

# My First Baby

Guide for Adolescent Girls



**Save the Children.**

## Acknowledgements

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This book was developed by Michelle Prosser and Beth Outtersson with significant input from Khim Khadka and Sangeeta Paudyal. The Cover was designed by Ram Krishna and the Illustrations were developed by Ram Krishna Graphic Design.

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## Introduction

This book was developed to help you as a young married girl with the next important years of your life, to understand pregnancy and childbirth, and to do your best to take care of yourself and your baby. We asked many girls of your age that have already given birth to help us develop this guide for you. We also asked husbands and mothers in law from villages like yours to learn of their experiences, feelings and opinions about marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and taking care of a new baby. This guide is divided up into chapters. Each chapter will focus on the changes in your body before, during and after your pregnancy. The chapters have a space for you to write down your thoughts and feelings during this time in your life. This is your workbook to keep and share with others. Pregnancy is a special and new time in your life when you need to pay attention to your feelings and the changes in your body as you prepare to welcome your first baby!

Remember that you are not doing this alone – you have the help and support from other married girls in your Married Adolescent Group. You will share this time in your life and support and learn from each other. The Female Community Health Volunteer (we also refer to them as the FCHV in this guide) in your Ward is an important person who can answer your questions and help you get the care you need during pregnancy and for the delivery of the baby. Your husband and your mother in law can play an important role in supporting you. Maybe they will want to read this book with you to better understand your needs and wishes.

## Welcome and Instructions on how to use this Book

Hi, my name is Kabita! I am excited to share my story with you. What I have to say in this book will help guide you in your pregnancy. I got married when I was 14 and before I knew it, I was pregnant. There were so many changes in my life, and it was all very scary. I was worried because I did not know what was going to happen to me or who would help me. I had to leave school, and move away from my parents' home to my husband's parents' house. There was so much happening to my body, and I did not know who to talk to. I was afraid of what other people would say to me. When I went to my mother-in-law she told me not to worry and everything will be fine, just like it was for her. My husband was getting ready to go far away for his job. I felt very alone during my pregnancy. Luckily I received the care I needed from the health worker at the health post who was so nice to me and really answered all my questions. I am happy to let you know that my baby was born with my no complications and we are now both very healthy. But I don't want to have another baby right away, maybe in three years. So, I would like to find out how to learn to delay my next pregnancy.

During my pregnancy, I learned a lot about myself, about being pregnant, eating healthy foods and taking care of a baby. When I got married, I felt like my hopes and dreams were taken away from me. But I now realize that I do not have to give up on my hopes in life and that I still have opportunities to be an active part of my community, my family, my life. I would like my experience to help you to understand your needs and share them with your family and community to get the support you deserve from them before, during and after your pregnancy.

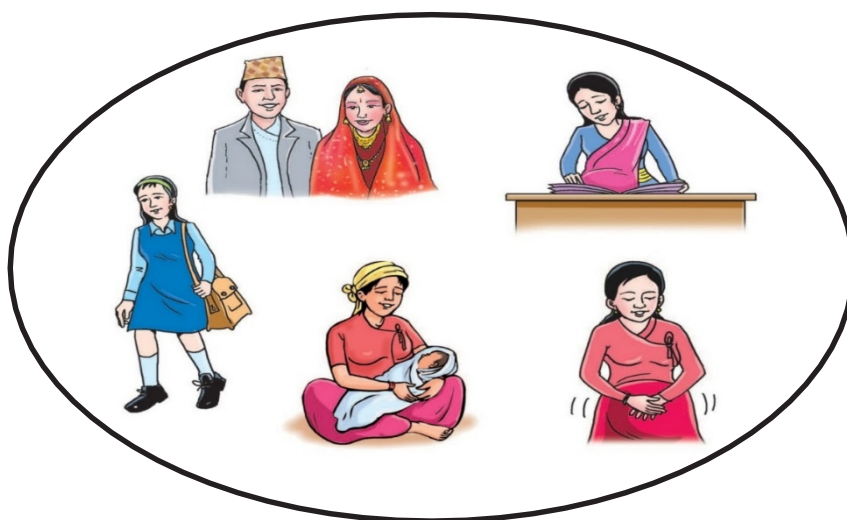
This book guides you through all you will experience, from being a girl, going through puberty, to getting married and then pregnant to help you prepare yourself for having and taking care of a baby. You will learn how your feelings and body change during pregnancy, how you can best take care of yourself, and to understand any danger signs that mean you will need to seek care at the health center. You will also learn how to select and use contraception to delay your next pregnancy after your baby is born. This is your book. Make sure you write notes about your thoughts and feelings.

As you read along, you will hear from other girls in your community who want to tell you their stories. I always learn better when I am sitting and sharing with my friends. I hope you feel that way too. I can't wait for you to learn along with me about how you can take care of yourself and your first baby. Most importantly, I want you to feel good about yourself and your future. Never give up on your hopes and dreams in life.

### How to use this book:

Most of you are already a part of a group of young married girls. Some of you may have already become pregnant. Some of you may already have children. Some of you may not have become pregnant. This book is for all of you. Some of the information may not be new to those who already had a baby, but for those of you who haven't, most of this information can help you. We want you to share the information you learn from this guide with you family, friends and other girls in your village. But mostly, we want you to feel strong and knowledgeable about how to take care of yourself before, during and after you have a baby. We also want you have good information about taking care of yourself and your baby. In the final part of the guide is information about how to use contraceptives to space your next pregnancy and some useful information about Sexually Transmitted Infections and Gender Rights. Over the next 6 months, we will go through the guide from the beginning to the end. We hope this guide will give you the information to feel strong to make the best decisions for yourself and your family.

How long have you been married? Are you pregnant? Do you have a baby? Do you want to have a baby soon? On the next page, please write down your thoughts about what you have been through and what you are looking forward to:



### New Hopes and Dreams

My name is Sabitri and I am from Gothibang ward, in Pyuthan. I had a dream to be a nurse before my marriage. My parents decided that I needed to get married when I was 15 and I felt so excited about my future and I felt grown-up. Now that I am married and have a baby, I realize that I can probably not become a nurse now and that makes me so sad. – I will try and talk to my husband and mother-in-law about going back to school so I can become a nurse and have my dream and help my family. Now that I have already been married for some time, my advice to other young mother is to talk to your husband about when we should have a baby and how important it is to finish school.

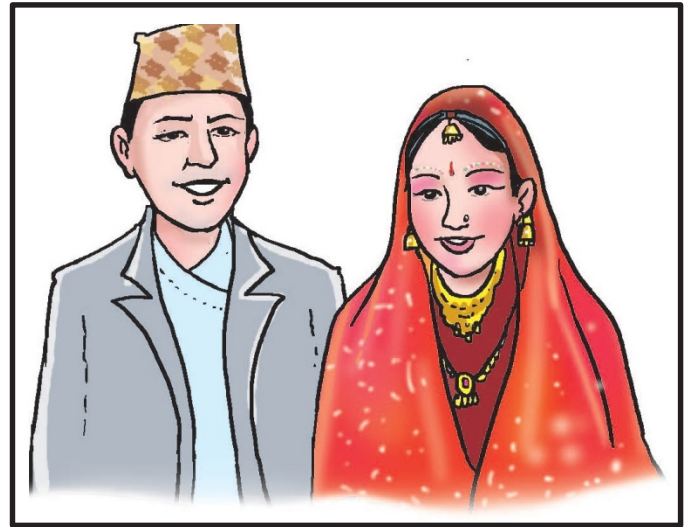
**I. Life Changes: What does it mean for you to be young married girl?**

Now you are married. What does this mean for you as a girl?

Now things are different. It is a new reality. There are many changes happening in your life. You may have a new family and perhaps you have moved out of your house and into your husband's family home.

Write here some of the things that have changed in your life since you are married.

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Marriage

What do you like about your new life?

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What is difficult about your new life?

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Who are your new family members?

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Who can you talk to about these things? For some girls, it is difficult to move out of your house and live in your husband's family's house. Maybe the friends you used to talk to are now far away. Even though this may be very hard, it will be important for you to become part of a new family and develop healthy relationships with your husband, mother in law, sister in law and other family members.

You may feel sad sometimes and happy other times. There are probably many expectations of you in your new role as wife. An expectation is how other people want you to feel and how they want you to act. These expectations might be coming from your husband and his family, but also from neighbors and other community members. They may include:

- Having to wear different clothes
- Adjusting to a new neighborhood
- Eating different foods
- Having new tasks around the house (cleaning, getting water, cooking)
- Having a baby one or two years after you get married

Please write down here some expectations you feel are put on you

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What are some good things about being married? Many girls report feeling good about their marriage because they like:

- being with their husband
- feeling independent, responsible, respected
- feeling mature and starting a new phase of their life

Are these things true for you? What are some other good things about being married?

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What are the hard things about being married? Many girls also report that there are some not so nice things about being married, such as:

- Having to leave school
- Less opportunity for job in your future

- Separated from husband if he is working in another country
- Feeling lonely
- Feeling pressure from your family to have a baby
- Feeling pressure to have a male baby

Are any of these things true for you? Please list other hard things about being married that you can think of and discuss in your Group:

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There are many things to think about if you want to have a baby. For your health, it is better to plan when you have a baby rather than wait for it to happen to you. Here are some important questions to answer:

Checking-in with you:

What are your hopes and dreams for your life?

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Do you go to school? If so do you want to stay in school?

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When do you want to become a mother?

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Have you discussed when to have your first baby with your husband?

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How do other people in your family feel about this?

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Whatever your hopes and dreams are, it is best for you to stay in school and keep studying. If you cannot stay in school, you can still keep learning in a youth club or Adolescent Support Group like ours.

**Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancy (HTSP)**

Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancy means that you become pregnant when your body is ready to have a safe pregnancy and delivery. It also means when and how to delay your next pregnancy until your body has recovered from the last pregnancy. We will learn much more about this in the guide.

You may be feeling pressure from your family to have a baby soon. Do you want to become a mother now? Please write your feelings about this:

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You may not know that a girl who has a baby between 15 to 19 years is 2- 5 times more likely to die or have serious problems in childbirth than older mothers. This means that if you are in this age, there are bigger risks if you become pregnant right now. Perhaps we should discuss a bit more about how your body works so we can understand your natural cycles of when you can and can't become pregnant. We will do this very soon.

Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancy (we also refer to this as HTSP in this guide) can help you make a decision about the healthiest time for you to be pregnant, and also to avoid pregnancy at the unhealthiest times. In order to make sure you and your children are as healthy as possible, follow these key instructions:

- Wait to get pregnant until you are at least 20 years old
- Wait at least 24 months after the birth of your last baby before becoming pregnant again

Family planning is when a couple decides when they want to have children and how many they want.

Family planning is also known as using a method of birth control. Every couple must decide for themselves if and how they want to plan their family. No one can decide for them. However, the FCHV, the health worker

and the leader of your Group can help you plan your family by teaching you about ways to prevent an unplanned pregnancy. The methods and medicines used for family planning are called contraceptives. Don't worry we will talk more about family planning and contraceptives later.

It is best to get married after your finish your schooling and wait until age 20 to become pregnant the first time. However we know that in Nepal many girls have their first baby before the age of 20 due to early marriage. We know that many of these girls want to wait a few years to have another baby. Using family planning can help you have more time for yourself while giving your first child the care and attention s/he needs. You can keep yourself and your first baby healthy by knowing how to space your children. If you are not yet pregnant, discuss the timing of your first baby with your husband and consider waiting until age 20 to have your baby.

### **Neena's Story**

I had a difficult time trying to explain to my mother in law that I did not want to have a baby right away because I wanted to finish my schooling. She was pushing me so many times, until I shared with her what I learned from the Group. I learned that it is better for the girl's body to wait until she is at least 20 years old. If she is too young, she could have many serious problems. I was so happy to know this because I do not feel ready to be a mother yet. My Mother in law agreed with me when she learned this. My husband also agreed! So to make sure we do not get pregnant right now, I am using injections once every 3 months. I feel very strong and confident now that I can delay my first pregnancy for a few years.

#### ***Checking-in with you:***

Do you think Neena did the right thing by standing up to her mother in law?

How long do you want to stay in school?

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Your Group is a great place to share your worries, experiences and concerns. They are here to support you. If you should have another baby before your first baby is 2 years old, it may be very difficult to breastfeed two children or give them both the attention and care that they need. It is also very hard on your body. Your body needs that time to heal and get strong. By waiting 24 months between the birth of the baby and becoming pregnant again, you will see better health effects for your baby and for yourself. There are many methods you should learn about before you decide which one is right for you. If you are interested in learning about all the methods of Family Planning, Please go to Section VII.

## How Pregnancy Causes Changes in Your Body

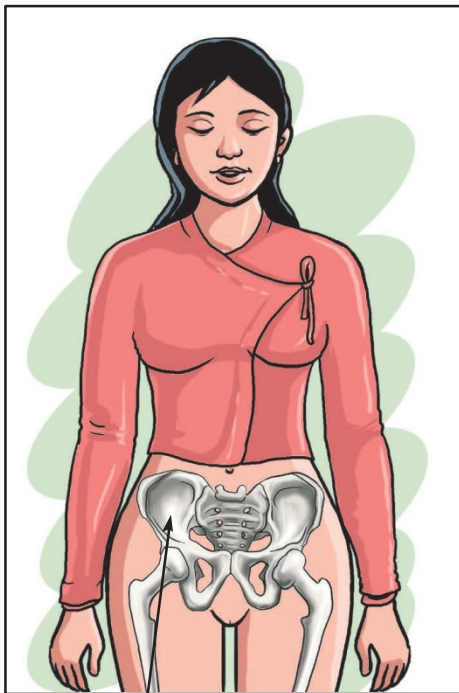
Do you remember there was a time when your body went through a lot of changes and you started getting breasts and more body hair? These changes are called puberty. During puberty there are many changes that happen in your body and your feelings as you begin to develop and mature. Once you have completed puberty, usually at around age 13, your body is capable of becoming pregnant. There are also changes that happen to boys as they go through puberty. When puberty ends a boy is capable of getting a girl pregnant. This can be a very confusing time for both boys and girls as puberty changes their bodies and affects their thoughts and feelings.

## Fertility and Menstruation

Menstruation is the monthly, normal, healthy releasing of blood from your womb. It is also called a period or menstrual cycle. For most girls, the bleeding usually lasts between 3 and 7 days. Many girls get their period around every 28 days, but sometimes it can be in as few as 21 days or in as many as 35 days. There is nothing wrong with you if your cycle is longer or shorter than 28 days. Your monthly cycle will stop coming during pregnancy but then starts again usually about 6 months after having your baby if you are breastfeeding. If you are not breastfeeding, your cycle can return as early as 3 weeks after having your baby and you are once again can get pregnant.

After puberty, a girl is able to become pregnant when she starts having regular monthly cycles. This means that she is fertile, which is the ability to become pregnant. There are certain days during your monthly cycle when you are able to become pregnant. These days are usually between days 11 and 18, after the first day your bleeding starts. This is usually in the middle of your cycle. A woman is fertile from her first regular monthly cycle until she stops having her cycle, usually around 45-50 years of age. A man, on the other hand, does not have a fertility cycle like women do. He is fertile every day after he reaches puberty and has the ability to father a child for the rest of his life. Don't worry, we will learn much more about the menstrual cycle and fertility later in this guide.

## How things look like inside of me?

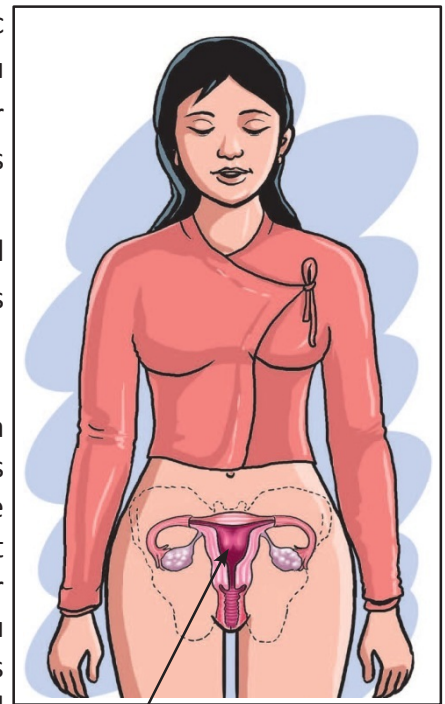


**Pelvic bones**

**1) The pelvic bones:** The pelvic bones are inside the belly. You can feel them by putting your hands on your hips like in this picture:

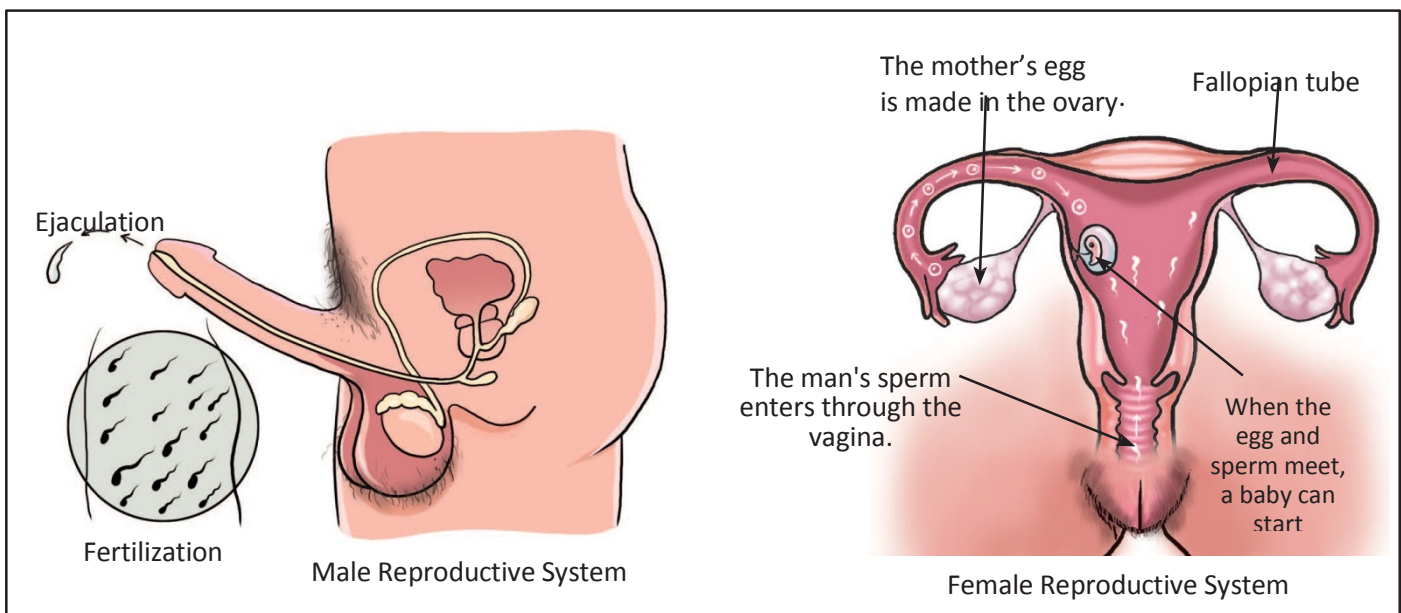
The pelvic bones are like a bowl and on the bottom of the bowl is where the birth canal is.

