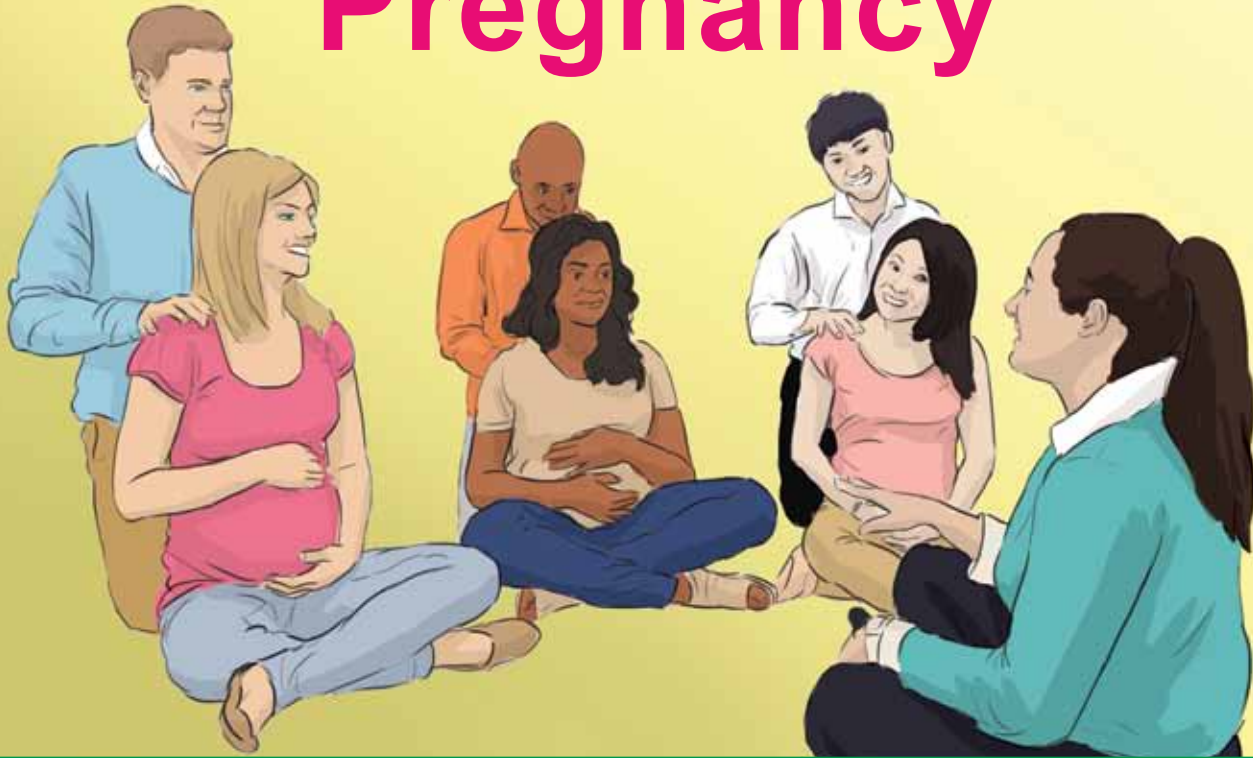


Pregnancy



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Pregnancy

This booklet will teach you:

- What is pregnancy
- How can a woman get pregnant
- What can a woman do when she gets pregnant
- What should women do and not do during pregnancy
- What is childbirth
- What to do if the baby dies before birth

What is pregnancy

Pregnancy is
when a woman expects a baby.
Pregnancy starts with insemination.

Insemination is
when the male semen and the female egg
unite in the woman's body.

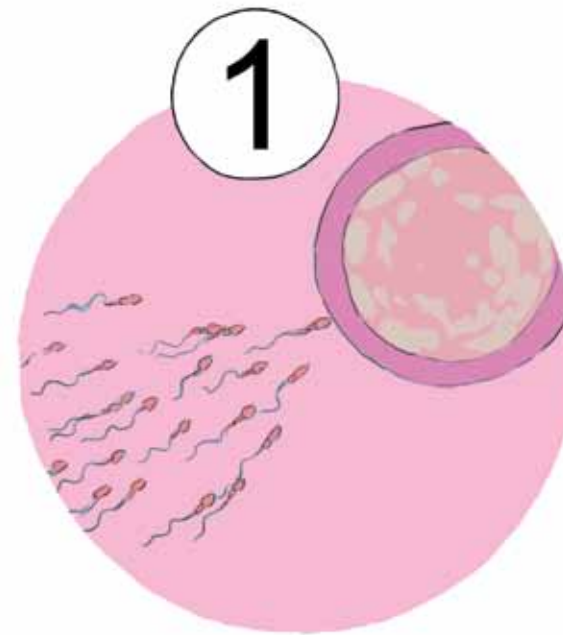
Pregnancy lasts for 9 months.

Pregnancy ends with the birth of the baby.

The baby comes out of its mother's body.

We say
that a woman gives birth.

