



# Health Tips For Women's Wellness

ISSUE: SEPTEMBER 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: Impact of hormonal changes on oral health

Hormones impact each and every body part and here we'll discover how our oral health is directly associated with hormonal changes.



## Preconception Care: Can stress before conceiving impact pregnancy?

Let us explore the potential impact of stress on pregnancy and provides tips for managing stress during the preconception period.



## CareNine: Impact of second-hand smoke and vapour on your baby

Getting exposed to second-hand smoke and vapour is fairly easy in urban centers today. What harm can it pose and how should you protect your baby? Find out here.



## CareNine Beyond: How to feed a fussy toddler?

Understanding why toddlers are fussy eaters and learning effective strategies can make mealtimes less stressful and more enjoyable for both parents and children. Read on to explore our curated list.



## CareNine: Can pregnancy make your asthma worse?

Numbing in hands is a common complaint most pregnant women have and now is the time to learn the science behind it. Read on to find out.



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## Women's Health: Impact of hormonal changes on oral health

Hormonal changes are a natural part of life, especially for women. These fluctuations can significantly impact various aspects of health, including oral health. Women experience hormonal changes during menstruation, pregnancy and menopause, so understanding them is crucial for maintaining good oral hygiene.

### How is oral health related to hormones?

Oestrogen and progesterone can increase the flow of blood to gums. Due to hormonal fluctuations, women can become more susceptible to swollen and bleeding gums. Also, higher levels of oestrogen, increases the risk of periodontal diseases.

### Hormonal changes and their effect on oral health

#### 1. Puberty:-

- During puberty, the surge in hormones can increase blood flow to the gums, making them more sensitive and prone to swelling.
- Teenagers may experience gingivitis.

#### 2. Menstruation:-

- Hormonal fluctuations during the menstrual cycle can lead to menstruation gingivitis.
- Symptoms include swollen gums, bleeding and sores inside the mouth, usually before a period begins.

#### 3. Pregnancy:-

- Pregnancy causes a spike in progesterone levels, which can lead to pregnancy gingivitis. Symptoms include red and swollen gums that bleed easily.
- Pregnant women are also at risk of developing pregnancy tumours, benign growths on the gums.
- Increased levels of certain hormones can exacerbate pre-existing gum disease, potentially leading to periodontitis.
- In case of morning sickness, the stomach acid causing vomiting can also erode the tooth enamel.

#### 4. Menopause:-

- Menopause leads to a decrease in oestrogen levels, which can cause dry mouth, burning sensations and an increased risk of gum disease.
- Women may also experience bone loss, leading to loose teeth and higher susceptibility to periodontal disease.
- Decreased oestrogen levels after menopause can lead to dry mouth

and decreased saliva production. Reduced saliva can increase the risk of tooth decay and gum disease.

### 5. Hormonal contraceptives:

- Oral contraceptives can mimic the hormonal changes of pregnancy, leading to similar oral health issues like gingivitis and gum inflammation.
- Certain hormonal conditions, such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and thyroid disorders, can also affect oral health.
- Regular dental check-ups and monitoring for any changes in oral health are important for individuals with these conditions.

### Oral health tips during hormonal changes

- **Maintain good oral hygiene:** Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and floss daily to remove plaque and prevent gum disease.
- **Visit the dentist regularly:** Regular dental check-ups can help detect and treat any oral health issues early on.
- **Balanced diet:** Eat a diet rich in calcium, vitamin D and other essential nutrients to strengthen teeth and gums.
- **Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of water to prevent dry mouth, especially during menopause. Avoid drinking soda and smoking.
- **Manage stress:** High stress can exacerbate oral health issues. Practice stress management techniques like yoga and meditation.
- **Inform your healthcare provider:** Always inform your healthcare provider about any hormonal changes, including pregnancy or the use of hormonal contraceptives, as this may impact your oral health and treatment plan.

Hormonal changes can have a significant impact on oral health. Understanding these connections is essential for maintaining a healthy smile. By practising good oral hygiene, visiting your healthcare provider and being aware of potential hormonal changes, you can help prevent oral health problems and enjoy a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums.

### Sources:

- US Department of Health & Human Services
- WebMD
- Cleveland Clinic



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## Preconception Care: Can stress before conceiving impact pregnancy?

Stress is a common experience in today's fast-paced world. However, when it comes to pregnancy, stress can be more than just a temporary discomfort. Increasing research suggests that stress before conceiving can impact not only a woman's ability to get pregnant but also the health of the pregnancy itself.

### How stress affects conception?

#### 1. Hormonal imbalance:

- Stress triggers the release of cortisol, the hormone that can disrupt the balance of reproductive hormones like oestrogen and progesterone.
- This imbalance can interfere with ovulation, making it harder to conceive.
- Irregular menstrual cycles and difficulty conceiving may be associated with chronic stress.