**2) The womb:** The womb is a bag of strong muscles. It lies inside the belly between the pelvic bones. When a girl is not pregnant, she cannot feel her womb from the outside. If you looked inside the belly that does not have a baby in it, it would look like the picture on the right. The womb is where the baby will stay and grow during your entire pregnancy. The womb is able to grow as your baby grows.



**Womb**

## How pregnancy happens



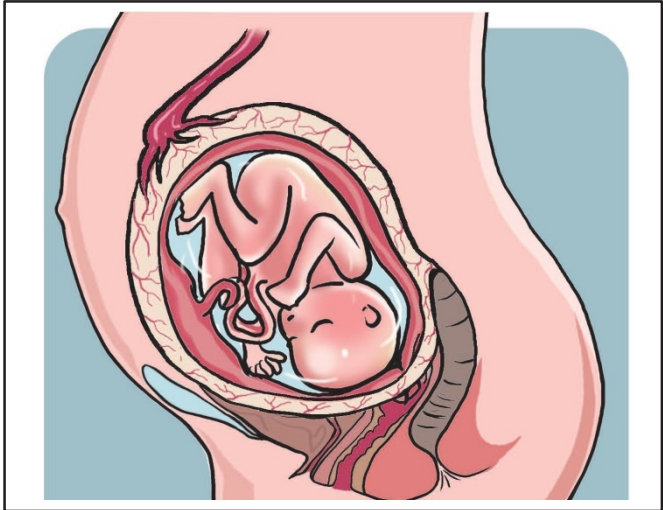
A woman's body makes an egg that travels through one of 2 tubes that we call fallopian tubes, and it comes down in the womb. The father's body makes a seed (sperm). When he and a woman have sex, the man's penis enters the woman's vagina. His sperm travels up into the womb and meets the woman's egg. The egg and seed together form a baby that grows inside the womb. The new baby will grow and develop in the womb for nine months. And this is how pregnancy happens.

## How a Baby Grows

If you could see inside the womb, you would find the baby floating in a bag of water. The baby is connected to the mother by a cord and the placenta which gives the baby nutrition and oxygen. The baby cannot eat or breathe while they are in the womb, so the mother helps with that by eating enough food to feed herself and the growing baby.

### Checking-in with you:

What do you think about all of this? You can write your thoughts, feelings and concerns here:



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## Review Game: What Have You Learned?

Read each of these statements to the group and have each person try to answer it in their mind. Then read the correct response and discuss why that is the correct response. This will help everyone to learn together! The answers to all of these statements are in the section we have just read.

### True/False:

- Not every woman goes through puberty.
- You can feel your pubic bone by putting your hands on your hips.
- The baby grows inside the stomach during pregnancy.
- The woman's egg moves through the man's body to join the sperm.
- During pregnancy the baby gets air and food from the mother.

## II. Now You are Pregnant: Understanding Pregnancy

For those of you in the group that are pregnant for the first time you will find a lot of useful information here. If you are not pregnant, this will help you be prepared for pregnancy in the future.

Now you are pregnant. What does this mean for you?

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Pregnancy and giving birth to a baby is a natural and normal part of life. Deciding when to have children is something that should be discussed between a husband and a wife. This can be hard for a newly married young girls. You may have planned it or this may be a surprise. In either case, it is important to understand the changes in your body and how your body and baby is developing. It is normal to have different feelings and a lot of questions during your pregnancy. This book was prepared to help answer questions a lot of girls have during their first pregnancy.

### Khadija's Story

I was married two years ago when I was 16 years old. I suspected that I was pregnant when my menstruation did not continue after one month of the last menstruation. I was worried and a bit scared. My husband took me to a hospital so I could be tested for pregnancy. I am so glad to know that I know that I am pregnant, because now I can prepare my body and my mind to have a baby. The Group facilitator is very nice and is giving me so much good information about pregnancy. It is helpful to have this guide and to talk to other girls who already have babies. I like to share this information with my husband so he can understand all the changes happening in my body. He will also help prepare the bag of items to take to the hospital when I will give birth. I am much more relaxed now. I know I will be a good mother.

#### **Questions for you:**

Did Khadija practice Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancy (HTSP)? Why or why not??

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How did Khadija feel when she stopped having her period? Why?

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Who helped to support her?

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Who can you ask to help you if you think you might be pregnant?

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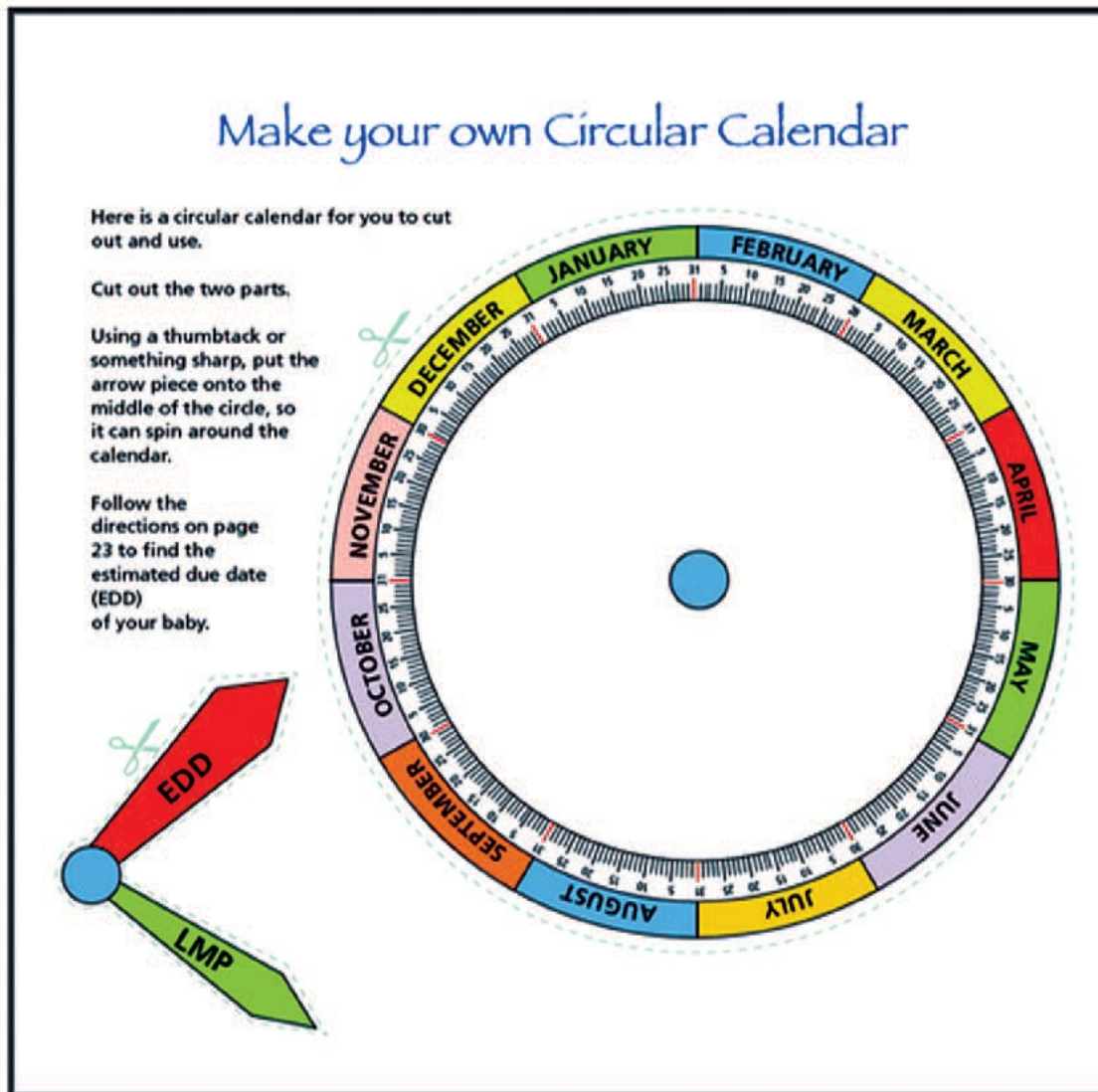
Your body and mind will go through changes as your baby grows before being born. This is why it is important for you to take care of yourself. As soon as possible after learning that you are pregnant, you need to make plans with your husband and family to see a health provider – before the fourth month of pregnancy. You can ask the FCHV in your area where you should go to be seen by a professional health provider. These health workers can be a Staff Nurse, or Auxiliary Nurse Midwife, Maternal Child Health Worker, or Health Assistant. They will help schedule your visits to the health center or facility to monitor your health and your baby's health during your entire pregnancy and after the baby has been born. These visits with the health care provider do not mean that you or your baby is sick. They are meant to make sure that you and your baby are both healthy, growing well, eating enough healthy food, and to answer any questions you may have.

### **Quick Pregnancy Facts:**

- Pregnancy lasts about 280 days, or 40 weeks
- Pregnancy is divided into 3 parts – called trimesters. Each trimester lasts for about three months
- You should see a health care provider early in your pregnancy to make sure you and your baby are doing well
- You should see a health care provider at least 4 times during your pregnancy

## Activity: Make your own Circular Calendar

Make a note on the calendar when you should go to your antenatal visits.

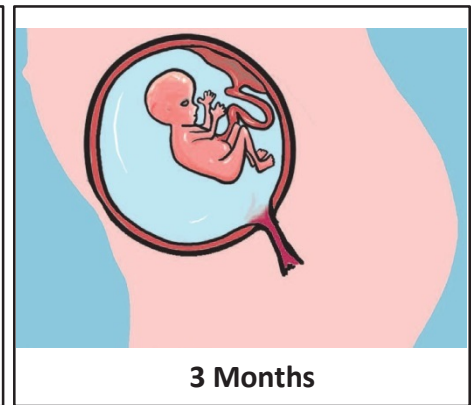
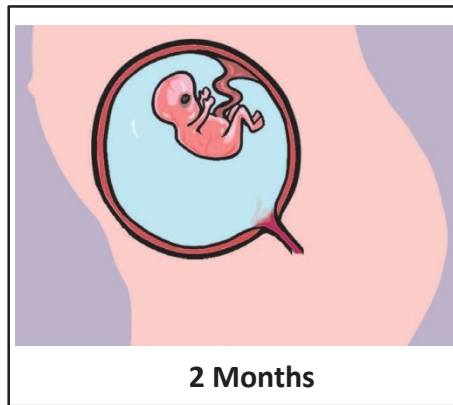




## The First Trimester (Months 1-3)

### Your Baby

Your baby starts out about the size of a grain of rice. He or she will slowly grow arms and legs, eyes, ears, a brain, and a heart. By the end of this trimester, your baby will grow to 7-10 centimeters long. Even though you may not feel it yet, your baby has grown arms and legs that are starting to move.



### Your Body

The first thing you may notice is that you no longer get your regular monthly cycle. You may also feel some or all of these changes or discomforts during the first part of your pregnancy:

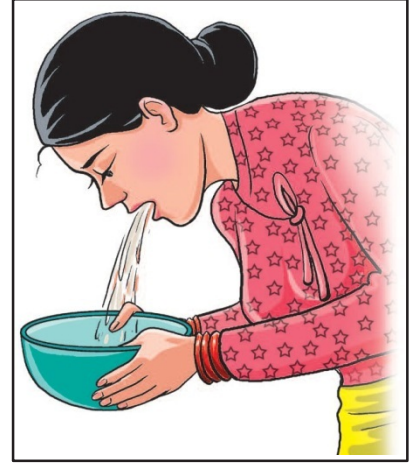
- Tired, feeling dizzy, headaches
- Breasts changing = becoming bigger, feeling sore and sensitive. The area around the nipple may become darker or develop small harmless bumps
- Morning sickness = Feeling sick to your stomach mostly in the mornings, but some girls can feel sick to their stomach all day.
- Some girls feel that they need to vomit. This is a normal part of early pregnancy and it won't last much longer. Drinking ginger tea or chewing on a ginger root can help



If there is a lot of vomiting that lasts for more than 24 hours, if you are feeling faint, dizzy or weak, or have a high fever, strong headache or abdominal pain or bleeding, you will need see a health provider right away.

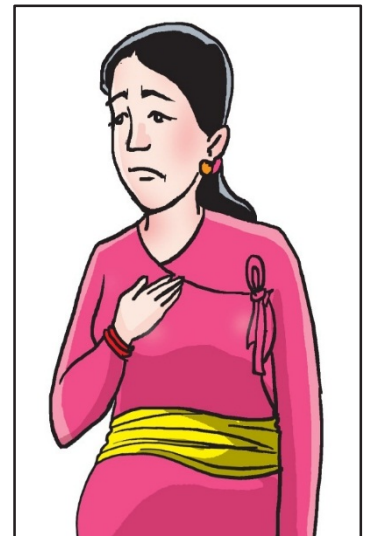
## Other common discomforts most girls experience are:

- Upset stomach or indigestion
- Feeling bloated – like your body is full of water
- Needing to urinate more often
- Wanting to eat specific foods and not wanting to eat other foods that you normally like. Some girls want to eat things that are not food, like clay or starch. Do not eat these, since they can cause you to become very sick.



## Changes in Your Feelings

All adolescent girls go through lots of feelings and emotions. During the first part of your pregnancy your thoughts and feelings will go through changes too. This is partly because of hormones, or chemicals inside everyone's bodies, that change during pregnancy. Your feelings can also change because of the pressures you may feel in your new role and new life. In the beginning of pregnancy, girls may feel happy one moment, and then very sad or even tearful the next moment. This can be frustrating, but is a normal part of pregnancy. And it will get better with time and understanding and experiencing all of these new changes.



### Activity: Skills to cope with changing feelings

It is important that you share your feelings with the girls in your group or another trusted person in your life like your family or your mother in law. There will be many times that you need to just share about difficulties. There will be other times that you just need information. Maybe you feel that you can confide in your Group who can listen to you very well and give you correct information about your pregnancy or tell you where you can go to get the help and information you need.

### Suneeta's Story

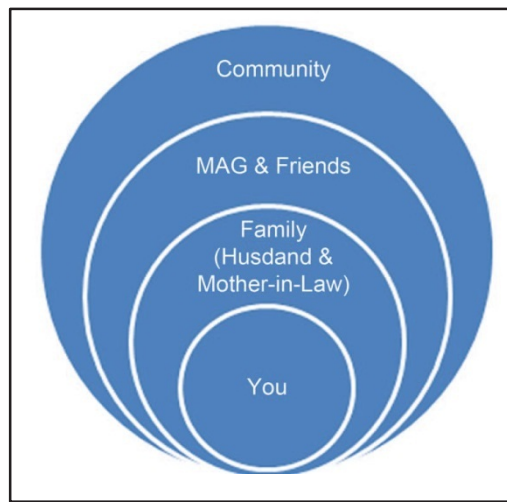
I was scared when I began to throw up every morning and my body started changing and my stomach got bigger. I cried for my safety and whether anyone would help me if I got sick. My husband was away working in Dubai. My mother in law calmed me down, gave me healthy foods and then took me to the health center. I discussed with the nurse about my feelings. She understood my fear and helped answer my questions. She gave me vitamins and told me to come back after a month. I was no longer worried if anyone would help me. Both my mother-in-law and the health worker at the clinic really helped me.

**Questions for you: Have you ever felt the way Suneeta did? What did you do about it?**

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**Activity:**

Take a look at the diagram below. Write on the line how the people in the diagram support you (husband, mother-in-law, and friends). This activity will help you remember that you are never alone during your pregnancy. There are many ways that people close to you might be able to you.



