

OPTIMISE WEIGHT PRIOR TO CONCEPTION

The prevalence of obesity, and women increasingly being overweight over the last few decades, has resulted from changes in lifestyle, including reduced physical activity, change in nutrition style and an increased calorie intake. However, some other factors such as endocrine disorders, hormonal disorders, psychological disorders, and the use of some drugs such as steroids and antidepressants may lead to obesity. This is a serious concern since a high BMI before conception is an independent risk factor for many adverse outcomes of pregnancy. Most people know that being overweight or obese increases the risk of health problems such as heart disease and diabetes. But many are unaware that this can also reduce fertility and impact chances of having a healthy baby. Obesity is common among women of reproductive age and obese women frequently undergo menstrual irregularity with ovulatory disorders, endometrial pathology and infertility.

DOES PREPREGNANT WEIGHT AFFECT PREGNANCY?

The risk of infertility has been shown to be threefold higher in obese than in non-obese women, and several studies have demonstrated that obese women need longer time to get pregnant. If you are trying to get pregnant or planning to start trying, the closer you are to a healthy weight, the greater are your chances



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- Class III >40

In addition to BMI, Waist to Hip Ratio (WHR), which helps in measuring the accumulation of fat around the abdomen, is also one of the most important tools. WHO has suggested that a healthy Waist-Hip ratio is 0.85(or) less for women; 0.9 (or); less for men. Central obesity and visceral fat can result in insulin resistance, which can contribute to menstrual irregularities and gestational diabetes.

Why should those planning pregnancy be concerned about their weight?

BEING UNDERWEIGHT AND FERTILITY

Being underweight (BMI under 18.5) can reduce a woman's fertility by causing hormone imbalances that can affect ovulation and the chances of getting pregnant. If you are underweight and trying to conceive, change your diet to help you gain more weight.

LOW PRE-PREGNANCY WEIGHT IS ASSOCIATED WITH

- Infertility
- First trimester miscarriages
- Anemia
- Preterm Birth
- Small for gestational age babies

EFFECTS OF BEING OVERWEIGHT OR OBESITY

- Infertility
- Polycystic ovarian disease
- Hormonal imbalances
- Problems with ovulation
- Hyperinsulinemia and insulin resistance are the underlying causes that lead to obesity

MATERNAL COMPLICATIONS:

- Gestational diabetes
- Pregnancy induced hypertension
- Thrombotic events
- Prolonged labor
- Emergency cesarean section
- Delayed wound healing
- Wound infection

HIGHER BMI CAN ADVERSELY IMPACT BREAST FEEDING INITIATION AND DURATION FETAL COMPLICATIONS:

- Miscarriages
- Pre term birth
- Still births
- Macrosomia (Big Baby)

COMPLICATIONS FACED BY THE CHILD IN ADULTHOOD

- Obesity / metabolic disorder

- Diabetes in later life
- Developmental disabilities
- PCOD in girls

What are the factors which influence weight?

- **Hormonal influences:** Thyroid disorders, polycystic ovarian disease
- **Lifestyle influences:** Choice of food, limited walk, stressful work environment, less sleep
- **Emotional factors:** Anxiety, depression, stress
- **Drugs:** Corticosteroids, anti-depressants
- Genetic factors

Your doctor can suggest few investigations like

- Thyroid function test
- Glucose studies
- Lipid profile

1ST LINE MANAGEMENT FOR A HEALTHY WEIGHT:

Nutritional therapy: Consult a dietician for caloric diet plan. A diet rich in proteins and healthy fats is preferred. A balanced diet with low complex carbohydrates to be considered.

TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER WEIGHT BEFORE PREGNANCY: FOLLOW A HEALTHY BALANCED DIET

- Cut back on processed foods including chips, biscuits, pastries and fast foods and only eat them in small quantities
- Prefer low caloric foods
- Swap sugary drinks and alcohol for water
- Use a smaller plate to help reduce your portion sizes.
- Get moving everyday
- Set a realistic weight goal. It can help you feel motivated & active.
- Slimming via exercise or diet is considered to be one of the most important targets in lifestyle modification. There are programmes capable of inducing an improvement in reproductive function among obese women. Weight loss equal to 5-10% of body weight will definitely improve the fertility rate.

Remember if you're already pregnant and want to lose weight, it is important to talk to your doctor (or) nutrition expert, before you start making any lifestyle changes.

