

Opting for a fertility consultation? Here's what you can expect

Mother's Day can be painful for those struggling with infertility. Conception is a science as well as a miracle and a basic fertility consultation is recommended when a couple fails to conceive within six months of trying naturally, during the female partner's fertile period. Dr Vandana sheds light on what couples can expect during their first fertility consultation.

Ideally both partners need to be present for evaluation. Else, ensure both attend the second visit when investigation reports are reviewed. Make adequate time for the appointment. Avoid scheduling between working hours/ lunch breaks. Carry all previous health records.

The fertility centre will have a documentation process, where the couple is registered with photo ID proof (15 min). A file is created to record all further interactions in the clinic (required as per ICMR regulations) (10min). The detailed history of both partners is entered in the software (30min). It is best to reveal all aspects of past/present health and any significant family history, as it can have implications on fertility. Also mention drug allergies if any. Next, an ultrasound scan is done or scheduled for another day (30min).

Once the general medical profile is created, the file is studied and evaluated by the consultant fertility specialist and doctor and certain investigations are prescribed. Various treatment options available, procedures involved, success rates, number of cycles required, risks, benefits and timeline are discussed (30min).

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Dr Vandana Hegde

A fertility counsellor then explains basic fertility treatment procedures in detail and costs involved (20 min). Fertility treatments start from Day 2/3 of menstrual cycle, so the second visit is scheduled accordingly. After test reports are reviewed, final treatment plan is decided (30 min).

The first visit may take anywhere around 2 hours or so. It is important to be patient as it's done with your best interest in mind and ensuring no process is skipped. Carry water, snacks and anything to keep you occupied during the waiting period.

Subsequent appointments will take a maximum of 30 minutes and can be planned accordingly. Couples may also be directed to andrologist /embryologist/ geneticist based for further evaluation.

A team of multiple specialists ensures treatment progresses effectively without missing markers at any juncture, while spending minimum time at the hospital. It is always important to ensure a professional approach is maintained at the centre so that the cycle isn't compromised due to absenteeism of a particular healthcare personnel.

Stay positive through the entire process. Good luck!

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Busting COVID myths during pregnancy

The rise in COVID-19 cases across India, especially in its second wave, is placing an enormous burden on our health infrastructure. This wave seems to be affecting the younger population, much more than it did in 2020, when senior citizens were relatively more vulnerable in terms of catching the infection as well as physical damage and mortality.

PLANNING PREGNANCY DURING COVID-19 SURGE

Myth: It is risky to plan pregnancy because of COVID-19's ill-effects on the developing fetus.

Fact: COVID-19 infection does not increase incidence of developmental abnormalities in the baby. There is also no evidence of an increase in death of the fetus or newborn after birth. Those who are trying to become pregnant need not avoid pregnancy after vaccination.

PREGNANCY AND RISK OF CONTRACTING COVID-19

Myth: Pregnant women are at an increased risk of getting infected.

Fact: No. As is the case for the general population, COVID-19 has an asymptomatic or mild course for most pregnant women. However, if they get symptomatic, the risk of premature birth multiplies by two to three times. This may be because of compromise in maternal or fetal health.

Pregnant women severely affected by COVID-19 may require intensive care admission when compared to non-pregnant women, particularly after the seventh



Dr K Niraj Yamamandra

month of pregnancy. This may also result from the need for closer monitoring because of pregnancy.

There is also an increased risk of hospitalisation in women with body mass index (BMI) > 25 kg/m², co-morbid conditions such as pre-existing diabetes and chronic hypertension. Women in occupations which involve more exposure like healthcare workers and other public-facing professions are at an increased risk.

VACCINATION DURING PREGNANCY AND FOR BREASTFEEDING WOMEN

Myth: It may not be safe to take the vaccine.

Fact: Pregnant and lactating women should take the vaccine. There is no evidence that they are unsafe for them. None of the vaccines currently offered in India are live attenuated vaccines (which should not be given to pregnant women).

ROLE OF VITAMIN AND MINERAL SUPPLEMENTS

Micronutrients, such as vitamins D & C and zinc do not cure COVID infection, but are critical for the smooth functioning of the immune system and promote health and nutritional well-being.

For further information, visit: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>; roog.org.uk; www.fogsi.org

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Cool off with these desi drinks this summer

JEERA AND HING CHAACH

Punjab and Haryana are famous for their *lassi* during summers, but equally refreshing is the Haryana *chaas* with *hing* and *jeera* powder *tadka*. Chef Hina Gaur shares, "Chaas is very tasty and good for the digestive system and enjoyed cool with ice cubes."

HOW TO MAKE IT: "We make *chaas* from yoghurt that is at least a week old, and instead of water, we add buttermilk to give flavour to the drink. Once done, we use rock salt, black pepper and crushed *puudina*, and temper the drink with *jeera* and *hing* on top," says Gaur.