**People Around You**

**Husband:** call you frequently; send pictures, rituals and other traditions, even if he is far away. He should try to be there for the birth of your baby. Let him know that even if he is away, he is very important.

**Mother in law and other family members living in your house:** have correct information, help you get to your appointments, be aware of your health, let you rest and not work hard, be supportive and caring.

**Your mother:** visit her if you can, let her know how you are doing

**Support Group and Friends:** listen to you, share their stories about what they are going through, help you to talk through problems you may have, help you do some work you can't do right now.

**FCHV:** check in on you to make sure you are okay, help you with transportation to the health center.

Write on the line how the people in the diagram support you: Your husband, mother-in-law, friends, family, group member, and other trusted people

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## Your First Antenatal Visit

With all of the changes happening with your body as your baby grows, it is important for you to visit a health care worker to have antenatal visits.

It is best to have your first visit with the health worker early on in your pregnancy—no later than your 4th month. During this visit, the health worker will ask about your health and ask if you have ever been pregnant before. They may also ask you questions about your family's health. If you take any medicine, herbal remedies, or vitamins, you should tell the health worker about this too. Your provider may also test you for any Sexually Transmitted Infections (we also refer to these as STIs, see Section VII for more information on STIs).

During your first visit the worker will do an examination on your body to feel the size of your womb. They may take tests on your blood and urine to check for any health problems. They should also give you vitamins to be taken every day during pregnancy and an additional 45 tablets to take after the baby is born to help provide you with extra nutrition for you and your baby. These vitamins contain helpful things like minerals like folic acid, iron, and calcium that are especially important for the baby's growth and development. They will also give you a first injection of TT that will protect your baby from getting serious infections after s/he is born. This first visit is a great time to ask the health worker about any questions or concerns you might have about being pregnant and any special information about being a pregnant adolescent. It is a good idea to have a list of questions prepared before your first visit.

List your questions for the health worker here

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Ideally you should have 4 antenatal visits at the health center during your pregnancy. You can mark the dates for these visits on the calendar you made.

### Ankita's Story

When my mother in law took me to the health center for my first visit, I was so scared. I was shaking! I had never been to a health center before, and I heard from other girls that the provider was not very nice to the girls. I was worried that she would think I was too young to be pregnant. When we got there, the provider greeted us with a big smile. I was so surprised! She sat down to listen to me away from other people in a separate room. She was very friendly and let me ask all the questions I wanted. And she told me that it was normal to have these worries about my body. The provider listened to my worries. I was so happy that people cared so much about me having a healthy baby. Now I don't feel alone.

**Questions for you:**

How did this story make you feel?

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Have you heard stories from other girls about going for their first antenatal care visit?

What did they say?

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Have you gone for a visit to a health center?

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How did you feel treated by the provider that you saw at the health center?

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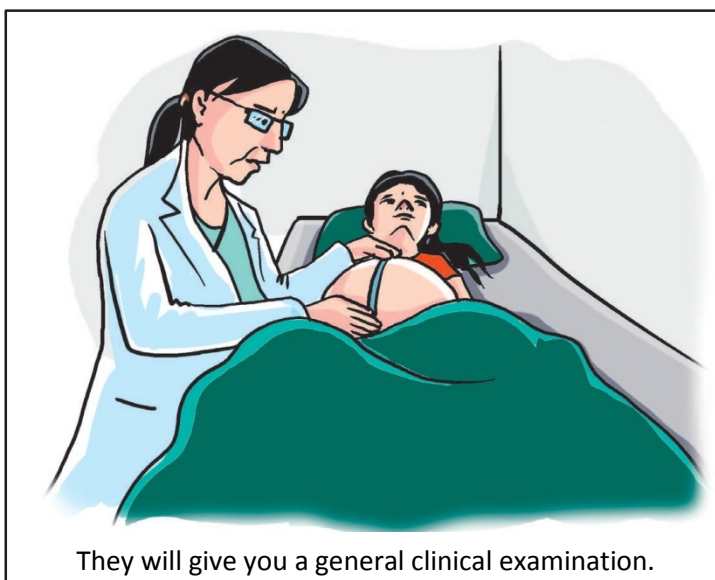
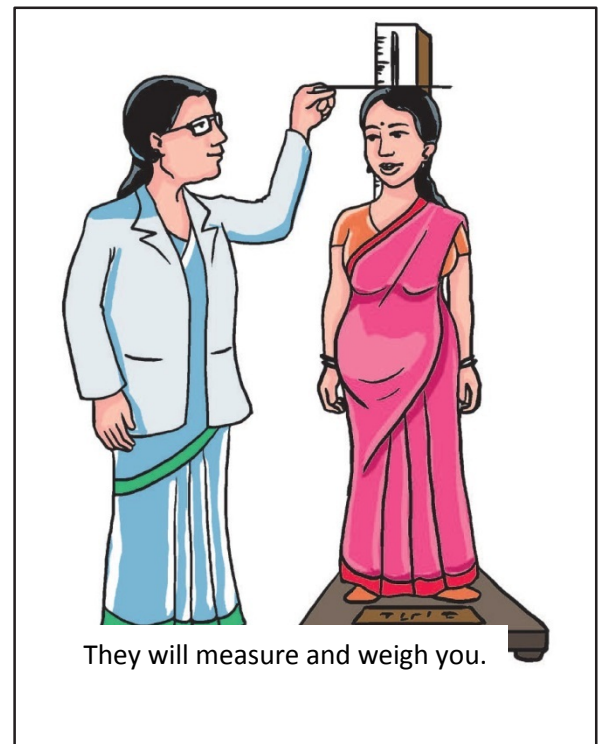
If not would you like to go visit one?

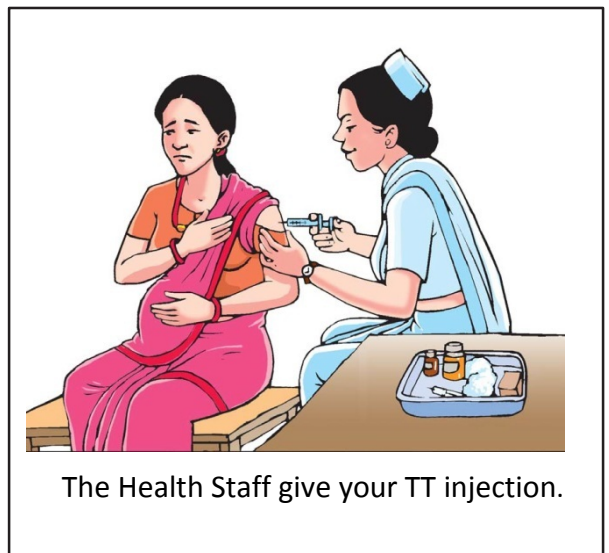
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## What to Expect at the Health Center

When you go to the health center, these are the things that normally happen:

- 1) The health staff will take your information and register you
- 2) They will measure and weigh you and take your blood pressure
- 3) They will give you a general examination and feel the size of your womb and listen for the baby's heartbeat.
- 4) At some health facilities, they can take blood and urine samples for various tests.
- 5) They provide TT injection
- 6) They will give you vitamins that you will take every day, even after you have your baby.





## Things to avoid while you are pregnant:

- Avoid people who smoke or places with a lot of people who smoke. Try to keep windows open when cooking indoors as the smoke from the stove is not good for you or your baby to breathe.
- There are some herbs and medicines you should avoid. Talk to the FCHV or health provider at the health center about this if you have questions.
- Avoid people who are sick with a cough, flu or a fever. You don't want to get any of these illnesses during pregnancy.
- If possible avoid lifting and carrying very heavy loads. Talk with your husband and mother-in-law about which household responsibilities are safe for you to do while you are pregnant.



Carrying heavy loads



Avoid smoking



Avoid alcohol



## Pratima's Story

Once my stomach started to feel strange, I was very worried. I did not know who to talk to, and so I talked to my mother in law. She took me to the health post. When we found out I was pregnant, I was very happy but also I felt like crying since I felt all alone without my parents or my husband. I continued to work in the fields as before, but my mother in law made sure I rested a lot. She was so good to me – she made sure I did not travel, and she made sure I did not carry heavy loads. She took me to the market to buy many fresh fruits and vegetables and rice and dahl. She made a calendar with me, counting back from the estimated date of birth. That way we knew which days to go to the health center, when to pack the bags. We discussed how I would get to the hospital. We even made a list of danger signs and put it on the wall in the house so we would remember them just in case. I was so happy to have a plan to the health center in enough time to have my baby. I am so lucky to have a mother in law who helped me to be healthy during pregnancy. Now I am not worried at all!

### **Questions for you:**

What do you agree with about what Pratima's mother in law did when Pratima was pregnant?

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What foods are good for you to eat during pregnancy?

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Who can help you to make a plan?

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## Things to do while you are pregnant:

- Eat a variety of healthy foods like: grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, milk, yogurt, cheese, meats, beans, and dahl.
- Drink a lot of water, at least 6-8 glasses (1-2 mana) a day.
- Make your first pregnancy visit with a health worker (Medical Officer, Staff nurse, Auxiliary Nurse Midwife, Maternal Child Health Worker).
- Take your antenatal vitamins.

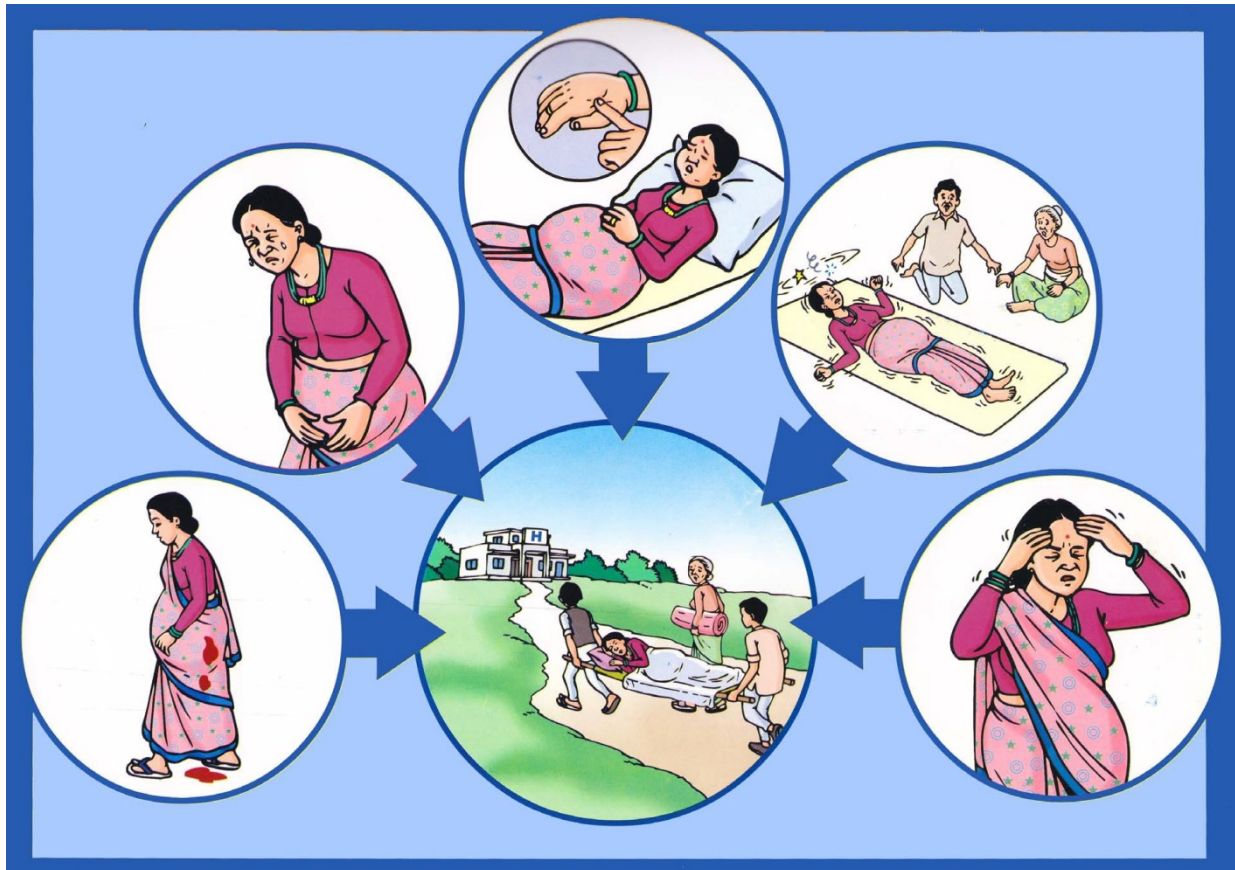


- Sleep under Insecticide Treated Net (ITN) to prevent malaria or dengue infection.
- Stay active and move your body regularly.
- Try to rest when you are feeling tired.
- Gently brush your teeth at least twice a day. Some girls have problems with their gums during pregnancy. It is not unusual to notice bleeding gums. Gentle brushing can help keep the gums stay clean and strong.

## Danger Signs

As you have learned, you may experience a lot of changes and discomforts during the first trimester of pregnancy. However, there are certain things that are signs of a danger to you and your baby's health.

These are signs of an emergency when you should go to the hospital as soon as possible:



### Danger Signs in Pregnancy

- Severe headache,
- Seizure and convulsion
  - a) Blurring vision and
  - b) Swelling of face and hand
- Severe abdominal pain
- Bleeding per vagina during any trimester
- offensive/foul smelling discharge from vagina
- Fever
- Difficulty in breathing
- Coughing up blood
- Nausea or vomiting that does not stop

## Group Activity: Questions You May Have

### **"It is important for me to go to my antenatal visits. How can I get there?"**

This is a very good question. You can speak with your husband or mother-in-law about resources and transportation to bring you to your visits. Friends or family members who have been pregnant before may also know about ways to go to your antenatal visits.

### **"Is it safe for me to work?"**

It is healthy to keep your body active during pregnancy. In a normal pregnancy, there is no need to stop doing the activities you usually do, except for lifting and carrying heavy things. It is important to talk with a health care worker about the type of work you do and if it is safe to do this during your pregnancy. It is also important to rest when you feel tired as often as possible. Share this information with your family and discuss how they can support you to reduce your daily workload.

### **What about lifting heavy objects?**

Is it true a pregnant woman should not lift anything heavier than 12 kg, one bucket of water, 3 pathi cereals? Not completely true....but not false either. Later in pregnancy the ability to safely lift heavy things decreases, mostly because of changes in the body's balance. There is a risk to your back and muscles if you have to lift a heavy load. This will probably not harm to the pregnancy or the baby but could cause you pain and lead to uterine prolapse when you are older. Health workers usually recommend decreasing the amount of weight you can safely carry in the 2nd and 3rd trimesters.

### **"How much weight will I gain during my pregnancy?"**

Most girls should gain no more than 11 - 18 kilograms during their pregnancy. Part of this weight gain is due to the baby, but most of it is from the extra fluid and changes that your body makes for the baby to grow. It is important to eat healthy foods and not to eat too little so your baby grows the right size. Your body does need more food now, so eating one extra meal per day is recommended during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

### **"Is it safe to have sexual relations during pregnancy?"**

For most girls, it is safe to have relations during pregnancy. Having sexual relations is not harmful to the baby or to your body. Talk with your husband about this because you or your husband may have strong feelings about having relations during pregnancy. Having sexual relations should be a decision you and your husband make together. You can also ask a health care worker about your concerns.

### **"I heard that there is discharge (wetness) from my vagina during pregnancy. Is this true?"**

A white discharge on your underwear is a normal part of pregnancy. You should not feel embarrassed about this. You can wear a sanitary napkin/clean cloth, but do not use tampons, douches, deodorants, or perfumes to cover the smell. You should talk to a health care worker if the discharge is a different color or smells badly or has fluid leaking as this could be a sign of a problem or a Sexually Transmitted Infection.

## Activity: How Your Family Can Help

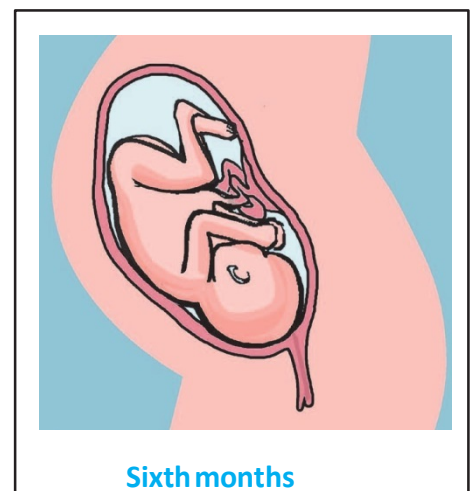
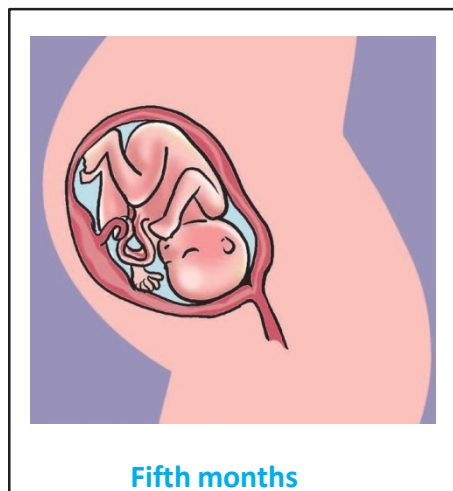
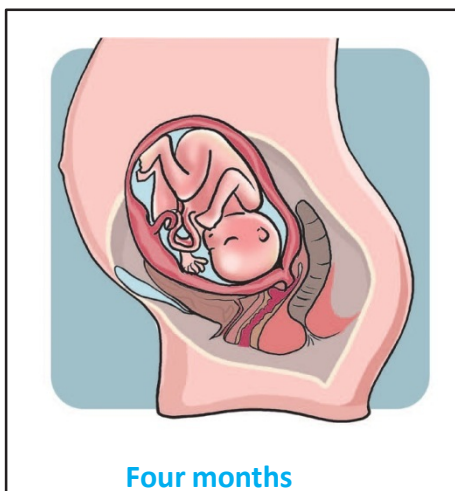
Hopefully working with the other girls in your Group has helped you feel more comfortable talking about your feelings and needs with your husband and his family. You could share the information you get from the health worker and from this Guide and group discussions with them and explain what you have learned about how to take care of yourself and avoid activities that may harm you or your growing baby. Discuss how you can continue to help with household chores during pregnancy and what actions you should avoid. Discuss the normal changes to your body and your feelings that you are experiencing. Review danger signs and signs of complications with them.