#### 2. Impact on menstrual cycle:

- Chronic stress can lead to irregular menstrual cycles or even missed periods.
- This irregularity makes it difficult to predict ovulation, further complicating conception efforts.

#### 3. Reduced libido:

- Stress can reduce sexual desire, leading to less frequent intercourse.
- This reduction in sexual activity lowers the chances of conception.

#### 4. Reduced sperm quality:

- Stress can negatively impact sperm quality and quantity in men.
- Elevated cortisol levels can reduce sperm count, motility and morphology.
- Stress-related factors such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and poor diet can also contribute to reduced sperm quality.

#### 5. Weakened immune system:

- Chronic stress can weaken the immune system, making it more susceptible to infections and inflammation.
- A weakened immune system can affect fertility and increase the risk of pregnancy complications.
- Managing stress and maintaining a healthy immune system are important for preconception health.

### Stress and early pregnancy

#### 1. Increased risk of miscarriage:

- High levels of stress before conception have been linked to an increased risk of miscarriage during early pregnancy.
- The reason is not fully understood but stress-related factors may contribute to placental problems or foetal development issues.

#### 2. Impact on embryo development:

- Stress can affect the quality of the eggs released, potentially leading to issues with embryo implantation and development.
- This could result in complications during early pregnancy.

#### 3. Long-term effects on the child:

- Some studies suggest that stress before conception can have long-term effects on the child's health.
- These effects include an increased risk of developmental issues and behavioural problems.

### Managing stress before conception

- Adopt relaxation techniques:** Practising yoga, meditation or deep breathing exercises can help reduce stress levels. These techniques are especially beneficial for women who may be facing societal pressures related to family planning.
- Regular exercise:** Engaging in regular physical activity helps manage stress and improves overall well-being. Activities like walking, swimming or even traditional Indian dance forms can be enjoyable ways to stay active.
- Healthy diet:** Eating a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains supports the body in managing stress. Traditional Indian foods like dal, leafy greens and seasonal fruits provide essential nutrients that can help in stress management.
- Adequate sleep:** Ensuring 7-8 hours of sleep each night is crucial for reducing stress levels. Establishing a bedtime routine, such as reading or listening to calming music, can improve sleep quality.
- Seek support:** Talking to a counsellor or joining a support group can provide emotional relief. Family and friends can also be a great source of support during the preconception phase. If stress is significantly impacting your life, you can also reach out to your healthcare provider.

While more research is needed to fully understand the impact of stress on pregnancy, evidence suggests that chronic stress before conception may influence fertility and increase the risk of certain pregnancy complications. By managing stress through healthy lifestyle choices and seeking support when needed, individuals can improve their chances of conceiving and having a healthy pregnancy.

#### Sources:

- WebMD
- The Bump
- Pacific Fertility Center



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## CareNine: Can pregnancy make your asthma worse?

During pregnancy, managing asthma becomes critical as it can impact both the mother's health and the baby's development. A common concern among pregnant women is whether pregnancy can make asthma worse. Understanding the relationship between asthma and pregnancy can help expectant mothers take the necessary steps to ensure a healthy pregnancy.

### How pregnancy affects asthma?

#### 1. Hormonal changes:

- Pregnancy brings about significant hormonal changes that can influence asthma symptoms.
- Some women may experience worsened asthma due to increased levels of progesterone and oestrogen, which can cause the airways to become more reactive.
- Increased levels of progesterone and oestrogen may cause airway inflammation and narrowing, leading to increased wheezing, coughing and shortness of breath.

#### 2. Increased respiratory demand:

- As the baby grows, the uterus expands and puts pressure on the diaphragm, reducing lung capacity.
- This can make breathing more difficult, especially for women with asthma, leading to more frequent or severe asthma symptoms.

#### 3. Changes in immune response:

- Pregnancy alters the immune system, which can affect asthma control.
- Some women may find their asthma worsens due to increased sensitivity to allergens or infections.

#### 4. Variation in symptom patterns:

- Asthma symptoms can vary throughout pregnancy. It mostly worsens between weeks 29 and 36.
- Some women may experience improvement in their symptoms, while others may notice a decline in their asthma control, especially in the second and third trimesters.

#### 5. Weight gain:

- Pregnancy often involves weight gain, which can exacerbate asthma symptoms in some women.
- Excess weight can put additional strain on the lungs and airways, making it harder to breathe.
- Maintaining a healthy weight throughout pregnancy can help reduce the risk of asthma flare-ups.