Physical activity for at least 30 minutes a day Cognitive and behavioral therapy to ensure around 5% reduction in weight loss over 3-6 months

2ND LINE OF MANAGEMENT

Pharmacotherapy: This is recommended if the BMI is >30kg/m² or if there is no loss of at least 0.5kg/week after 3-6 months of lifestyle modifications

Bariatric surgery: Consider surgery if BMI >40kg/m² or if other weight loss attempts have failed

DOES BEING OVERWEIGHT IMPACT FERTILITY IN MEN?

Being overweight (or) obese can also reduce a man's fertility. This is likely due to a combination of factors including hormone problems, problems with erection and other health conditions linked to obesity. Weight loss in men who are overweight (or) obese can significantly increase total sperm count and quality. Weight loss results in increased testosterone levels and improvements in sexual function.

Abnormal sex hormone levels are commonly observed in obese males. Sedentary lifestyle, using a laptop based on the thigh and saunas, may also lead to increased testicular temperature. In obese men, any such conditions can lead to sperm cell damage and reduction in sperm motility.

Reaching a healthier weight can improve the chances of conception. This is because sperm takes about 3 months to develop and being in the healthy weight range during this time, helps develop healthy sperm.



Dr Akash Agarwal, Scientific Director

To summarize: It may be important to consider the BMI of couple. Usually a BMI between 18.5 & 24.5 may offer the maximum possibilities of getting pregnant. Also, waist and hip circumference should be maintained

- Remember even the modest reductions in weight may have a beneficial effect on perinatal outcome
- Before an IVF cycle, women with obesity should be carefully evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team to determine the safety of oocyte retrieval under anaesthesia, considering factors such as BMI and comorbidities
- Be fit, eat right, stay healthy and enjoy parenthood
- Sleep also plays important role. Working at night or late-night sleep can disrupt your circadian rhythm, causing hormonal imbalances, irregular cycles and also cause obesity
- Sleep deprivation among men and women is increasingly reported as one of the causes of obesity and infertility
- Sleep loss creates a hormone imbalance in the body that promotes over eating and weight gain
- Sleep deprivation is associated with growth hormone deficiency and elevated cortisol levels, both of which have been linked to obesity.

COMPREHENSIVE FERTILITY SOLUTIONS UNDER ONE ROOF

Hegde Fertility is a one-stop destination for all fertility needs. The centre provides infertility services from basic evaluation, counselling, semen analysis, tubal testing and treatments like IUI, to more advanced procedures like IVF and ICSI.

Hegde Fertility ensures the all-round wellbeing of couples during their fertility journey. The in-house nutritionist on board, suggests and customises personalised diet plans for couples planning pregnancy, which is suited to their needs and also helps them in their weight loss programs. In addition to supporting couples through their weight loss journey, the in-house nutritionist and counsellors help them to maintain optimal BMI. The healthcare providers equally support couples aiming for natural pregnancy, by encouraging them to conceive with minimal interventions. Hegde Fertility delivers fertility care with empathy, providing supportive counselling by trained psychologists and inculcating alternative therapies like acupuncture and yoga for all-round wellness.

Being located at prominent areas across Hyderabad in Hitec City, Malakpet, Miyapur and Suchitra Circle, the centres of Hegde Fertility are easily accessible. The timings of 8 AM to 8 PM

from Sunday to Saturday, at all branches, adds to the convenience of working couples, so they can plan their fertility treatment which may require multiple visits at times. Hegde Fertility has invested in some of the best infrastructure and technological advancements, along with the team of well qualified and experienced doctors, who follow the latest protocols seamlessly across all its branches. This effort has been the game changer in its consistent results over the last decade.

The team of specialists at Hegde Fertility have over the years managed numerous complicated cases of recurrent pregnancy losses, with their advanced protocols of evaluation and by implementing newer therapies in management as per the couple's requirement. Today, with advancements in technology, various tests are available to help get a clearer understanding of the problem. The well qualified and experienced doctors have successfully taken such patients to term and helped them achieve healthy live birth safely. Couples can be reassured that every problem identified has a solution. The centres are well equipped to handle complicated cases which may require advanced IVF procedures. Hegde Fertility also provides expert psychological counsellor for emotional support, which is equally important to give couples the required strength and hope. All these efforts have ensured a better pregnancy and IVF outcome for patients.

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