## The Second Trimester (Months 4-6)

### Your Baby

Your baby grows very quickly during this trimester. By the end of the second trimester, your baby will be over 30 centimeters long and weigh about a half a kilo. Your baby has some hair on his or her head and eyelashes. You will also begin to feel the baby move inside of your belly. By the end of this trimester, you should feel your baby moving every day.



## Your Body

As your baby grows, so will your body grow and change during this trimester. You will continue to have some of the changes you had during your first trimester, but you may also experience:

- The baby moving
- White discharge from your vagina that does not smell or itch
- Feeling hungrier
- Feeling out of breath
- Stuffy nose or nose bleeds
- Swollen ankles, feet, veins in your legs.
- Backaches
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Small amounts of liquid (milk) start coming from your nipples (this is normal)

## Your Feelings

You will continue to have changing moods and feelings from the hormones of pregnancy but also the pressures you might be feeling in the house. You may even be used to them by now. You may even start to feel happier because your baby is growing and your morning sickness may be gone, but you may also be scared to think about having your baby. These feelings are all normal and all girls and women have these feelings, even if they have had several children already. Try and discuss your feelings and fears with your husband and the girls in your group or find a friend that you can talk to about these things.

### Activity:

This is a good time to set new life goals for yourself and your new baby and for the life you want to have with your husband. What kind of parents will you be? What is important for you? Remember that valuing yourself will help you to make decisions and to face hard times.

#### **Checking-in with you:**

What is your best memory from when you were a child?

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What is your biggest wish for this baby?

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What do you want this baby to be when it grows up?

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**Questions for your husband:**

What kind of dad do you want to be?

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What is the most important thing you want to do for this child?

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What is the one thing you can do to support me during this pregnancy?

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**Let's Talk About Breastfeeding**

We talked about how you may experience small drops of liquid coming from your nipples. This is early breast milk and it is normal for this to happen now. We want you to know about how to best feed your baby. Breastfeeding is the best way to feed your baby. It protects your baby from many infections because it is full of things that fight illness that could be dangerous for your baby. We will talk more about breastfeeding later. Bottle and formula feeding is never as good as mother's milk. Many babies get very sick from drinking formula mixed with unsafe water.

**Neena's Story**

I had a very difficult pregnancy. I felt horrible sometimes in the morning and stopped eating very much. I had lower back pain and just wanted to sleep all day. Food tasted very different to me. I was terrified because I did not know what was happening to me. The girls in the Group calmed me down, and told me that this was normal and that I should just try to eat like normal and that these feelings would pass. They were absolutely right!! After three months I started feeling okay again, and felt very healthy. This taught me to trust the girls in Group because they have the correct information. If there is every any question they don't know, then we can always ask the FCHV.

**Questions for you:**

Have you ever felt the way Neena did?

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Who did you talk with to get the information you needed?

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Have you ever asked a question in your group? How did the other girls help you?

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## Your Second Antenatal Visit

Your second visit will be similar to the first. Your weight and blood pressure will be taken. They will measure your belly to check the growth of your baby. They may also be able to check the baby's heartbeat if they have a special tool (fetus scope) to hear it. They will also look at your hands and feet for swelling. They may check your urine again as well. Remember to ask the health care worker about any questions you have. This is also a good time to think of questions you might have about delivering the baby.

### Questions you May Have:

**"The baby moves all night and I can't sleep. What can I do?"**

It is normal, no need to worry. It is a sign that the baby is healthy.

**"I've heard a lot of scary stories about giving birth. Are these stories true?"**

All scary stories are not true. Many stories come from lack of information and fear about pregnancy and childbirth. Having the right information and knowledge from your health provider and this guide can help you relax. Pregnancy is special. Plan for a healthy pregnancy and a safe delivery by making a birth plan (we will learn much more about this in the next section).

**"I feel more tired than I did earlier on in my pregnancy. Is this normal?"**

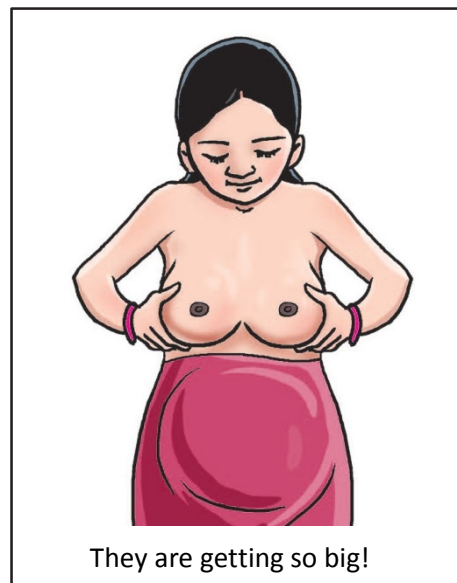
"Feeling tired in pregnancy is normal and happens to everyone. This is because your body is changing to make sure your growing baby is getting enough food and oxygen. You are also carrying the extra weight of your growing baby. This is why it is important to rest regularly.

**"When will I know if the baby is a boy or a girl?"**

Because the test to detect the sex of the baby is usually not done in Nepal, you will probably not know this until your baby is born.

"I feel so uncomfortable. Sometimes I have lower back pain, indigestion, leg cramps, difficulty in breathing, vomiting, lack of appetite, swelling in hands and legs. Is there anything I can do to make me feel better?"

Share how you feel with family members and peers. Most of these discomforts are very common in pregnancy, and usually are not serious. But if any of these last for long time, consult with health workers. Sometimes just having someone listening to you can help you feel better.



Talk about these questions and other questions you may have with your Group, your husband,



mother-in-law, or other family members and friends. Think of these questions before your antenatal visit so that you can ask the health worker.

Write down questions for your health care worker here:

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### How Your Family Can Help

Remember to share the new information you get from the other girls in your Group and the health worker with your husband and your family. Explain to them what you have learned about how to take care of yourself and avoid activities that may harm you or your growing baby. Review with them about healthy foods for you. Discuss how you can continue to help with household chores during this stage of pregnancy and what actions, medications and other things you should avoid. Discuss the normal changes your body is experiencing and feelings you are having. Review danger signs and signs of complications with them.

***Be sure to get help if you experience:***

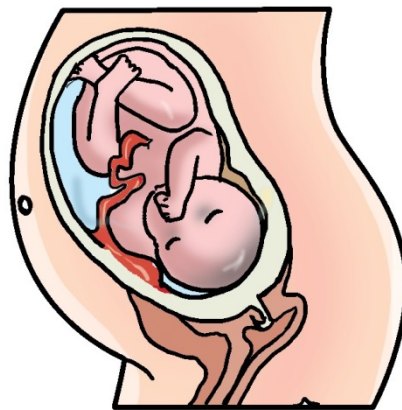
- Heavy bleeding through your vagina that soaks through a pad
- Fluid that looks like water coming out of your vagina
- Sweating and chills with a fever over 38 degrees Celsius
- Strong pain at the top of your belly that does not go away
- You don't feel your baby moving for more than 24 hours
- Strong headache that doesn't go away after 2 or 3 hours

## The Last Three Months (Months 7-9)

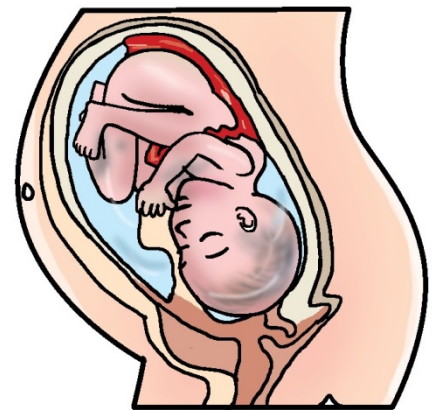
### Your Baby



7 Months



8 Months



9 Months

You have been doing such a great job taking care of yourself and your baby, and now he or she is almost ready to be born. At this time, your baby in your belly really looks like a real developed baby. In your womb, your baby can now see, hear, cry, and even suck its thumb. The baby's brain and lungs are still developing during these last weeks. By the time the baby is ready to be born; he or she will probably be 45 to 50 cm long and weigh 2900g for girl babies and 3010g for boy babies.

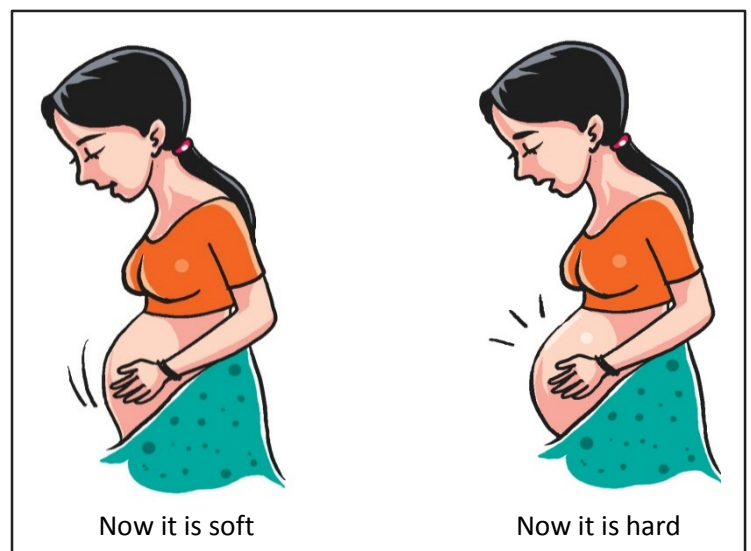
### Your Body

You may feel more discomfort during this last part of your pregnancy since you and your baby have grown. Additional changes in this trimester may include:

- Feeling your baby kick and move often
- More white discharge from your vagina
- Leg cramps
- Sharp pain in your groin area, especially when lifting, turning or carrying something heavy
- More difficulty breathing because the baby is higher and close to your lungs.

This is also normal

- Belly button sticking out
- Cramping of your womb and your stomach feeling hard and tight. This can last up to 60 seconds and happen many times during the day. These are called contractions and usually are not painful. We will discuss much more about contractions later in this section.
- Towards the end of this trimester, your baby drops down lower in your body to prepare for birth, you can breathe easier, but you will probably have to urinate more frequently.



Now it is soft

Now it is hard

## Your Feelings

Different mothers to be will have many different types of feelings and they can change every day! Adolescent mothers to be like you might also have special feelings in the few months leading up to the birth. Your feelings are special for you and it is important that you have someone who really cares about your feelings. You need to feel trust in yourself, in them and learn to share your feelings with your friends and your family so they can help you feel not so alone. You may be tired, excited, nervous, happy, or a mix of all of these feelings. Get as much rest as you can and take care of your body, and start imagining what your baby will be like to help ease your mind. Share your feelings with your husband or other family or friends. Remember to ask your health worker, family, and friends any questions you might have.



### **Checking-in with you:**

How has your pregnancy been going so far? Are you happy, scared, and excited about your delivery?

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## Your Last 2 Antenatal Visits

As you get closer to the birth of your baby, it is important to see a health care worker at least one more time in your pregnancy. During your visits, the health worker will continue to check your weight, blood pressure, and listen for the baby's heartbeat. They will also examine the size and position of your baby in your womb.

This is the time to talk with the health worker about signs and symptoms of labor to help you and your family understand when you are in labor and when you are about to give birth. Labor is the process of having your baby from when contractions start to the delivery of your baby. Don't worry; we will learn more about this later in this guide. It is important to understand when you are in labour so you can have a plan to go to your health center, where you can ensure a healthy delivery. If you have to deliver your baby at home, ask your provider what supplies and other things you need to for you and your baby to have a safe and clean birth at home.

**Remember** - have a plan with your family for getting a skilled birth attendant to help you through your labor and delivery if you cannot get to a facility.

This visit is a really good time to talk to your provider about:

- Healthy timing of your next pregnancy,
- How to avoid another pregnancy
- Which family planning methods are available,
- Which family planning methods would be easy for you to use,
- When you should begin using a family planning method.
- Exclusive breastfeeding of your baby
- When to come back to see your provider after your baby is born

Write down your questions for the health care worker here:

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## Preparing for Birth

You and your husband or other family members should do some things to get ready as it gets closer to the time for you to give birth to your baby. While most babies are born after nine months, you should be prepared in case your baby is born earlier than expected. Have a plan, make sure you have transportation to get you to the facility where you will deliver your baby and decide who will accompany you there. It is safest for you and the baby to be at the health facility for the delivery. Ask your family to support you in the decision to deliver at the health facility. Remember to bring your pregnancy record with you to the facility and be sure to tell your provider of any health or medical problems you or the baby have had during your pregnancy.



### Kamala's Story

When it was getting close to the time to have my baby, I was getting very uncomfortable because my stomach was stretched so much. I could not eat very much because the baby was pressing down on my stomach. I had to go to the bathroom a lot. I was also worried about the safety of my baby. I learned in the Group that it is important to deliver my baby at the health center. But then my mother in law convinced me to deliver at home. This is what most girls do with no problems. I do think that if there had been an extra-long labor, my mother in law would have tried to get me to the hospital, although she and my husband did not have a plan for this. I am very lucky that I had no problems and the midwife had all the right things she needed for a healthy delivery for me and my baby. Now I have a lovely baby boy! I think that next time I have a baby, I will deliver at the facility.

#### Questions for you:

How are you feeling now in your pregnancy?

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Where are you planning on having your baby?

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If you must deliver at home, what is your plan if you have problems with your delivery or the baby?

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Do you feel like Kamala did?

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#### Delivery at the Health Facility – things to bring with you:

- Your pregnancy record/card
- Food and something to drink for you and your family
- Money for any necessary supplies and to pay for transportation back home from the Ama program
- Clean and dry clothes for you and your new baby from the Nano Jhola program
- Blood donors

## **If you must deliver at home - preparing your home for a delivery:**

You and your family may have decided to deliver the baby at home. It is safest for you and your baby to deliver at a health facility. Giving birth at a facility makes sure that you will have any problems or complications taken care of right away if you or your baby needs it. However, this may not be possible for you. You can prepare for a deliver at home so it will be as safe as possible for you and your baby. You should have a skilled birth attendant present to help you through your labor and delivery and to help if there are any problems with your baby. Your FCHV can help you find a skilled birth attendant in your village. If you deliver your baby at home, you should have money saved and a way to call for medical help if there are complications with your delivery. The sooner you can reach a facility, the better for you and the baby.

### **For a delivery at home you want to make sure you have these things:**

- A copy of your pregnancy record for the skilled birth attendant to read
- Plenty of hot and clean water
- A clean, warm and dry room or space to deliver the baby
- A delivery kit and any other necessary medications and supplies available – clean towels and blankets for the baby
- Clean clothes for yourself to put on after the baby is born.
- A plan and money for transportation to a health facility in case of complications

### **For a delivery at home, you want to make sure that your baby will have these things:**

- Hygiene items
- Clean, dry clothing
- A warm place to rest and sleep away from open windows
- Clean, dry cloths or towels to wrap baby

### **Questions You May Have:**

These are questions most mothers-to-be have before giving birth. You should add your own questions and discuss with your group and your provider or FCHV.

#### **"Is it going to be painful giving birth?"**

Most mothers will tell you that labor is painful. But the pain is not constant and you can relax between contractions. Having a trusted person or supportive family member with you at all times can help you relax and this will help to cope with labor pains.

#### **"Will the baby tear my body? Are there any ways to avoid this?"**

Some new mothers will tell you that they had some tearing of the birth canal when the baby came out. This does not happen to everyone. You can help avoid this by pushing with your contractions, and be in a comfortable position for you. Some women like to sit upright, squat down or lie on their side when they deliver the baby. This can help to avoid having a tear. If you do have a tear, your health worker may need to put in some stitches to help it heal. The healing usually takes up to 6 weeks. You should not start having relations with your husband until the tear heals because it can open again and become infected. If this happens, you will need to go to a health worker right away for treatment.

#### **"How will I know that the baby is hungry?"**

Most mothers will tell you that they learned to understand when their babies are hungry within a week after the delivery. Some babies are very tired from the birth process and won't be hungry for a day or two. It is still important to put them to your breast to nurse every 2 – 4 hours to help your milk production start and get the baby used to breastfeeding. You will soon learn other signs from your baby, like when s/he is happy, tired, or needs to have their cloths changed. Your baby is also learning how to tell you what s/he needs and wants.