#### 6. Respiratory infections

- Pregnant women are more susceptible to respiratory infections, such as colds and flu, which can trigger asthma attacks.
- It is important to take preventive measures, such as getting vaccinated against influenza and avoiding exposure to sick individuals.
- Prompt treatment of respiratory infections can help prevent asthma flare-ups.

### Managing asthma during pregnancy

#### 1. Regular monitoring:

- It's essential to have regular check-ups with your healthcare provider to monitor asthma symptoms.
- Lung function tests may be recommended to ensure that asthma is well-controlled.

#### 2. Medication management:

- Many asthma medications are safe to use during pregnancy but it's crucial to consult your doctor before making any changes.
- Inhalers and other prescribed treatments should be used as directed to keep asthma under control.

#### 3. Avoiding triggers:

- Identifying and avoiding asthma triggers such as dust, smoke and strong odours can help reduce the frequency of asthma attacks.
- Pregnant women should also avoid exposure to respiratory infections by practising good hygiene and avoiding crowded places.

#### 4. Healthy lifestyle:

- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is vital for managing asthma during pregnancy.
- Eating a balanced diet, getting regular exercise and ensuring adequate sleep can improve overall health and help in managing asthma symptoms.

#### 5. Stress management:

- Pregnancy can be a stressful time and stress can exacerbate asthma symptoms.
- Practising relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation and deep breathing patterns can help manage stress levels.

### When to seek medical help?

- **Frequent asthma attacks:** If you experience frequent or severe asthma attacks, seek medical attention immediately. Uncontrolled asthma can lead to complications such as pre-eclampsia, preterm labour or low birth weight.
- **Difficulty breathing:** If you experience shortness of breath or wheezing that doesn't improve with medication, contact your healthcare provider. This could indicate that your asthma is worsening.

Pregnancy can potentially worsen asthma in some women but with proper management, it is possible to have a healthy pregnancy. Regular monitoring, adherence to prescribed medication and lifestyle adjustments are key to keeping asthma under control throughout pregnancy.

#### Sources:

- Cleveland Clinic
- Victoria State Government
- NHS



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## CareNine:

### Impact of second-hand smoke and vapour on your baby

Second-hand smoke and vapour, also known as e-cigarette vapour, pose significant health risks to both adults and children. Exposure to these harmful substances can have a detrimental impact on a baby's health, both during pregnancy and after birth.

#### What is second-hand smoke and vapour?

##### 1. Second-hand smoke:

- Also known as passive smoking, second-hand smoke is the combination of smoke exhaled by a smoker and smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, bidi or other tobacco products.
- This smoke contains over 7,000 chemicals, many of which are toxic and can cause serious health problems.

##### 2. Second-hand vapour:

- Vapour from electronic cigarettes or vaping devices, may seem less harmful than cigarette smoke. However, it still contains nicotine and other harmful substances that can be inhaled by non-users, including babies.

#### How second-hand smoke affects your baby?

##### 1. Respiratory problems:

- Babies exposed to second-hand smoke are at a higher risk of developing respiratory infections such as asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia.
- They are also more likely to suffer from asthma and frequent coughing or wheezing. Tonsillitis can also develop in babies due to this.

##### 2. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS):

- Exposure to second-hand smoke significantly increases the risk of SIDS, also known as cot death.
- Babies who breathe in second-hand smoke are more likely to die unexpectedly during sleep.

##### 3. Ear infections and other defects:

- Babies exposed to second-hand smoke are more prone to middle ear infections, which can cause pain, fever and hearing problems.
- Exposure to these harmful substances has been associated with an increased risk of birth defects, including cleft lip and palate.

##### 4. Low birth weight and premature birth:

- Pregnant women exposed to second-hand smoke are more likely to give birth to babies with low birth weight.
- There is also a higher risk of premature birth, which can lead to long-term health issues for the baby.

##### 5. Impaired lung development:

- Regular exposure to second-hand smoke can impair lung development in babies, leading to chronic respiratory issues later in life.

#### Risks of second-hand smoke and vapour for babies

##### 1. Nicotine exposure:

- Second-hand vapour contains nicotine, which can harm a baby's developing brain and lungs.
- Even small amounts of nicotine can be dangerous for babies and young children.

##### 2. Chemical exposure:

- Vapour from e-cigarettes contains chemicals such as formaldehyde and acrolein, which are harmful when inhaled, especially for babies with developing lungs.

##### 3. Respiratory issues:

- Just like second-hand smoke, second-hand vapour can irritate the airways and lead to breathing difficulties in babies.
- Babies exposed to second-hand smoke and vapour after birth are more likely to develop respiratory problems, such as asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia.

