

PLAN YOUR PREGNANCY THE NATURAL WAY



It is well known that since the time of Kings and Queens, human civilization has witnessed the history of people giving birth to many children, to continue their progeny and have a healthy line of heirs. The first known In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) was written in our epic Mahabharata, where Queen Gandhari gave birth to 100 children in an earthen pot. Is it really possible? In today's world, yes, it is! But nobody wants to have a 100 children; just one or two in good health is all we hope for.

Couples hope to plan their pregnancy the natural way, because what could be better and healthier than natural, or simply because they don't want any medical interventions for their pregnancy. However, is it possible to plan your pregnancy when you are ready, rather than to get accidentally pregnant and feel confused about the outcome?

The best way to plan your pregnancy is to understand your menstrual cycle, timing of ovulation and have intercourse at the right time, but this is not sufficient to have a healthy baby; age, lifestyle, habits and stress levels also play an important role in successfully achieving a pregnancy.



Dr Vandana Hegde, Clinical Director & Chief IVF Consultant

How do you begin?

Before planning a pregnancy, it is important to ensure that you are in good health and shape to have an uneventful pregnancy. You must not be over or underweight, since both have negative effects on your health and pregnancy. Physical fitness is important for a healthy pregnancy. You can try brisk walking or jogging initially and progress to weight-bearing exercises to improve muscle strength and lung capacity. Yoga has many benefits in improving overall health as well.

Undergo a routine check-up with your doctor, to make sure all your blood work and general health is normal. Your blood pressure, blood sugars, thyroid levels, vitamin D to name a few, should be within normal limits.

Start taking Folic Acid supplements 0.4 mg once daily, 3 months prior to planning and continue throughout pregnancy. Folic acid is a form of vitamin B which helps in preventing neural-tube defects in the baby. So, it is important that your diet isn't deficient of Folic acid.

Things to avoid

- Smoking
- Alcohol intake
- Harmful radiation
- Hazardous chemicals
- Narcotic drugs
- Caffeine

Diet and Exercise

It is very important that the food you take contains all the essential nutrients and antioxidants necessary, to improve your fertility. Good diet and lifestyle play a pivotal role in your fertility. Ensure you have good sleep and keep your stress levels under check, do not overdo anything that harms your general health, be it exercise or food habits. Daily work outs, walking or jogging help in improving blood circulation to uterus in women and improves Testosterone levels and quality of sperms in men.

Adequate hydration up to 3 to 4 litres of water per day, helps in detoxifying your body. Do not overload your body with carbohydrates, reduce the amount of carbohydrates but do not remove them entirely from your diet, include proteins and fibre in your diet.

Zinc is a natural antioxidant which helps in improving your Oocyte and Sperm quality. Foods rich in Zinc are paneer, curd, butter milk and pumpkin. Vitamin C is yet another vital antioxidant which helps both men and women. Spend time under the sun for around 30 minutes a day, as it helps in increasing vitamin D in your body. Avoid dairy products and gluten if you have inflammatory or autoimmune conditions. Meet a nutritionist or dietician and have a diet plan that suits you for better results.

Understanding your menstrual cycle

Normally women have menstrual cycle every 28 to 32 days, with duration of bleeding ranging from 3 to 7 days. Cycle frequency rang-



ing from 25 to 35 days is also accepted as normal.

Ovulation usually occurs on the 14th day of a regular cycle; it may vary from 9th day to 21st day in case of short or long menstrual cycle.

It is easy to understand that ovulation happens 14 days prior to your next expected cycle. That is, if you have a 28-day cycle then you ovulate on 14th day, if you have a 25-day cycle then you ovulate on 11th day, if you have a 35-day cycle then you ovulate on 21st day.

You should be able to track your ovulation by calendar method. Note down the first day of your last menstrual period and find out the corresponding date of your next cycle based on your cycle length, count back 8 to 18 days from that date, ovulation might happen on one of those days. Since it is tricky to predict the exact date of your ovulation, you can have intercourse either daily or on alternate days in your ovulation window, to increase the

chances of pregnancy.

Cervical Mucous Method

Cervical Mucous is the secretion from the Cervical glands. It helps in preventing ascending infection into the uterus and facilitating ascent of sperms into the uterine cavity during ovulation. The consistency, appearance, and amount of cervical mucous changes with the menstrual cycle phase. You Can Predict your ovulation by analysing your Cervical Mucous during the fertile window. Cervical Mucous discharge is normally thick and viscid when felt between the thumb and index finger, two days prior to ovulation it becomes thinner and clearer and forms a long string between your fingers, after ovulation it again gets thick and doesn't form a string. You ought to have intercourse when your cervical discharge turns thin and clear for 2 to 3 days, to improve your odds to get pregnant.



Dr Akash Agarwal, Scientific Director

Basal Body Temperature Method

Another method to predict your ovulation is by measuring your basal body temperature, this is a crude method and may not be accurate, but it can give a hint on your ovulation when combined with other methods. Measure your body temperature after your menstrual cycle is complete, for 3-4 consecutive days preferably in the mornings. Note your basal body temperature. Record your temperature daily in your ovulation window. During ovulation, there will be an increase in the body temperature by 0.2 to 0.5-degrees, which continues to remain elevated for 2 weeks.

However, this method is not reliable as your body temperature increases if you have the flu or other infections.

Apps on the Phone

Nowadays various mobile apps are available to track your menstrual cycle and predict ovulation. These apps give you an idea about your fertile window, so you can have intercourse during those days to increase your chances of pregnancy.

The best method would be to combine all these natural methods to predict your ovulation and time your intercourse accordingly.

Follicular tracking by ultrasound scan

If you want to be even more sure about your ovulation, then you can visit your health care provider to monitor your follicle growth and ovulation through serial ultrasound scans. This is a definitive method to confirm ovulation, and is best done in a fertility centre under the care of a reproductive medicine specialist.

Ideally, for a young couple aged below 30 years, who is trying actively to achieve pregnancy for 6 months, there are good chances to conceive within this time. If you are not missing the fertile window and still there is no positive pregnancy, then it is best to consult your doctor for a full examination and treatment if required.

Hegde Fertility is a one-stop destination for all your 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.

Being located at prominent areas across Hyderabad in Hitec city, Malakpet, Miyapur and Suchitra Circle, the centres are easily accessible. The timings of 8 AM to 8 PM from Sunday to Saturday, at all its 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.

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This effort has been the game changer in its consistent results over the last decade.

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. Hegde Fertility has a nutritionist on board, who suggests and customises a personalised diet plan for couples planning pregnancy, which is suited to their needs and also help them in their weight loss programs too.

The healthcare provider equally supports couples aiming for natural pregnancy and is well equipped to handle complicated cases requiring advanced IVF procedures.

For more details, contact:

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