#### **"Will my body ever go back to how it was after I gave birth?"**

Most mothers will tell you that you will probably never feel exactly the same after giving birth. Pregnancy, birth and becoming a mother produced many changes in your body and your feelings. Your breasts and stomach grew bigger and it can take up to six months for them to get smaller again. You may have stretch marks on your breasts and belly and these do not go away, but they get smaller and less visible over time. The muscles in your birth canal had to stretch to let the baby come out. They usually will be strong and tight again after what is called the postpartum period. This period lasts 6 weeks or 42 days.

#### **"Will my feelings and moods change after I give birth?"**

Most new mothers will have many new feelings and moods after giving birth. Your body is going through changes since it no longer needs some of the hormones it needed to keep you and your baby healthy during pregnancy and birth. You will probably be very tired after the delivery and this can last for several weeks. Because you need to get up and feed your new baby every 2 – 4 hours, you will not be getting as much sleep as you need. Lack of sleep can cause you to feel sad, angry, or unhappy. It is important to know that all new mothers have these feelings and they will go away as the baby grows and can sleep through the night. Remember – you will feel more confident in your new skills as a mother. But you need a lot of support from your family to help you trust your new skills. Please talk to your husband, your family, your

Group or other family and friends about these feelings. They can help you learn how to cope with them and reassure you that this is a normal part of motherhood. Ask your family to support you in getting the rest and nutrition you need to help you feel strong and healthy after the delivery.

**Remember/Review:**

- Think of something that makes you happy and try to relax and know that you will soon be holding your baby.
- Try and go to all four of your antenatal visits to check that both you and your baby are doing well. Get enrolled in the Amma and Nano Jhola programs
- Eat a variety of foods and take your antenatal vitamins and iron tablets every day.
- Drink 6 – 8 glasses of water/liquid a day.
- Get plenty of rest and try not to lift or carry things that feel very heavy to you.
- Talk to your family about how you can contribute to household chores during your pregnancy so you can rest and eat enough.
- Have a plan and enough money and transportation to bring you to the facility where you will give birth or a clean, warm and dry place at home where a skilled birth attendant can deliver your baby.
- Discuss what contractions feel like with your health care worker or FCHV and know when to go to the facility for delivery or call the FCHV or skilled birth attendant to come to your house.
- Know the danger signs of pregnancy and childbirth and seek help right away if you have any of the danger signs.
- Start thinking about Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancies and what kind of contraception/ you will use.

**Activities**

**How Your Family can help**

Continue to share the new information you get from the health worker and from this guide and your Group discussions with your husband and your family. Explain to them what you have learned about the signs of labor and decide on a plan on where you will deliver the baby – at the facility or at home. Discuss the normal changes to your body and your feelings.. Review danger signs and signs of complications with them. Make a plan for delivery and have all the necessary food, clothing and other items you need for you and the baby. Remember – you are not alone. Share your feelings and concerns with your husband and family and ask for their support and advice.

*Checking-in with you:*

What are you thinking about right now? Express your feelings and concerns here:

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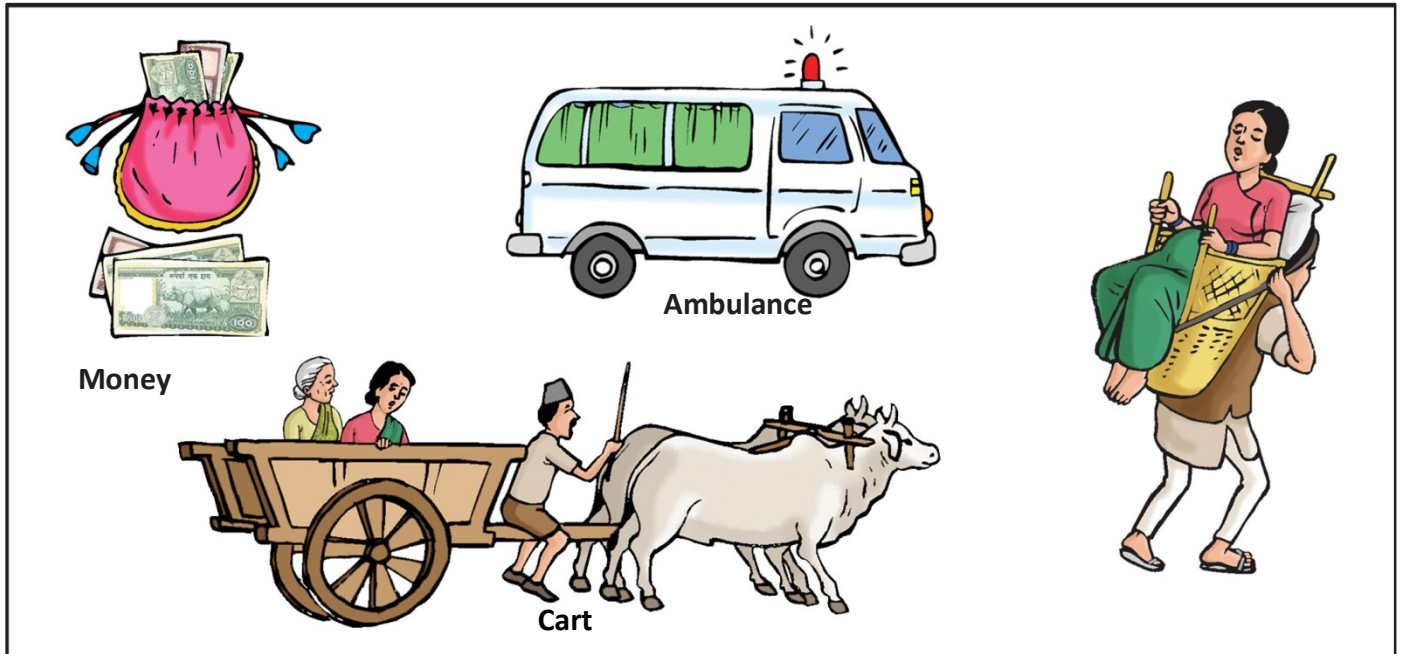
How do you want your family to help you?

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## Activity: Make a Birth Plan

Write down all the things you will need for the birth that we discussed (look at the picture below to help you remember). Discuss with your husband and family and make a list of what you need to have.



My delivery is expected to be around (date) :

.....

### For health facility delivery:

My family and I have arranged to deliver at \_\_\_\_\_ health facility. My family and I have arranged transport with \_\_\_\_\_ and have (money) to buy supplies that we may need.

I have made sure I can receive transport through the Aama program.

I have enrolled in the voucher program.

#### I have made sure that I have the following items for my delivery:

- Pregnancy record
- Clean dry clothing
- Cloths to wrap the baby/hygiene items
- Food and drink for myself and my family

## For home delivery:

I have arranged with \_\_\_\_\_ (birth attendant/FCHV) to help me deliver my baby\_\_\_\_\_. I can contact the birth attendant by\_\_\_\_\_. My family members that will be there to support me during labor and delivery \_\_\_\_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_ In case of emergency, my family will contact\_\_\_\_\_.

### I have made sure that I have the following items for my delivery:

- Clean delivery supplies
- Medicines
- Clean dry clothing
- A warm place lie down away from open windows
- Cloths to wrap the baby/ hygiene items
- Clean water
- Food

## III. Stages of Labor: The Birthing Process

- 1. Reminder/Review:** Plan ahead for the birth process. How will you get to the health facility? Who will go with you? What will you bring with you (clothes for you and the baby, snacks, something to drink)? If you must deliver at home, make sure you have necessary medications and supplies available.
- 2. Am I in labor?** Labor usually starts with contractions. Contractions are cramps or pains in the lower part of your belly making it feel hard and tight. They usually last between 30 and 60 seconds in early labor. You may have already had small, painless contractions during the last months of your pregnancy that come and go several times a day. This is normal and is not a sign of labor. Labor contractions are different. They become stronger, longer, and painful; they come back every 5 – 10 minutes, and don't go away after 2 hours.

It is not possible to know exactly when labor will begin. It is usually between your 38th and 40th week of pregnancy. You may notice a pink-bloody discharge coming from the vagina, which can come a few hours or days before labor starts. Sometimes labor starts when your bag of water breaks and there is leaking or gushing from the vagina of the fluid. These are signs that you are in labor and will give birth usually within 6 – 24 hours.

**Remember** - It is important for you to know that labor is a normal, natural and different experience for every girl. Labor usually starts very slowly with a few regular contractions an hour for a few hours and then become stronger, last longer and come every 5-10 minutes. Every contraction helps move the baby farther down in the birth canal. Contractions will last longer and become more painful as labor progresses. You will have time between contractions to rest and relax before the next contraction begins, but as you get closer to delivery, you may only have a minute or two between your contractions. It is important to try and drink water or other liquid to keep your strength between contractions.

### Mother in Law's Story

We arranged with the traditional birth attendant to come to the house when the time was near for her to deliver the baby. There was a great delay in the baby coming out and we were very worried that the baby might be hurt. Then the baby was born with the cord around its neck. Luckily this was not a problem for the birth attendant. She told me it was very common and was able to manage it, but I wish we had taken the daughter to the hospital anyway.

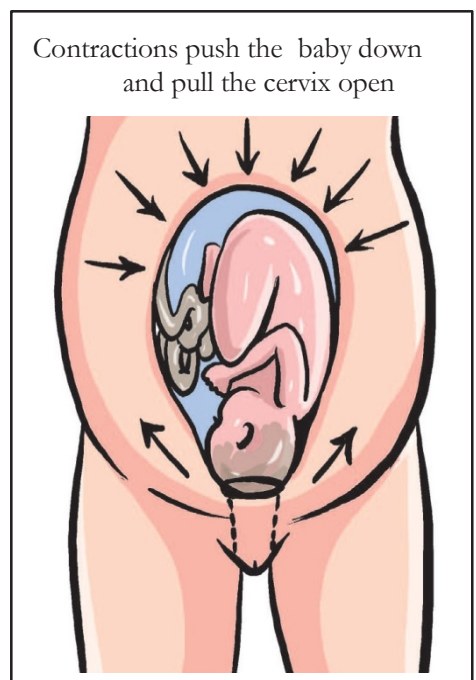


There are 3 stages of labor 1) the womb is opening up and the baby is moving down into the birth canal and the cervix opens up, 2) the baby is pushed out and delivered, 3) the placenta is pushed out and delivered.

## Stages of Labor

### 1st Stage:

The contractions you are feeling are making your cervix open so the baby can come out of the uterus. In the beginning of labor the cervix is only open about the size of your fingertip and you may feel pain in your back or strong menstrual like cramps. The first stage is usually the longest stage of labor and can last up to 20 hours. At the end of the first stage, the cervix will open to 10 cm and the baby is ready to be pushed out of the birth canal. In the beginning of the first stage the contractions last from 30 – 45 seconds long and come every 5 – 20 minutes, then they come every 5 minutes and last from 40-60 seconds. At the end of the first stage, your contractions will be very strong and come every 1 -2 minutes and last for up to 2 minutes. When this happens, it is time to start to push. Taking deep breaths helps you get through this stage: take a deep breath in through your nose and then blow out slowly through your



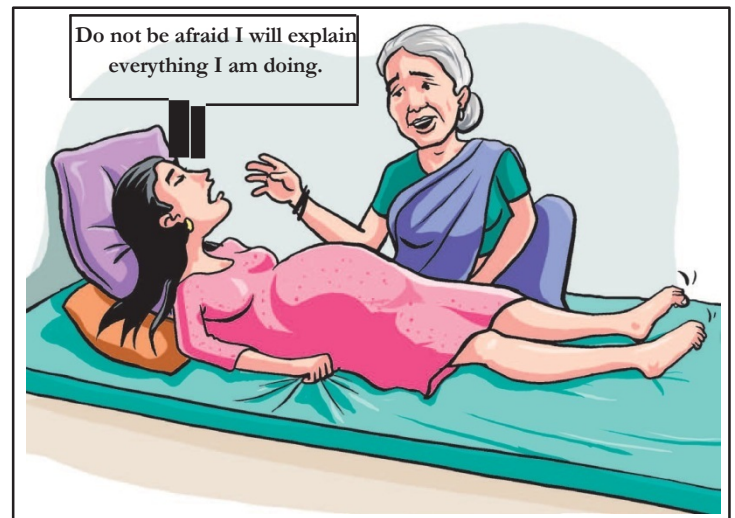
mouth during your contractions. When your bag of water breaks or your contractions are about 10 minutes apart you need to get to the health facility. If you must deliver at home, you should call for the birth attendant to come when your contractions occur every 5 minutes and last from 40-60 seconds.

**How to take care of yourself during the first stage:** Try to rest between contractions. Sip water or juice if you want to. Have someone wipe your face with a cool towel. Imagine yourself strong, happy and holding your baby in just a few minutes.

## Second Stage:

When your cervix is open 10 cm, you will probably feel like pushing down like you need to move your bowels. This is natural and helps to push the baby out of the birth canal. The pressure of the baby's head in the birth canal makes you want to push down. You may feel very tired now with some nausea and cramping in your legs. This is normal, and you are almost finished! It can take between 15 minutes and 4 hours to push the baby out.

You will need to try and push down as hard as you can during your contractions. Taking a deep breath in through your mouth and blowing it out hard can help make it easier for you to push down. It is normal to push between 1 and 3 times during a contraction. Each contraction and push will help move the baby closer to being born, so it is important to push every time if you can. You may feel a stinging or burning sensation when the baby's head comes out. Hold on – you are almost there. During the next few contractions, the rest of the baby's body will come out and you will be a new mother. As soon as the baby comes out, it is good for both you and the baby to have the baby put directly on your chest while the birth attendant dries the baby and cuts the umbilical cord.



**How to take care of yourself during the second stage:** Continue to rest between contractions. Sip water or juice if you want to. Have someone wipe your face with a cool towel. Imagine yourself strong, happy and holding your baby in just a few minutes.

## Danger signs of Labor:

### *Be sure to get help if:*

1. More than 12 hour of labor pain
2. The baby is coming feet first or the cord comes out before the baby.
3. Fits/convulsions
4. Heavy bleeding per vagina
5. You are in labor or your water broke more than 3 weeks before your due date – the baby may need extra help if it comes early
6. You have a severe headache or blurry vision
7. You feel too weak to continue pushing
8. Your placenta has not come out an hour after the baby born

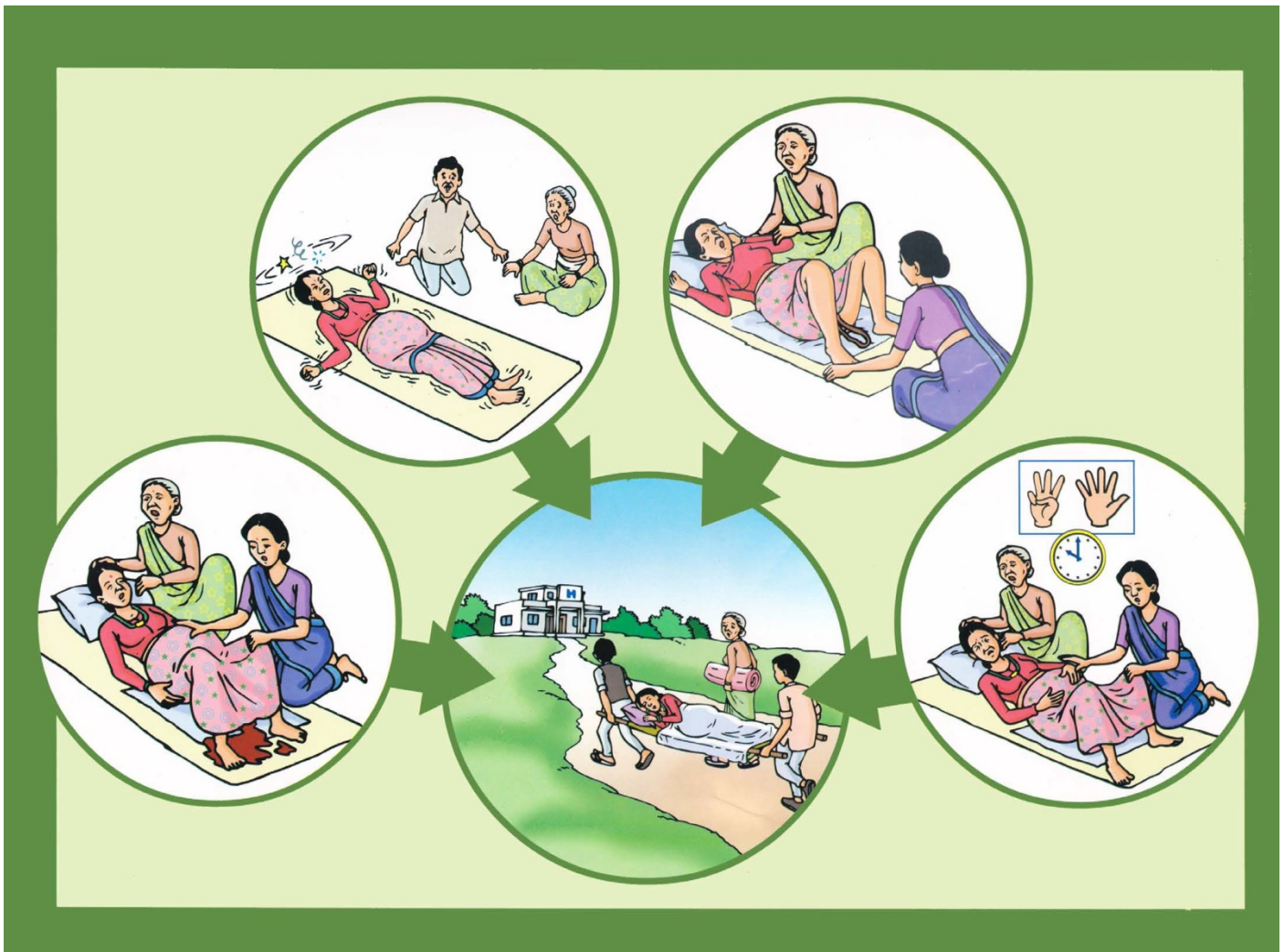
## Third Stage

You have one last step to go through before labor is over. The placenta, which provided your baby with nutrition and air during his/her time in your womb, needs to come out. This usually happens between 5 and 30 minutes after the baby is born. The health care provider will help deliver the placenta and make sure all of it has been released. Delivering the placenta is much easier than delivering the baby. You may need to push down a few times to help it to come out. If the placenta does not come out after an hour after the baby is born, you will need to seek immediate care from a health worker to help the placenta come out. After the placenta is out, your labor is over.

