

## Pregnancy: Stay fit & Healthy

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Dear friends, today I would like to discuss with you a very important aspect of a life event for both women and men - "The antenatal period". Being pregnant can be an exciting as well as anxious time for most couples whether it is planned or a surprise!

Although pregnancy is a normal physiological process, it involves major changes in the body systems:

- As a direct result of sharp surges in feminine hormones.
- Increased blood flow to the uterus and kidneys and the increased total blood volume.
- the growth of the baby resulting in enlargement and consequent displacement of the uterus and
- Increase in body weight and adaptive changes in the centre of gravity and posture.

Many women experience **back pain** in pregnancy and many women identify pregnancy as the start of chronic Back problems.

For many women, pregnancy and childbirth can also be the start of a number of health problems related to **pelvic floor dysfunction (PFD)**.

**Incontinence** as a result of PFD affects mainly women in the childbearing age group - many of whom suffer in silence for years before seeking help. Education into these changes and learning skills to adjust and deal with them, preparing yourself as pregnancy advances, for labour and childbirth are essential in order to make this unique period not only stress free but a most unique and fulfilling time in your life.

Today's antenatal care aims to

- Promote and maintain optimal physical and emotional maternal health throughout pregnancy.
- recognise and treat medical complications occurring during pregnancy
- detect abnormalities in the foetus as early as possible
- To prepare and inform both parents about pregnancy, labour, childbirth and the subsequent care of their baby.
- The overall goal is to ensure that result of pregnancy is both mother and baby are healthy.