We call this event **childbirth**.



How can a woman get pregnant

A woman can get pregnant if she has sexual intercourse with a man.

This means

that a man and a woman make love.

Sometimes we say that they sleep together.

The man inserts his aroused penis into the woman's vagina.

At the end of sexual intercourse the man ejects sperm into the woman's vagina.

In the woman's body, the male semen unites with the female egg.

This is how the **embryo** is made.

The embryo then grows into a baby in the woman's belly.

Sometimes, the woman gets pregnant after having sexual intercourse just once.

Sometimes, the woman cannot get pregnant easily.

In this case, the partners have to try for some time and have sexual intercourse more often.

Sometimes, the woman cannot get pregnant at all.



How can a woman get pregnant

A woman can get pregnant if she has sexual intercourse with a man. She can become pregnant if neither of them uses contraception.

A woman can become pregnant if her sexual organs are healthy. For example, her uterus and ovaries have to be healthy. A man has to have healthy sexual organs as well. You must think carefully about pregnancy. Pregnancy must be planned.

This way, both partners are prepared for pregnancy. The woman should plan to get pregnant with a person that she loves and trusts.

For example the woman can plan her pregnancy with:

- her boyfriend,
- her partner.



How does a woman know that she is pregnant

When the woman is pregnant
she doesn't get her period.

When the woman doesn't get her period
she can do a pregnancy test.

The test will show
if the woman is really pregnant.

If the woman doesn't get her period,
she should visit her gynaecologist.

The gynaecologist will examine her with an ultrasound.
The gynaecologist will determine
if the woman is really pregnant.

The woman doesn't get her period during pregnancy.



What is a pregnancy test

You can buy a pregnancy test at a pharmacy or chemists.

Sometimes, the pregnancy test doesn't work. For example, it shows that a woman isn't pregnant.

The test shows the wrong result.

In reality, the woman can be pregnant despite the negative result.

If she doesn't know whether she is pregnant or not, the woman should visit her gynaecologist.



When a woman finds out that she is pregnant

When a woman finds out that she is pregnant, she can have different feelings.

With every woman, the feelings are different.

All feelings are normal.

Some women are happy.

Some women are afraid.

They wonder if the baby will be healthy.

They don't know if they will be able to take care of the baby.

It is also important

what the partner thinks about the pregnancy.

It is important

that the woman talks about her feelings to a person that she trusts.

The woman has different options.

A pregnant woman is also called an **expectant mother**.



Many women are pleased
to be pregnant.
They are happy.
They look forward to having a baby.
When the baby will be born,
they will take care of it.

Sometimes, the woman doesn't want to have a baby.
There can be different reasons for that.
For example, she is afraid
that she will not know how to take care of the baby.
Or she is afraid
that the baby will be sick.
Sometimes, the woman doesn't have enough money.
Sometimes her boyfriend or husband leaves her.
She doesn't know
if she will be able to support her child.
There are also other reasons for her fear.



When a woman decides to have an abortion

If the woman doesn't want the baby she can have an **abortion**.
An abortion means ending the pregnancy
before the baby is born.

We also call abortion:

- termination,
- artificial termination of pregnancy.

The abortion is carried out by doctors in hospitals.
They terminate the pregnancy artificially.
The baby will not be born.

Before a woman decides to have an abortion
she should talk about it with someone.
For example, she can talk with her family or friends.
She can talk to a counsellor.



When a woman decides that somebody else is going to take care of the baby

After birth, the woman can give the baby to other people. These people will take care of the baby instead of her.

For example, the woman can give the baby for **adoption**. This means that she gives up the baby. She then doesn't have any more rights towards the baby. The baby goes to live with another family for ever. The woman cannot take care of the baby any more. She cannot see the baby any more.

The woman can also give the baby to **foster care**. This means that somebody else will take care of the baby. In this case, the woman can visit the baby.



What problems can a pregnant woman have

A pregnant woman can have different problems:

- She feels sick.
- She feels like vomiting.
- She is constipated. She cannot poo for several days.
- Her breasts hurt her.
- She is very tired.
- She can faint.
This means that she loses consciousness.
- Her belly is hard.
- She has cramps in her legs.

This is normal.

The woman's taste for food can change a lot.

For example, she no longer likes food that she liked before.

Or she begins to like food that she didn't like before.

The woman may have the feeling that everything smells bad around her.



What should a woman do during pregnancy

The woman should have a healthy lifestyle during pregnancy. This way, she will remain healthy. The baby in her belly will be healthy too. The baby will grow nicely.

During pregnancy, a woman should:

- eat a lot of fruit and vegetables,
- drink a lot of non-carbonated non-alcoholic drinks, for example water,
- get enough physical activity, for example by walking,
- wear comfortable clothes, for example a bigger and more comfortable bra,
- sleep and rest a lot.



What shouldn't a woman do during pregnancy

There are some things that the woman shouldn't do during pregnancy.

Some things can harm the baby.

The baby may be born sick.