Now that your labor is over and you have your baby, your body will continue to go through many changes. You will notice right away that you will have bleeding. This is very normal and will continue to happen for about the next 3 – 6 weeks. This is your body getting rid of the fluids that were in your womb, Your bleeding will become lighter every day. You will probably also have some blood clots, usually between the size of a small lime or an orange.



If you are having any of these problems, you must go right away to the health facility.



#### IV. Caring for your New Baby

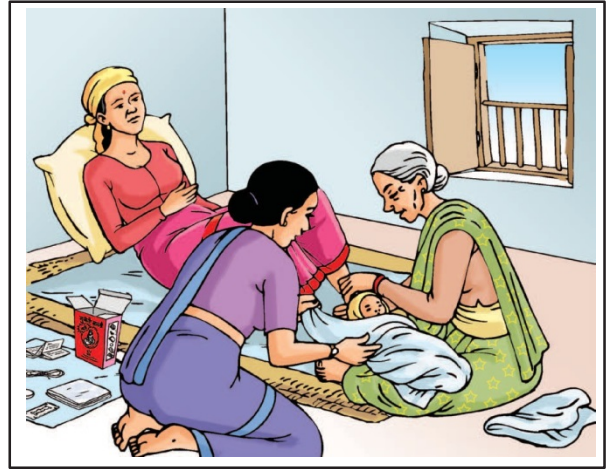
Reminder/Review: You did it! Your first baby is here and you are a new mother. All of this is new for you, so it is a good idea to ask questions and share your feelings and thoughts with your husband often, as you both learn how to take care of your baby. Now is the time to feel proud of yourself for all the months of pregnancy and for the delivery. You are powerful and strong. You are the best mother your baby could have. It will take a while before you understand what your baby needs, but you will learn together.

##### Immediate Care for your baby after delivery

After birth, your baby needs to be quickly dried with a clean, dry cloth. After drying your baby, the towel should be put away and not be used on you or your baby again. The birth attendant should do this while your baby is lying on your chest. You are the best “heater” for your baby. Put your baby’s stomach side down on your chest to keep him/her warm. Your baby will be able to hear and feel your heartbeat that he/ she has heard for the last 9 months. This will help keep your baby calm and get to know you.

## Quick Newborn Checklist – the birth attendant should:

- Dry the baby's face and head with clean and dry towels
- Make sure the baby is breathing well
- Use new dry towel to dry the body
- Not rub off the white coating on the baby's skin
- Cover your baby with a clean, dry blanket
- Put a hat on the baby's head
- Change the blanket right away if it gets wet
- Keep your baby on your chest until you can start breastfeeding
- Help you to start to breastfeed as soon as you can – at least an hour after your baby is born
- Help deliver the placenta



If the FCHV was not able to come for the birth of your baby, call her now to come to you to make sure you and the baby are doing fine. If there are any problems she should help your family get you for you and your baby to a health facility.

Your baby will be hungry very often – usually every 2 – 4 hours in the first weeks of his/her life and you will need to feed her/him as often as he/she wants. Babies can sleep as much as 20 hours a day, so while the baby is sleeping, take time for yourself and get some rest. The most important things you can do for your new baby is to prevent you and him/her from getting sick and keeping your baby healthy.

### The most important things you and your family can do to keep your baby healthy:

- 1) Always keep your baby warm and dry
- 2) Never put anything on the cord to help it heal and fall off (except chlorhexidine if it is available)
- 3) Give your baby only your breast milk. Your baby does not need any foods, water or liquids for the first six months
- 4) Keep sick family members and others away from your baby.

## Keeping your baby warm

Keep your baby away from open windows and doors, especially if it is cold outside. You can tell if your baby is cold by feeling its feet. If they are cold, put the baby skin-to-skin on your chest, like you did when he/she was born for 30 – 60 minutes. This will help the baby quickly warm up.

Always quickly remove any wet or soiled clothing and put dry and clean clothes on and wrap the baby loosely with a blanket to make sure he/she stays warm. Wrapping the baby tightly is not good for



your baby because babies that are wrapped tightly can become cold very easily.

Keep your baby near you so you can check if he/she is cold and to make it easier to breastfeed when the baby gets hungry. Make sure the baby is always on a clean, warm and dry surface.

## Keeping the cord clean and dry

### Cord Care Basics:

- Cut the cord with a clean razor a few minutes after the baby is born
- Do not put anything on the cord to help it heal or fall off – except for Chlorhexidine if it is available
- Never put oil, dung or other household products on the stump – this could cause a serious infection
- Wash your hands before and after caring for the cord
- The cloth should be folded below the stump and should not cover it
- Wash the cord with clean water and soap only
- If the cord starts to smell bad, your baby needs to be seen by a health provider
- The cord should fall off without help about a week after birth



### Nirmala's Story

After the umbilical cord was cut with a knife, my mother in law put mustard oil on the stub. My baby was fine but when the FCHV came she said that this is not helpful for the baby. I have not had the courage to speak up to my mother in law. Now, with the support of the Group, I am getting the right information to be able to have the best health for my baby and future babies.

**Questions: What was done wrong in Nirmala's story, and what are some ways to talk to your mother in law about things you have learned?**

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## Giving the First Bath

Babies should not be washed during the first 24 hours. The baby can become very cold if it is washed in the first 24 hours and get sick. Do not let anyone rub away the white film on the baby's skin.

**Remember** - keeping your baby warm and dry is the best way to keep him/her healthy. After 24 hours, your baby can be washed with a warm washcloth using gentle strokes. You can hold your baby in a blanket or towel when washing her/him. Make sure that the room you are washing the baby in is warm and not next to an open window. Never put your baby on a cold surface while you are washing her/him. Use a separate washcloth to wipe the baby's eyes. Dry the baby with a clean, dry towel and put clean and dry clothes and a cloth on right after the bath so your baby won't get cold. Babies do not need strong soap or oil on their skin, just warm, clean water. . Your baby can be washed in a basin with warm water and gentle soap after the cord stump falls off, usually between 7 – 10 days.



### Danger signs

Babies who are born in facilities have skilled care immediately available to them. Your health care provider will look for any danger signs and problems with your baby and provide the right treatment or referral for treatment. If your baby is born at home, or becomes sick after returning home from the facility, there are certain danger signs we will list below to look out for which mean you must go to the health facility immediately.

***If your baby is born at home and has any of these danger signs, you must get help right away***

## Breastfeeding Your Baby

Mother's milk is the best and most nutritious food you can give your baby. It has all the nutrition your baby needs for the first six months. It keeps your baby healthy and protects the baby against many illnesses including diarrhea, infection, cough and other common infant illnesses. It also helps your baby connect with you and recognize you as its mother. Breastfeeding exclusively means that the only food or liquid your baby gets for the first six months is your milk. No other kind of milk or formula has all the benefits of breast milk and for most babies is not safe. Giving other drinks or liquids can fill the baby up without giving him/her any nutrition. Many people mix formula or other foods with unclean water, which can make the baby very sick.

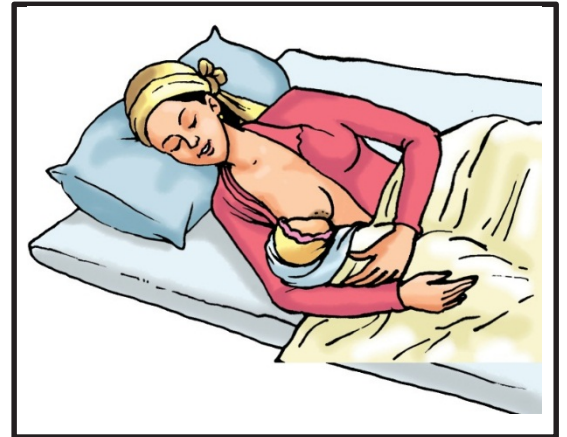
Breastfeeding is good for you too. It helps you connect with your baby and teaches you how to understand what your baby wants and needs. When the baby is breastfeeding the first few weeks after

giving birth, you may feel small cramps (like menstrual cramps) or contractions in your uterus. This is because breastfeeding helps your body to slow down your bleeding, and helps your body let go of the fluids and blood from your womb. When your baby nurses, it helps your womb contract and return to its normal size.

To help you heal and feel strong after your birth, and for your body to make breast milk for your baby, a new mother should eat as much or more food as when she was pregnant. You should eat a lot of different kinds of food including fruit and vegetables, foods high in protein and fats like meats, dahl, eggs and nuts. You will also need to drink plenty of liquids like water, herbal tea, fruit juices and milk.

The very first breast milk after your baby is born is very important to give your baby. It is thick and yellowish and is full of healthy nutrients to help your baby be strong and gives protection from illness. Since the baby is already lying on your chest, you can have someone help you position the baby comfortably and start breastfeeding. Getting in the right position helps your baby feed better and can prevent sore breasts and pain or cracks in your nipples. Your breast milk will come in within three to six days after your delivery and you may have milk leaking from your nipples, and your breasts might feel full, tender, or uncomfortable.

Learning to hold your baby in the best position for both of you can take some practice. You will need to learn to support the baby's head with your hand or arm and the baby's whole body should face you. Make sure his/her neck is not turned, because it makes it hard for your baby to swallow. When your baby opens its mouth wide, pushing its tongue out or turning its head from side to side, it's telling you she/he is hungry. Bring your baby onto your breast and look to see if the whole nipple is in the baby's mouth. If it isn't, open the corner of you baby's mouth with your little finger to break the suction and try again.



## Pratima's Story

After I had the baby, I was so exhausted but also very hungry. I could not take care of myself for a day or so. My family prepared special foods for me like jawno ko soup, chaku, chicken soup, fish and other hot soup, (soups with ginger and molasses and other things like cashew nuts and raisins). I also had soup made from turmeric and caraway so that I would regain my strength and produce milk. I was so happy about having my baby that I could not think about eating. I was so happy that they did these things for me.

**Questions for you: What kinds of special foods are prepared in your community for the mother after the baby is born? (If you don't know, ask your mother in law):**

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**Do you think your family will serve you these foods?**

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**From what you have learned about nutrition, do you think that the foods given in your community are healthy foods for a mother who just had a baby? If not, what would you like to change.**

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## Activity: Discuss Breast Feeding Stories

Sometimes your baby may start to cry and pull her/his legs up as soon as he/she begins to nurse. The baby may have too much gas in the stomach from swallowing air during breastfeeding. It is easy to help the baby “burp” and get the air out. You can lay your baby’s on your shoulder and gently pat its back until it burps.

You can also lay your baby across your knees and rub or pat its back. Some babies burp easier when they are sitting on your lap and leaning forward into your arms while you are rubbing or patting her/his back. This kind of gas pain usually stops when the baby is around 4 months old.

**Remember** - It is normal for most babies to want to eat every 2 – 4 hours. Babies need to eat this often because they are so small. Your baby will probably want to nurse for about 20 minutes. Sometimes babies nurse for 5 minutes and then stop to look around, and then want to nurse again. You and your baby are getting to know each other and you will soon learn how your baby likes to eat. Remember that every baby is different. This can be exhausting for you. All new mothers feel overwhelmed by how much time it takes every day. You should talk to your husband and family and ask for their support.



Start breastfeeding on the breast that feels hardest and let the baby eat for 10 minutes on that breast. Then put your baby on the other breast and let it continue to eat for as long as he/she wants. You should always try to have your baby nurse on both sides to help you make enough milk for your baby, and to protect your breasts and nipples from becoming sore and painful.

If you are not sure you are breastfeeding your baby properly, ask for help from your provider at the health center, the FVHW, female family members or other mothers from your group. Sometimes your baby will suddenly want to eat more often than usual. This is normal and means that your baby is growing and needs more food. Just let him/her breastfeed more often and for as long as she/he wants.

Some women are afraid that they do not have enough breast milk for the baby. Some family members may tell you that you don't have enough milk and the baby needs other food or liquid. This is almost never true. Finding out if you have enough milk is very easy! The best way to know that your baby is getting enough milk is to check that he/she has at least 6 soiled or wet cloths every day. The more your baby nurses, the more milk your body will make.

## Adolescent father's story

After the baby was born, I came home for a while. I felt very proud to be a new father. The FVHW helped my wife learn how to breastfeed correctly and advised her to do it as much as possible. About breastfeeding, I myself am very unsure of the proper way. My mother says to feed the baby as soon as possible with the first thick milk (bigouti) but in other places they think it causes diarrhea. We need more information on what is the healthiest way for the baby. I think the baby should be given breast milk for 6 months, although this will be difficult for my wife since she will need to work

**Question: Have you thought about the traditional ways to breastfeed and how they are different from what you learned? How do you plan to breastfeed your baby?**

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## How to care for yourself during breastfeeding

- Sometimes a mother's breasts get very full and hard, especially during the first few days after birth. This can be painful and make it difficult for the baby to breastfeed. It can also cause an infection and a fever in the mother. There are easy ways to treat this problem.
- Breastfeed the baby every 2-3 hours both day and night on both breasts. Stay in bed if you can and keep the baby next to you so you can feed her/him often.
- Place hot, wet cloths on the breasts for 15 – 20 minutes before each feeding
- Put cool cloths, or fresh cabbage leaves on the breasts between feedings. Let the milk come out and support your breasts with a towel or cloth.
- If the baby has trouble getting onto the breast because it is swollen, remove a little milk by hand until the breast is soft enough for the baby to take.

### Danger Signs:

If you get a fever or you have a painful lump in one or both of your breasts, find a hot, sore red spot and you feel like you have the flu, these are all signs of an infection. You will probably need antibiotics for this condition. Have the FCHV come to your house, or go to the health facility to be seen by a provider as soon as possible. This problem will not go away by itself and could get worse if you do not get the right care.

**Remember/Reminder:** Your baby only needs your breast milk during its first six months. Any other foods or liquids, including water can make the baby sick, cause diarrhea and can make your milk dry up. Your breast milk provides exactly enough food and water to satisfy all of your baby's needs. If your baby does not seem satisfied after eating, do not give any other milk, tea, food or liquids. Help your baby nurse more often.

## Remember to get help if the baby:

- Is too hot or too cold
- Refuses to breastfeed, or only feeds for a few minutes and then falls asleep
- Sleeps all the time
- Difficulty breathing: breathing too fast, too slow or gasping for breath
- Swollen, bleeding or umbilical stump with pus
- Swollen eyes or eyes with puss
- Yellow colored skin or eyes
- Has fits or convulsions

## How your family can help

If your baby has any of these above problems, you need to have a plan with your family about getting your baby to a facility for care. How will you get to a facility? Who will go with you? How can transportation be paid for? Does your community have an emergency transport system? Who will call them?

### Checking-in with you

This section had a lot of things to remember. How are you feeling about yourself How are you coping with being tired? Are you feeling pressure to be or feel a certain way? What is your baby's personality? Is s/he like you though s/he would be? Is being a new mother like you thought it would be? Do you feel scared? Do you feel confident? Try to answer some or all of these questions:

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## Activity

The postpartum period is the last stage of pregnancy and starts right after you deliver the baby. This stage lasts 6 weeks. This is the time to get to know all the unique things about your baby and start your life as a new mother. It is also the time for you to regain your strength and health after pregnancy and delivery.

### Remember that you will need to:

- 1) Get plenty of rest
- 2) Eat a variety of healthy foods
- 3) Drink plenty of water and fluids
- 4) Keep your body very clean
- 5) Go to the health center for a postpartum check-up
- 6) Start thinking about family planning

It may be difficult for you to be able to do all of these things. You will need support from your husband and other family members. Taking care of these things is really important for your health because new mothers need care after birth just as your baby does to avoid getting infections. As a new mother, you will experience many changes in your body and your feelings while you learn how to deal with all the newness of becoming a mother. Normal changes in your body include having vaginal bleeding for 3 – 6 weeks. You might also have some swelling in your legs and feet. The best way to get rid of the swelling is to lie down and lift your feet up for 15 – 30 minutes. You may need to do this several times a day.

## **Sleep**

Depending on your family and cultural practices, you may be required to rest in bed with your baby from one – four weeks after the birth of your baby. This is the time to focus on you and your baby and not be expected to do household chores. This is good for both you and the baby because it helps your body heal and helps you connect with your baby. If possible, your family should take over the responsibility of your household chores for you to help you get your strength back. You need to learn to sleep as often as you can now as most new babies will wake up about every two to three hours to feed. Many new mothers may tell you that sleeping when the baby sleeps works best for them. As the baby gets older and gains weight, they may only want to breastfeed every 3 or four hours, but every baby is a bit different.



