply talk.

Bonus tips:

- **Engage in cultural activities:** Incorporate traditional stories, art and music to celebrate your heritage and strengthen the sense of belonging.
- **Spend quality time together:** Play games, read stories or even chat. Unplugged time fosters connection and emotional well-being without any distractions from screens.
- **Connect with community:** Encourage positive social interactions with friends, family and community groups. Belonging is vital for mental health.

By nurturing good mental health practices early on, you equip your child with the tools they need to navigate life's challenges and thrive. Remember, you're not alone on this journey. Seek support from family, friends and healthcare professionals whenever needed.

Sources:

- UNICEF
- Health Park Pediatrics
- Canadian Paediatric Society