#### How to protect your baby?

- Create a smoke-free environment:** The best way to protect your baby from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke and vapour is to avoid exposure altogether. Ensure that your home and car are completely smoke-free. Ask friends and family members who smoke to do so outside and away from your baby.
- Avoid vaping around babies:** Even if you use e-cigarettes, it's important to avoid vaping around your baby. The chemicals in vapour can be harmful to their health.
- Educate family members:** Inform family members and caregivers about the risks of second-hand smoke and vapour and encourage them to quit smoking or avoid smoking near your baby.
- Encourage smoking cessation:** If you or your partner smoke, consider quitting for the sake of your baby's health. There are many resources available to help you quit smoking and you can discuss them with your healthcare provider.

Second-hand smoke and vapour pose serious health risks to babies, both during pregnancy and after birth. By understanding the dangers and taking proactive steps, you can significantly reduce your baby's exposure to harmful toxins and give them the best start in life.

#### Sources:

- Raising Children
- CDC
- NHS



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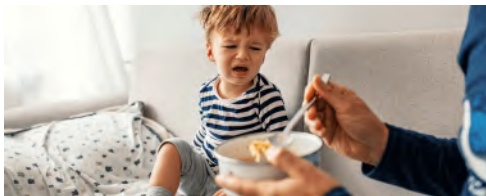
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## CareNine Beyond: How to feed a fussy toddler?

The first week of September is celebrated as National Nutrition Week. This year, the theme is 'Feeding Smart Right From Start.' All parents want to follow this principle while raising their babies but as the babies grow into toddlers, their fussy behaviour takes over. Feeding them starts becoming a challenge but understanding the reasons and our tips can help you pacify them easily.

### Why toddlers are fussy eaters?

#### 1. Developmental changes:

- As toddlers grow, their taste preferences and appetite can fluctuate. This is a normal part of their development.
- They may become more selective about textures, flavours and even the appearance of food.

#### 2. Independence:

- Toddlers are at a stage where they want to assert their independence. Refusing food is one way they try to gain control over their environment.

#### 3. Small stomachs:

- Toddlers have small stomachs, so they eat smaller portions. What might seem like fussiness could simply be that they're full.

### Strategies to feed a fussy toddler

#### 1. Create a routine:

- Establish a consistent meal and snack schedule.
- Offer meals at the same times every day to help regulate your toddler's appetite.

#### 2. Serve small portions:

- Start with small portions to avoid overwhelming your toddler.
- Let them ask for more if they're still hungry.

#### 3. Offer variety:

- Include a variety of foods in different colours, shapes and textures comprising of a wide range of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins.
- Present familiar foods alongside new ones to encourage your toddler to try something different.

#### 4. Be patient with new foods:

- It can take several tries before a toddler accepts a new food.
- Offer the food multiple times, without pressuring them to eat it.

#### 5. Involve your toddler:

- Let your toddler help with simple tasks like washing vegetables or stirring ingredients.
- Involvement in meal preparation can increase their interest in eating.
- Encourage self-feeding as soon as your child is able to grasp a spoon or fork.

- Offer utensils that are easy for your child to handle.

#### 6. Lead by example:

- Eat a variety of healthy foods in front of your toddler.
- They are more likely to try something if they see you enjoying it.

#### 7. Make meals fun:

- Use colourful plates and utensils to make mealtime more appealing.
- Create fun shapes with food or make a game out of eating.

#### 8. Avoid force-feeding:

- Forcing a toddler to eat can create negative associations with mealtime.
- Encourage but do not pressure them to eat.

#### 9. Limit distractions:

- Turn off the TV and put away toys during meals.
- Focus on eating and enjoying the meal together.

#### 10. Offer healthy snacks:

- Healthy snacks between meals can help ensure your toddler gets enough nutrients throughout the day.
- Fruits, vegetables and small portions of whole grains make excellent snacks.

### Dealing with refusals

- Stay calm:** If your toddler refuses to eat, stay calm and don't turn it into a confrontation. Simply remove the food without comment and try again later.
- Don't use food as a reward:** Avoid bribing your toddler with sweets or treats to get them to eat. This can create unhealthy eating habits. Instead, focus on positive reinforcements and praise your child for trying new foods or eating a balanced meal.
- Respect their appetite:** Trust that your toddler knows when they are full. Forcing them to finish their plate can lead to overeating and negative mealtime experiences.
- Address underlying issues:** If your child's fussiness is severe or accompanied by other symptoms, consult a healthcare professional to rule out any underlying medical conditions. Stress, anxiety or other emotional factors can contribute to fussy eating.

Feeding a fussy toddler requires patience, creativity and persistence. By understanding the reasons behind their fussiness, you can make mealtime a more positive experience.

#### Sources:

- NHS
- WebMD
- Apollo Cradle