## **Nutrition**

As we have already discussed, a mother's body has undergone many changes during pregnancy and childbirth. Along with sleep and rest, good nutrition after birth is important for you and your baby. Eating well will help your body recover and give your baby the nutrition it needs from breast milk to grow and stay healthy. Remember that when you are breastfeeding, the foods that you eat will give nutrition to your baby. As we have discussed when we talked about breastfeeding, you should eat as much or more than when you were pregnant to heal after birth and to make breast milk. Eat at least one extra meal a day, or try to eat smaller but more frequent meals. Remember - it is especially important for you to drink plenty of liquids, at least 2-3 liters a day.

Talk with your family about how you need to eat a variety of foods including fruits, vegetables, foods rich in protein and fat such as meat, fish, cereals, beans, vegetables, milk and starchy food (rice, maize, cereals and potatoes). As we talked about in the section on breastfeeding, many new mothers may be so tired or busy that they don't feel hungry or are too tired to eat. Your husband and family can help make sure that you are eating and getting enough fluids.

- Increase your food intake - you need one extra meal per day when you are breastfeeding
- Eat different types of foods from the 4 food groups:
  1. Staples: grains such as maize, rice, and millet, buckwheat, wheat and roots and tubers such as potatoes sweet potato, yam
  2. Legumes such as beans, lentils, peas, groundnuts and seeds such as sesame
  3. Fruits and vegetables such as mango, papaya, dark-green leaves, carrots, yellow sweet potato and pumpkin, and other fruits and vegetables such as banana, pineapple, watermelon, tomatoes, eggplant and cabbage
  4. Animal-source foods: flesh foods such as chicken, fish, liver, and eggs and milk, and milk products

### **Nutrition Checklist**

- Eat healthy snacks between meals: fruits, vegetables, boiled eggs, sour milk, bread, sweet potatoes, boiled or roasted maize cobs, fried fish, chapatis, bean cakes, nuts and oil seeds.
- Does your family grow vegetables? Fresh vegetables and fruits are really great for you.
- Does your family have dairy animals? Fresh milk, cheese, yoghurt and butter are really good sources of protein for you,
- Does your family keep livestock for food? Meat and chicken are really good sources of protein and other valuable nutrients.

Make sure that the meat, chicken, eggs, or fish you eat is well cooked. Uncooked foods may have germs that can make you and your baby sick. You may feel tired from taking care of the baby, but do not forget to feed yourself.

### **Hygiene**

As we talked about earlier in this guide, it is normal to experience discharge or bleeding and discomforts (cramps) shortly after giving birth. Too much activity can increase the time that you will bleed. Change your cloths often and make sure you change to a clean sanitary napkin. This will help you avoid an infection around the birth canal. Most of this discharge will stop by 6 weeks after having your baby. While bleeding is normal and will decrease over the weeks. If you see large blood clots the size of a lime or an orange or have enough bleeding to soak a cloth napkin in 1 hour, you need to see a health care provider or go to a facility right away.

After giving birth you will have some pain around the birth canal. This is because the skin there was stretched or torn at delivery. Here are some clean ways to help with the discomfort:

- Wash your hands before and after changing your cloth
- Change your sanitary napkin every 4-6 hours. Remove the sanitary napkin from front to back so that the germs from your rectum don't touch your vagina.
- Pour warm water over this painful area after urinating or moving your bowels.
- Gently pat the area dry and always wipe from front to back.
- Wait to have relations with your husband until the area is not painful and your bleeding has stopped





Some mothers also have difficulty moving their bowels after giving birth. If this happens, drink lots of water to soften your stool. Grains and fruits will also help you go. Walking can also help with this problem. You cannot tear or open any stitches by pushing too hard, but pushing can lead to hemorrhoids, or swelling around your rectum.

If you have hemorrhoids, it can be painful to sit. Try to sit in a warm bath 2 or 3 times a day to decrease the pain and swelling. Be sure to wash the area with warm water after bowel movements and to always wipe from front to back with clean paper.

### **Sexual Relations**

Your body will need time to recover before you are able to have sexual relations with your husband again. Many health workers recommend waiting 6 weeks before having sex again. However, it is most important that you feel ready before having sexual relations. Vaginal soreness, feeling tired, and changes in your hormones may make you not want to have sex yet. Talk with your husband about how you are feeling. You should never have sex if you do not want to.

When you are ready to have sexual relations again, you may worry that it will be painful or different after having a baby. Changes in your hormones can make your vagina feel dry and tender, especially if you are breast feeding. You can ease these discomforts by talking with your husband and asking him to move slowly. You can try different positions to take pressure off of sore areas. Be sure to tell him what feels good and what doesn't. It's okay to stop if you are in pain or do not feel comfortable. Remember, it is possible for you to become pregnant 3 -4 weeks after having a baby, especially if you are not exclusively breastfeeding. You will need to discuss using a contraceptive method with your husband to prevent a pregnancy. See Section VII for more information.

## What are your Feelings?

Only you know the feelings you are experiencing in this time of change. It is good to express them even when sometimes they seem hard to explain. Please make sure you keep on writing down your thoughts, feelings and concerns even after you have your baby. Continue to do this practice each week since your feelings can change. What is important is that you express these feelings and learn to share these feelings with someone who wants to listen to you. This might be your husband, your friends in the Group or even your Mother in Law.

**Write down here some things you would like to talk about with your Group:**

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## VI. Returning to Fertility – Family Planning

After about 6 weeks after giving birth the postpartum stage is over. Some girls will start to have monthly bleeding again. If you are exclusively breastfeeding, you may not see your period until 6 months after your baby is born. Even if you are not having your period and breastfeeding, it may be possible to become pregnant. Now is the time to decide with your husband when you want to have another baby and what you as a couple will do to make sure that you do not become pregnant until you want to. Here is some information that will help you as a couple make a plan. This is the time to go to the health center for your postpartum check-up and discuss your family planning needs.

### Tasnim's story

My husband is supportive of me and agrees to wait 2 years before we have our second child. However we know this will be difficult because the religious leaders here are against the use of contraceptives, like condoms and pills, but because my husband agrees with me, we will use them anyway. Because of this, I still have hope for my future.

### Understanding Your Fertility

We talked a little bit about the fertile period when we discussed how you became pregnant. Now we are going to talk more about it to help you plan and time when you want to have your next baby and what you can do to make sure you don't get pregnant when you don't want to. Fertility awareness means that a girl knows how to tell when the fertile time of her menstrual cycle starts and ends. The fertile time is when you can become pregnant. You can use several methods, alone or together, to tell when your fertile time begins and ends. Fertility Awareness Methods involve keeping track of days of the menstrual cycle to identify the start and end of the fertile time. Some examples are Standard Days Method which we will talk about later. For all the fertility based methods, you and your husband should avoid vaginal sex, or agree to use condoms during your fertile days.

A female is fertile in the middle part of her monthly cycle, about 10- 20 days from the first day of

bleeding. This starts from your first regular menstruation until you stop having your cycle, which usually happens between 45 – 50 years old.

## How to track your menstrual cycle:

The first day of monthly bleeding is always counted as day 1.

**Activity:** Understanding the menstrual cycle and the Fertile Period.

Here is a sample calendar for Kavita who has a 28 day cycle.

### January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1(Day 1) X	2 X	3 X	4 X	5 X
6 X	7 X	8 Z	9 Z	10 O	11 O	12 O
13 O	14 O	15 O	16 O	17 O	18 O	19 O
20 Z	21 Z	22 Z	23 Z	24 Z	25 Z	26 Z
27 Z	28 Z	29(Day 1) X	30 X	31 X		

X = menstruating O = ovulating (Fertile days) Z = infertile days

In this method, a woman counts the days from the beginning of her last monthly bleeding to find out when she is most fertile. Count the days from the beginning of one monthly bleeding to the beginning of the next monthly bleeding.

Look at the calendar to figure out the fertile time, you can:

1. Circle the day on the beginning of the last monthly bleeding. This is day number 1.
2. Count forward 10 days from day number one. This is day number 10.
3. Put a line under day number 10 and under the next 9 days (10 days in all). These are your fertile days.

## Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancy Review

We talked about Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancy earlier. In this section, you will find some more information for you on how to practice HTSP. Health experts have found that planning your next pregnancy at least 24 – 36 months after the birth of your last baby is the healthiest for mothers and babies. If you wait less than 24 months after you give birth before trying to become pregnant, the baby can be born too small, too early or have serious health problems. It is also dangerous for you as a mother since having a baby so soon may cause dangerous health problems for you too. If you can wait more than 24 months after giving birth before trying to become pregnant, you can breastfeed your baby a full two years, which is what health experts recommend. It also means you can give more of your time, love and attention just to your baby without worrying about another one on the way. HTSP can help you be more in control of when you want to get pregnant again. Remember: No one should force to make any kind of decision about when and how to space and time your pregnancies.

### Checking-in with you

Is spacing and timing your next pregnancy something you and your husband have talked about?

Have you discussed using any family planning methods?

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### Using a Family Planning Method

As a reminder of what we talked about earlier, family planning is when a couple decides when and how many children they want to have. Contraceptives are the methods and medicines used for planning the Healthy Timing and Spacing of your pregnancies. We also talked about how every couple must decide for themselves if and how they want to plan their family. No one can decide for you. However, the FCHV and the leader of your Group can help you plan your family by teaching you about ways to prevent an unplanned pregnancy.

### Contraceptive Methods

Below is a list of contraceptive methods that may be available in your community and appropriate for young mothers who wish to wait before having more children. This is not a complete list of contraceptives, but the most commonly used and available in your area. If you have more specific questions please talk with your health provider or FCHV to make a plan for your family planning needs and choice of contraceptive method during your postpartum check-up. Even through some contraceptive methods have some health risks and can cause some minor problems in some girls, using contraception is much safer for you than pregnancy and childbirth.

## Activity: Comparing Contraceptive Methods

More effective

Less than 1 pregnancy per 100 women in one year



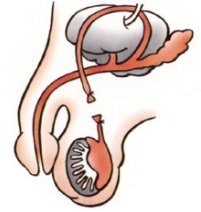
Implants



IUD



Female Sterilization



Vasectomy



Injectables



LAM



Pills



Condom



Diaphragm



Fertility Awareness Methods



Withdrawal



Spermicides

Less effective

About 30 pregnancies per 100 women in one year

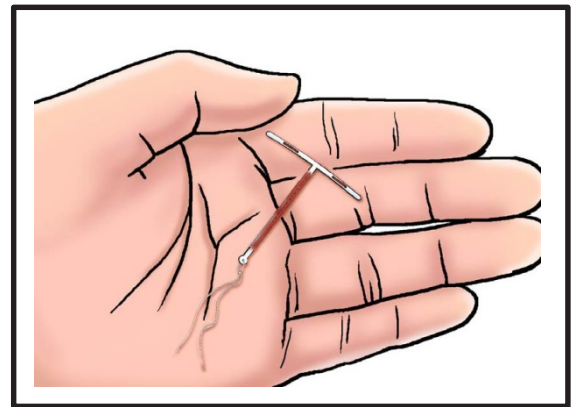
## Combined Oral Contraceptive Pills

Birth control pills are a type of medicine with hormones that you take every day to prevent your eggs from leaving the ovaries and travelling to the womb, which prevents pregnancy. Hormones, as we talked about earlier, are chemicals that a woman's body normally makes and are responsible for bringing on your monthly cycle. These pills are very good at preventing pregnancy if they are taken by mouth at the same time every day. You can start taking birth control pills 6 months or earlier after your baby is born and you are no longer exclusively breastfeeding. Your health provider can talk to you about the pill and help you decide if this is a good method for you. The pills will not prevent pregnancy for the first 4 weeks that you take them. To protect yourself from a pregnancy, you should either not have sex during the first 4 weeks, or make sure you and your husband use a condom every time you have sex. If your menstrual cycle causes you stomach pains and lots of bleeding, pills can often help make those problems better. Pills do not help to prevent STIs or HIV. Sometimes pills may cause you to feel headaches, dizziness, nausea, breast tenderness, weight change, mood change and acne. This usually gets better after a few months of taking the pills. If they do not get better, you should talk to your health provider about finding a different family planning method for you. Danger signs of using pills include chest pain, difficulty breathing, strong headaches, numbness in arms or legs, or strong pain in one leg. You must get to a health facility right away if you experience any of these danger signs. These problems are very rare and most girls can take pills without any problems.



## Intrauterine Device (IUD or 'Copper T')

The IUD is a contraceptive method that is a small flexible plastic T-shaped object that is inserted into a woman's womb. The IUD works to prevent pregnancy by changing the man's sperm before it can join the egg (copper IUD), or by stopping the tissue from coating the uterus and the egg from attaching in the womb. Health care providers at a facility can insert and remove the IUD from your womb and answer any questions you may have. The IUD works very well to prevent pregnancy, but some girls notice changes in bleeding that usually goes away after 2 – 3 months of getting the IUD. An IUD can be inserted within 48 hours after birth or until four weeks or more after giving birth. The IUD offers up to 10 years of protection and can



be removed at any time during this period of time by a health care provider. Some people might say this method is not good for young girls, but this is not true. This is a safe and good method for you to have long term protection from getting pregnant before you and your husband are ready to have your next baby.

## Injectables

Injectable contraception is very popular and easy. You get an injection in your hip, shoulder or buttocks every three months to prevent pregnancy. The shots work by releasing a hormone into your body that prevents eggs from leaving your ovaries, which prevents pregnancy.

You can safely get these shots six weeks after childbirth. It is safe to get them during the time you are breastfeeding.

Sometimes the shot may cause some changes to your body, such as irregular bleeding, weight gain, possible headaches, dizziness, stomach bloating and discomfort, mood changes, and less interest in sex. These problems usually get better in 3 – 6 months. Remember – you will need to have a plan to return to the health center every 3 months for your next shot.

In some cases, when you use this method, you will not see your monthly cycle. This is normal but can be very scary for you. It is the hormone in the contraceptive that causes this to happen. It does not mean you are pregnant or that you are not able to return to fertility after stopping this method. If you use this method for many years, you should make sure you get extra calcium in your diet to help your bones stay strong.



## Implants

Implants are small flexible rods or capsules with hormones that prevent pregnancy that are placed just under the skin of the upper arm. They provide long-term pregnancy protection for 3 to 7 years, depending on the type of implant, and can be removed at any time during this period by a health care provider. You will need to visit the health clinic to have an Implant inserted and removed. There may be some changes in your bleeding, but these are not harmful and go away within a few months of getting an Implant. Some users of implants do not have a period during the time the Implant is in place. This is normal and not harmful to you.



## Emergency Contraception

Pregnancy doesn't happen right after sex. That's why it's possible to prevent pregnancy even after the fact. It can take up to six days for the sperm and egg to meet after having sex. Emergency contraception pills work by keeping a woman's ovary from releasing an egg for longer than usual. Pregnancy cannot happen if there is no egg to join with sperm.

You might have also heard that the morning-after pill causes an abortion. But that's not true. The morning-after pill is **not** the abortion pill. Emergency contraception is **birth control**, not abortion.

Emergency contraception is a safe and effective way to prevent pregnancy after unprotected intercourse. Emergency contraception pills are commonly called the “morning-after pill” but can be used up to five days (120 hours) **after** unprotected intercourse. You may want to use it if:

- You weren't using any birth control when you had sex
- You forgot to take your birth control pills, patch, ring, or other birth control method
- Your partner's condom broke or slipped off
- Your partner didn't pull out in time or
- You were forced to have unprotected vaginal sex.



## Fertility Awareness Methods

### Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM)

This method works to delay the start of your menstrual cycle after giving birth by making sure to only breastfeed your baby as often as the baby wants and not give any other food or liquid to the baby. Exclusively breastfeeding during this time prevents the release of eggs from the ovaries. Breastfeeding must be the baby's only source of nourishment. The return of the menstrual cycle is a sign that the method is no longer providing effective pregnancy prevention. While still breastfeeding, you will need to soon decide which contraceptive method to use before your menstruation returns. It is best to have a plan and a method chosen and available by the 3rd month postpartum. Condoms work well as a second method with LAM.