The woman shouldn't:

- drink too much coffee,
- drink alcohol,
- smoke,
- do dangerous sports, especially those that involve jumping,
- eat raw meat,
- drink certain drinks, for example tonic,
- take medicines that were not prescribed by her doctor.

Her gynaecologist and midwife will tell her what's good for her.



What medical examinations does a woman have during pregnancy

Every woman should visit her gynaecologist.
A pregnant woman should see her gynaecologist every month.
The gynaecologist tells her when is the expected date of childbirth.
This means that the gynaecologist tells her when the baby will probably be born.
At the beginning of her pregnancy the woman gets a **maternity booklet**.
In the booklet, the gynaecologist writes down important things.
The woman carries the booklet with her all the time.
She shows it to her doctor if there's something wrong.
Starting with week 37, the woman sees her gynaecologist every week.
Before the expected date of childbirth, the woman goes for medical examinations at the maternity ward.
The gynaecologist suggests when to apply to the maternity ward.



What happens at medical examinations during pregnancy

A nurse weighs the woman at every examination. She also measures the woman's blood pressure. She examines her urine. The gynaecologist asks the woman if she feels her baby moving in her belly.

During pregnancy, the woman gets her blood taken a couple of times. They test the blood. For example, they test the blood for pregnancy diabetes. This way, the gynaecologist sees if the mother and the baby are healthy.

The gynaecologist also does an ultrasound of the woman's belly.



Ultrasound

Sometimes, the gynaecologist also takes an **ultrasound** of the woman's belly.

The ultrasound looks like a round device or like a tube.

With the round device,

the gynaecologist slides across the woman's belly.

Sometimes, the gynaecologist inserts

a tube-like device into the woman's vagina.

The gynaecologist and the woman then see the baby on the monitor.

The gynaecologist sees the baby's heartbeat.

The gynaecologist also sees if:

- the baby is healthy,
- the baby is growing nicely.

If the woman wants to know the sex of the baby, the gynaecologist will tell her if it is a boy or a girl.



How is the baby born

At the end of the pregnancy, the woman gives birth to the baby.

We call this **childbirth**.

Most women give birth in a natural way.

This means

that the woman pushes the baby out through her vagina.

The duration of childbirth varies from woman to woman.

Usually, childbirth lasts a few hours.

Sometimes, it lasts longer.

It may also last for a whole day or more.

If the woman cannot give birth in a natural way, she goes for an operation.

The doctor cuts open her belly and takes out the baby.

We call this a **caesarean section**.



How can a woman prepare for childbirth

During pregnancy, the woman can prepare for childbirth.

For example, she can:

- visit exercise classes for pregnant women,
- visit a special class before childbirth.

At the class,

they tell her what happens during childbirth.

She learns to exercise and breathe.

This will help her during childbirth.

The classes are conducted by midwives and obstetricians.

The woman should pack her hospital bag.

They give her a list of the things to pack in the class.

She must have her bag ready

one month before the expected date of childbirth.



If the woman expects a sick baby

Sometimes, the baby in the belly isn't healthy.

The gynaecologist advises the woman what to do.

The gynaecologist may advise her to terminate the pregnancy.

This means that the woman gets medicines.

When she takes the medicines, she begins to give birth.

The baby is not yet ready to be born.

In this case, the baby dies.

We call this **premature childbirth**.

No one should force a woman into premature childbirth.

The woman must decide this by herself.

The woman should talk about her feelings with a person that she trusts.

This can help her decide what to do.



If the baby dies before birth

Sometimes, the baby dies before the woman gives birth to it.

This can happen to every woman.

This can also happen to a healthy woman with healthy sexual organs.

This usually happens in the first 3 months of pregnancy.

We call this a **miscarriage**.

The pregnant woman recognises a miscarriage from a strong pain in the belly.

Blood starts coming out of her vagina as if she would have a heavy period.

There are small pieces in the blood.

With blood, the embryo of the baby comes out as well.

Sometimes, the baby dies at the end of the pregnancy.

In this case, the woman doesn't feel the baby moving in her belly.

The woman has to go to the maternity ward.

There, they help her get the dead baby out of her belly.

If the woman has the feeling that something isn't right, she has to see her gynaecologist or go to the hospital.



What can a woman do if she loses the baby

If the woman loses the baby, she is usually very sad.

Some women blame themselves.

They think that they did something wrong.

Some women are angry with people who have children.

Some women feel lonely.

They have the feeling that they will never again have a baby of their own.

When the woman loses the baby, she can ask for help.

For example, she can ask her gynaecologist to help her.

Or she can ask for help from a person that she loves and trusts.

If the baby dies, the woman can get pregnant again.

But she has to wait at least six months before she gets pregnant again.

Most women can get pregnant again after a miscarriage.

After that, they usually give birth to a healthy baby.





ZVEZA
SOŽITJE

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Easy-to-read booklet



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Further reading:

Being a Woman



Being a Man



Love, Sex and Me



A Visit to the Gynaecologist



Childbirth



Sexual Violence



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