GONDHORAJ LEBU GHOL

Summers are really tough in Bengal, and *gondhoraj lebu* (King aromatic lime) *ghol* helps keep one cool and active in the draining weather. Chef Sudeshana Basu shares, "Ghol is a light and frothy Bengali style buttermilk that is known for its cooling properties. The drink is unparalleled in taste, fragrance and flavours. The combination helps fight the humid summers of Bengal."

HOW TO MAKE IT: "A generous amount of *gondhoraj lebu* – king lime native to West Bengal – is squeezed into the buttermilk and whipped until it becomes frothy. We add rock salt, sugar and mix it well. Serve it with *gondhoraj lebu* zest and ice cubes," says Sudeshana.



Rishabh Deb

From *gondhoraj lebu ghol* and *tanka torani* to *saunf ka paani* and *panakam* – we take you on a nationwide trail of the cool, healthy and refreshing, yet lesser-known, beverages in each region

SATTU SHARBAT

Sattu sharbat, a popular drink from Bihar has made its way across UP, and is now a summer fix in Punjab and other states, too. "The drink is a heatwave fighter and keeps the gut cool," says home chef Dr Mohana Pandya.

HOW TO MAKE IT: "We make it by blending roasted ground black *chana*, bay leaves and roasted *jeera* together. In Patna, we serve it by mixing it with sugar and water, or with *jeera*, *hara dhaniya* (coriander leaves), green chillies and *kala namak* (black salt)," Dr Pandya adds.



RAGI GANJI/ KANJI

Healthy and delicious, the drink from Karnataka is made of the super grain *ragi*. It is perfect for breakfast or for sipping throughout the day. It can be made either sweet or salted. "Ragi ganji is quite a common summer drink in the state and even across Tamil Nadu," informs Radha Nair, a home chef from Bengaluru.

HOW TO MAKE IT: "It is made of *ragi* and millet flour with water, and left overnight. We add a few teaspoons of curd, salt, and chopped onions, adding a *tadka* of curry leaves and mustard seeds on top. The drink is served cold or room temperature," says Radha.



SOLKADHI AND KOKUM SHARBAT

The two neighbouring states of Maharashtra and Goa are known for their summer drinks *solkadhi* and *kokum sharbat*, which are popular summer chillers.

HOW TO MAKE IT: Chef Seema Deshpande shares, "*Kokum sharbat* is made using sun-dried *kokum* fruit that has a naturally sweet and salty flavour. We add mint leaves, lime, sugar and salt according to our taste. The drink is very refreshing in the summers. *Solkadhi* is its sister drink made of the same fruit as a summer digestive *kadhi*, blended with yoghurt, green chilli, cumin seeds, garlic cloves, coriander leaves and salt."

PANAKAM AND KULUKKI

Panakam and *kulukki* are among the most popular summer drinks from Kerala.

HOW TO MAKE IT: Home chef Gayathri Nair explains the flavours and says, "*Kulukki* is made with unripened lime and basil seeds. Basil seeds play an important role in cooling your body. We blend the two ingredients and serve the concoction with chopped pineapples or apples, garnishing it with mint or *tulsi* leaves, with salt, pepper and sugar syrup. *Panakam* is a sister drink of *kulukki* that is made with the same base. We add black pepper, lemon, still water and dried ginger to it."



OTHER POPULAR DESI SUMMER DRINKS ARE...

- Bel sherbet
- Shikanji/jal jeera
- Rose water sharbat
- Aam panna
- Khus sharbat



SAUNF KA PAANI

Saunf ka paani or fennel seeds water is a popular drink from Gujarat, where it is also known as *variyaali sharbat*. "The refreshing drink is a popular post-lunch drink in Gujarat and it is a detox drink, too. Other benefits include healthy gut and beautiful skin," shares chef Roma Patel.

HOW TO MAKE IT: "The *sharbat* is made of fennel seeds or *variyaali*, dry black grapes or raisins, white rock sugar or *khadi sakhar* (rock sugar) and lemon juice," says Roma.



TANKA TORANI

Tanka torani is a popular spicy and cool drink from Odisha. "The recipe is known to fight heat stroke," says chef Sujoy Mohapatra.

HOW TO MAKE IT: Chef Sujoy adds, "The drink is a mixture of fermented rice water, which is at least three days old. In a big container, we add yoghurt, lemon juice, zest and leaves, slit green chillies, mint leaves and rock salt. All the ingredients are added to the fermented rice water and mixed well."



KANJI

Mildly sweet, zingy, tart, salty and pungent – *kanji* from Jammu and Kashmir, and other northern parts of India is a refreshing drink for summers. The fermented concoction keeps the body cool and energetic. "It has a lot of health benefits and immunity-boosting qualities," says home chef Rubina Banu from Srinagar.

HOW TO MAKE IT: Rubina shares, "*Kanji* is a fermented drink made from water, black carrots and beetroot. It has mustard seeds too, they give the drink a kick. The drink sits in the jar for two weeks with the above mentioned ingredients and then we refrigerate it and serve with ice cubes."