#### **There are three conditions that must be met for LAM to be effective:**

1. The mother's monthly bleeding has not returned
2. The baby exclusively breastfed and is fed often, day and night
3. The baby is less than six months old

### Calendar Method & Standard Days Method

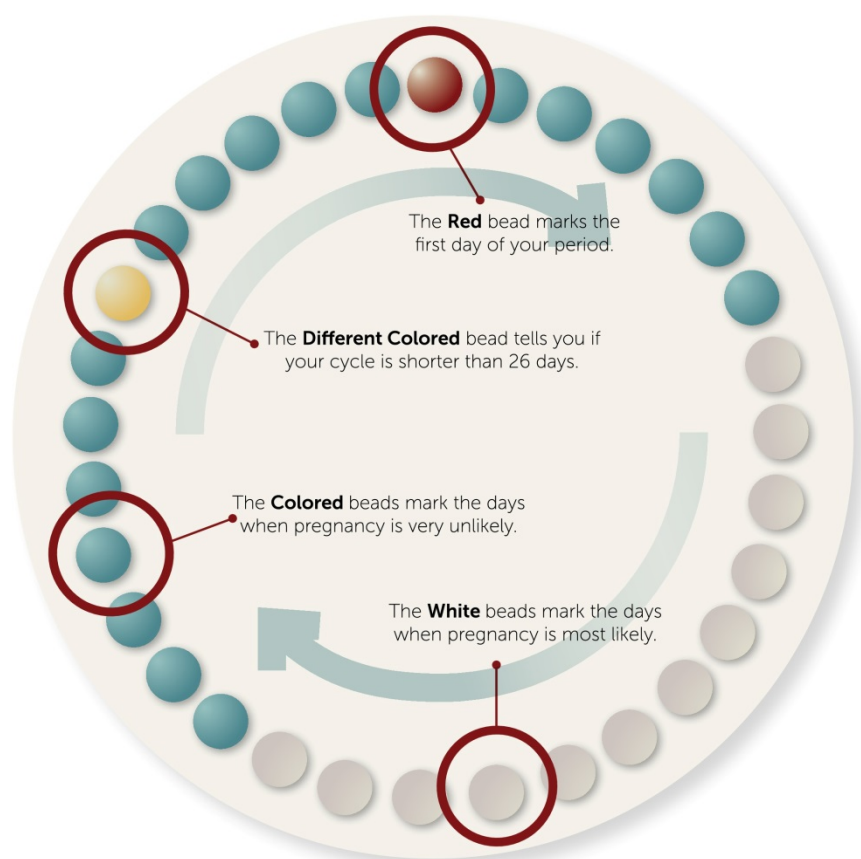
By tracking your monthly menstrual cycles with a calendar, you can determine your fertile period of days every month and avoid sex during this time or use a short term contraceptive method like condoms to prevent pregnancy. This method is generally not recommended for most young couples as it requires very good and open communication during the entire month to be used correctly to prevent pregnancy.

To use this method correctly to make sure you won't become pregnant, you will need to track 6 months of regular menstrual cycles before you start using this method to understand the average length of your cycle. This must be done after you are finished breastfeeding and you have had at least 6 normal cycles. You use simple math to identify your fertile days each month. You need to write down every day on a table or in a calendar the changes in your body that let you know your fertile time. To prevent pregnancy during your fertile days you must avoid sex or agree with your husband to use a condom.

For this method to work, a woman must have regular monthly bleeding that is always about 4 weeks apart (28 days). You won't be able to use this method if you are currently pregnant or breastfeeding or if your baby less than six months old. This method has no side effects but it does NOT prevent against STI or HIV.

## CycleBeads

The day a woman starts her period she places the rubber ring on the red bead. Each day she moves the ring one bead forward, always in the direction of the arrow. When the ring is on the red bead or a colored bead, there is very low likelihood of pregnancy, so she can have intercourse on these days without getting pregnant. When the ring is on a white bead – Days 8 through 19 – she is in her fertile period and there is a high likelihood of getting pregnant if a woman has unprotected intercourse. If a woman wants to prevent pregnancy, she should avoid having unprotected intercourse on Days 8 through 19 (days represented by glow-in-the-dark white beads) as this is her potentially fertile period. If a woman wants to achieve a pregnancy, she and her partner should have intercourse during these white bead days as these are days when a woman is most fertile.



If you do **NOT** want to get pregnant, do not have unprotected sex on days when pregnancy is likely—days represented by white beads.

If you **DO** want to get pregnant, you should have sex on days when pregnancy is likely—days represented by white beads.

## Choosing a Method that is Right for You

Now you have information about contraceptive methods. You and your husband can choose the one that is right for you. If the one you choose first is not working for you, or you have unwanted side effects, you can always choose another method. Discuss with the health worker at the health center any problems or concerns you have. Some health centers and hospitals have Sexual and Reproductive Health programs for adolescents like you that offer quality services for young people. Your Group should find out if there are Adolescent Friendly (AFS) reproductive health services in a health center near you. If possible, have your husband go with you to get more information for you to decide which method is best for you.

When you see a health provider for family planning counseling and methods, one way of knowing if you received quality guidance and service is to see if they provided the following services. You can check off the ones that were provided:

- They allowed me to ask questions and made me feel comfortable
- They identified my needs and told me about all contraceptive methods available.
- They listened to me and understood my concerns
- They considered and respected my choice of contraceptive method.
- They showed me how each method is used and gave me information about each one.
- If I chose a contraceptive method they provided it for me.

### **Checking-in with you:**

Did you choose a contraceptive method? Which one? Did you discuss with your husband? Are you happy with your choice?

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If you still need some help, talk with your peer facilitator and other girls in your Group. Every girl's needs are a bit different, but it is helpful to talk with the other girls, since they are asking themselves the same questions

## VII. Sexually Transmitted Infections

As you already learned, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are like other infections that you get from bacteria and viruses but they are mostly spread from one infected person to another person through unprotected sexual contact, meaning sex without using a condom or any skin-to-skin contact of the genital area. Some infections may also be transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy and childbirth. Some of the most common STIs are HPV, gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, herpes and HIV, and others.

STIs can be found in body fluids, male and female genital fluids, and saliva in the mouth, and sores and affected skin around the genital areas. It is very important for you to understand that STIs often exist without symptoms, particularly in females. This means that you can have an STI without knowing it. This also means that someone who is infected can pass the STI to their sexual partner without them knowing it.

Since STIs often exist without symptoms in females, if your husband has a symptom, you should also seek care even if you have no symptoms. Sometimes, you may feel symptoms that can affect both you and your husband.

**Condom Use:** Condoms can protect you from pregnancy and many STIs, including types of HPV, chlamydia, gonorrhea and HIV. To be effective, use a condom correctly each and every time.

### Symptoms of some STIs

- Bad smelling discharge (wetness) from the genitals
- Sores, ulcers, lesions, bumps, warts, lumps or blisters on or around the genitals
- Itching or stinging in the genitals
- Ongoing pain in the lower abdomen, while having sex
- Painful urination

#### ***What about discharge from your vagina?***

It is normal for you to have some discharge (wetness) from your vagina. This is usually a whitish discharge which does not burn or itch or smell bad. Discharge is common in pregnancy and also increases during your fertile days. But, any sudden change in the amount, color or smell of the discharge can mean you have an infection. If this happens, you need to see a health care provider for diagnosis and treatment. Don't wait until you feel very sick to get help from a provider.

**Remember -** If you think you or your husband may have a symptom of an STI, seek treatment without delay before, during or after pregnancy.

### ***Are there treatments and cures for STIs?***

Most common STIs can be cured with medical treatment if:

- You go to a health facility for care and treatment without delay
- You follow the treatment exactly as the health worker prescribes.
- Your husband also follows the treatment.

There is no cure yet for some STIs such as HPV, herpes or HIV. However, HIV and herpes can be treated.

What can happen if I don't get treatment for an STI?

- STIs can harm your reproductive organs, like the fallopian tubes, womb or ovaries
- This can cause a pregnancy outside the womb which is very dangerous for you and will also result in a miscarriage
- STIs can cause damage to your other organs
- STIs can cause infertility in males and females
- STIs can cause cervical cancer
- During your pregnancy and delivery, you could pass STIs to your baby.
- This can cause early birth and early labor
- It can also result in babies to be born too small, too early, blind or have other dangerous conditions
- It can cause a baby to die in the womb

If you are concerned that you may have an STI or just have questions about STIs and treatment, contact your health worker or FVHW for more information.

### ***How can you prevent the spread of STI and HIV/AIDS through sexual contact?***

**Testing:** You and your husband can get tested for HIV and other STIs at certain health facilities. Once you know if either of you have the virus or not, you can plan how to have safe sex that can decrease the possibility of you getting the virus in the future.

**Faithfulness:** The easiest way to stay free from STIs is to have a monogamous sexual relationship. This means that you stick to only one partner, and neither of you has sex of any kind with anyone else.

**Abstinence:** Some couples choose to practice abstinence (not having sexual intercourse) after having a baby – or even at marriage - to prevent pregnancy. This is the only 100% sure way of preventing STIs and unplanned pregnancies.

Secondary abstinence is when a person who has had sexual intercourse in the past decides that from now on, s/he will choose not to have sexual intercourse with anyone. Many couples feel that this is right for them.

## Types of STIs

### *Chlamydia*

**What it is:** Chlamydia is a bacterial infection.

**How it is spread:** It is most often caused by having sex without a condom with an infected partner, and enters the body through the vagina during unprotected sex.

**Signs to look for:** About 50% of people infected with chlamydia will have no signs or symptoms. Others will have some of the symptoms described on page 51.

**Treatment:** Chlamydia is easy to treat with antibiotics and has a 100% cure rate, if both partners are treated early.

### *Gonorrhea*

**What it is:** Gonorrhea is another bacterial infection.

**How it is spread:** It is most often caused by having sex without a condom with an infected partner .,

**Signs to look for:** Many women (and especially men) may not realize they are infected because they have no symptoms until it has spread far up to the womb from the vagina. If there are signs, women can experience abdominal pain, pain and burning on urination and a change in discharge. Men may feel a burning sensation when urinating, discharge from the penis, or painful or swollen testicles.

**Treatment:** Gonorrhea can be treated and cured with the right medicine.

**Health problems if not treated:** Untreated gonorrhea can cause infertility. A pregnant woman who has gonorrhea can give the infection to her baby as the baby passes through the birth canal during delivery. This can cause serious health problems for the baby.

### *HPV*

**What it is:** Genital human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common STI in Nepal.

**How it is spread:** HPV is spread through sex without a condom or skin-to-skin contact of the genital area with an infected partner.

**Signs to look for:** Most people who become infected with HPV do not even know they have it, but some people will see warts in their genital area that look like a small bump or group of bumps. Warts can be seen weeks or months after sexual contact with an infected partner.

**Treatment:** There is no treatment for the virus itself, but there are treatments for the health problems that HPV can cause.

**Health problems if not treated:** Most HPV infections go away by themselves within two years. But, sometimes, HPV infections will not go away and can cause a variety of serious health problems, including cervical cancer.

## ***Syphilis***

**What it is:** Syphilis is a serious STI caused by a bacterium that can affect your whole body and last for many years.

**How it is spread:** Syphilis is transmitted by direct contact with a sore. They occur mainly on the external genitals, vagina, anus, or in the rectum. Sores also can occur on the lips and in the mouth. Transmission of syphilis occurs during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Pregnant women with the disease can transmit it to their unborn child.

**Treatment:** Syphilis is easy to cure by taking antibiotics in the early stages.

## ***Herpes***

**What it is:** Herpes is caused by a virus. There are two types that are just a little bit different from each other. Type I usually causes sores only around the mouth. Type II causes sores around the genitals and in the mouth.

**How it is spread:** People get herpes through sex without a condom or skin-to-skin contact of the genital area with someone who is infected. Herpes can be found in and released from the sores. It can also be released from skin around the genitals.

A pregnant woman who is infected with herpes and has sores at the time of the birth can pass the infection to her baby. If this is the case for you, it is very important that you give birth at a facility because they can give you special medicines during the birth process to protect the baby from getting infected.

**Signs to look for:** Painful blister-like sores that can come and go periodically on your genital area or in your mouth. The sores can last from 3 days to 3 weeks. The first time you have the sores usually is the longest and most painful. Some people get the sores regularly – or several times a year. Other people may only have the sores one time. It is not possible to know how often you will get sores. It is very important to wash your hands with soap and water very well if you touch the sores, and be careful not to touch your eyes or your children's eyes because you can infect them with the virus, too. This can cause serious eye problems and even blindness.

**Treatment:** There is no cure for herpes yet, so once you get it, you will always have it. It is important to know that you can infect your partner with Herpes even if you do not have any sores.

## **HIV**

**What it is:** HIV is caused by a virus called the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). It is spread when blood or genital fluids from someone already infected with the virus gets into the body of another person. Women can get HIV more easily than men during sex and can pass it on to their baby who is growing in the womb. Women can get HIV more easily than men during sex.

You can get HIV from someone who looks healthy. It is also spread by receiving a transfusion of HIV infected blood, or through use of sharp instruments like needles, syringes, razors, and through unclean surgical and dental instruments, visit prostitutes, men who inject drugs or men who have sex with other men.

It is also spread by blood through sharing sharp instruments like needles, syringes, razors, and through unclean surgical instruments, as well as from parent or mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding.

### **You can NOT get infected through:**

- mosquito bites
- kissing and hugging, or sleeping next to a person living with HIV
- sharing a bathroom or using public restrooms
- Sharing plates, glasses and silverware or food with a person who is living with HIV.

**Signs to look for:** The only way to know if a person is living with HIV is a blood test.

**Treatment:** There is no cure for HIV, but medicines help people live long, healthy and productive lives. You can even protect your unborn baby from getting HIV by taking medicine during pregnancy and the breastfeeding period. These life-saving medicines are called anti-retrovirals (ARV). This medicine will protect you for the rest of your life. Health workers will also monitor your health and treat any other infections that occur.

**Remember -** It only takes one unprotected sexual encounter to become infected with HIV or other STIs. Having multiple sexual partners further increases the risk of HIV or STI transmission, thus it is important to always use condoms during sexual encounters when the status of either sexual partner is unknown.



## II. Sexual and Reproductive Health – Rights and Prevention of Gender Based Violence

Preventing Gender Based Violence and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR): What are Your Rights and Your Baby's Rights?

In the interim constitution of Nepal 2007, health is included as a fundamental right of the people. It has included the following definition for sexual rights:

Sexual rights embrace human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus statements. They include the right of all persons, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, to:

- The highest attainable standard of sexual health, including access to sexual and reproductive health care services;
- Sexuality education;
- Respect for bodily integrity;
- Choose their partner;
- Decide to be sexually active or not;
- Consensual sexual relations
- Consensual marriage;
- Decide whether or not, and when, to have children; and
- Pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life.

***The responsible exercise of human rights requires that all persons respect the rights of others.***

You have probably heard about human rights before. Now we will think about the human rights that have to do with your health and also your baby's rights.

### **Your rights are:**

- To receive quality care during pregnancy, delivery and the postpartum period.
- To have access to information and services for prevention and treatment of Sexually Transmitted Infections, including HIV/AIDS.
- To obtain information and guidance from health staff about breastfeeding, pregnancy, contraception, STI treatment, and routine health appointments.

### **Your baby's rights are:**

- To receive medical care starting before birth
- To receive delivery care from a skilled birth attendant
- To receive post natal care from a trained Frontline Health Worker
- To have a full name and nationality, to receive an initial birth certificate, and to be treated with

equal rights regardless of sex, beliefs or birthplace.

- To grow up within an environment of love, understanding and support.
- To receive immediate and exclusive breastfeeding
- To have a family and a home
- To be protected against abandonment, mistreatment and abuse.

**When we refer to rights we also refer to the responsibilities of the baby’s father and mother:**

- To take care of themselves from the beginning of the pregnancy so that the baby is born healthy
- To make sure that the delivery happens with a skilled birth attendant, so that the newborn and mother are not at risk.
- To ask for health care services for the healthy or sick newborn
- To take the newborn to his/her first check up during the first three days, whether the baby is healthy or sick.
- To bring the baby for regular checkups during the first years of life.
- To keep the baby clothed and warm
- To give the baby a lot of love
- To protect the baby from sickness

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) are part of Human Rights, so that men and women, girls and boys, can live healthy, responsible and prejudice-free lives.

**Activity**

On the following chart is a list of questions about your SRHR. Think about this very seriously. Mark your response in the YES or NO column. If the answer is NO, write down in the next columns what is preventing you from practicing your SRHR

Sexual Rights	Yes or No	What is preventing me from practicing this aspect of my rights?
Do I have access to relevant information about issues related to my sexuality?		
Is my sexuality free from all forms of violence, abuse or harassment?		
Can I say for sure that my sexuality (separate from reproduction) is healthy and without risk to my health?		

Reproductive Rights	Yes or No	What is preventing me from practicing this aspect of my rights?
Can I freely and responsibly decide the number of children and the spacing of births, and have the information and means to plan my family?		
Do I have access to quality health services that give me information about my SRHR?		
Do I have access to useful, accurate and modern information about contraceptive methods?		
As a pregnant young mother have I been accepted without a problem in my work, at school and by society in general?		
Do I have access to information and services for prevention and treatment of STIs, including HIV/AIDS?		

Exercising your SRHR is not always that easy because to exercise them you have to be sure of what you want. It may be difficult for you to discuss contraception and STIs with your husband. It will often be difficult to talk about what you think about these things with your husband, your family, your Group or members of your community and others who may not know about their rights.

## Making a Commitment to Exercise Your Rights

Please review the above chart and think about which of these rights you want to stand up for in your life. For each one, write here what steps you promise to take to make this happen. In this way, you will feel more empowered to live your life according to your hopes and dreams and feel that you can have a healthy and safe future for your children.

Which Right do I commit to standing up for?	What steps will I take to do this??

## Our Journey together is now over – but a new phase begins

We have come a long way since we began reading the first chapter of this guide. We have taken so many steps forward individually and as a Group. We have come to learn and understand ourselves, our strengths and our roles and relationships in a new way. Let's make a commitment and a plan to continue to support each other and other young women in our families and communities. Let us also make a commitment to continue to respect our hopes and dreams in our marriage with our husbands. Everyone has hopes and dreams for their futures...even if they just had their first child. While we have been focusing so much on your baby, let's end here by focusing on the most important person...YOU.

### Activity – Making a Commitment to ourselves, our communities and our futures

Draw a picture of your hopes and dreams and write three things you can do to help make these things come true.

### Notes and References

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