

Family planning following childbirth

STAR HEALTH DESK

Family planning (FP) after childbirth is crucial for prevention of unintended and closely spaced pregnancies. However, providers, women, their families and communities, as well as policy-makers and programme managers, often do not properly think of the need for FP at this time. They may not be aware that a woman's fertility can return in the early months after birth and that with timely initiation most contraceptive methods are safe for the breastfeeding mother.

According to an analysis of Demographic and Health Survey data from 27 countries, 65% of women who are 0-12 months postpartum want to avoid a pregnancy in the next 12 months but are not using contraception.

Closely spaced pregnancies within the first year postpartum are the riskiest for mother and baby, resulting in increased risks for adverse outcomes such as preterm, low birth weight and small for gestational age. FP can avert more than 30% of maternal deaths and 10% of child mortality if couples spaced their pregnancies more than two years apart.

In order to raise awareness of FP needs of postpartum women (women after delivery), policymakers need to focus beyond antenatal care, labor and delivery care, and child care, to address postpartum care, including Postpartum Family Planning (PPFP).

Most of the pregnant women make prenatal visits or have contact with health care providers at or soon after delivery when PPFP can be introduced in the context of primary care, including comprehensive maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) services encompassing antenatal, birth, newborn, immunisa-



tion, nutrition and community health care. It provides more acceptable, timely and effective ways of reaching postpartum women and addressing their FP needs.

Efficient organisation of services is essential to allow enough time to include FP counseling and decision-making and to ensure that integrated services, such as birthing units or immunisations sessions, have all the necessary equipment, supplies, contraceptives and trained staff to provide FP, including long-acting and/or permanent methods like intrauterine device, tubal ligation, vasectomy etc.

However, many women do not access to healthcare institutions and these have limited opportunities to receive FP information or services. Community health workers can bring information and services to women and men in the communities where they live, rather than requiring them to visit health facilities, which may be distant or otherwise inaccessible. Men may effectively be involved in PPFP in their role in decision-making, in influencing the attitudes of families and communities, and as clients. The postpartum period, especially first

few days after birth, is a time during which couples generally have multiple encounters with the health care system.

Providing contraception during this time is cost-effective and efficient because it does not require significant increases in staff, supervision or infrastructure. Strengthening of family planning in this period can result in dramatic reductions of high-risk pregnancies, reduced unmet need for FP, and improvements in the health and survival of mothers and children.

Source: World Health Organisation

HEALTHbulletin



Knee arthritis improved by combined diet and exercise

Overweight and obese adults suffering from knee osteoarthritis may benefit more from combined intensive diet and exercise regimes, rather than undertaking diet or exercise regimes separately, according to a study published in JAMA.

Shorter radiation course appears effective for early breast cancer

In women with early breast cancer, three weeks of high-dose radiation is as effective as the current standard — five weeks of lower-dose treatment, British researchers say.

A short course of radiation given in larger doses — an approach called hypofractionated radiation — is safe and effective and causes less damage to healthy surrounding tissue, according to the 10-year results of two British trials published in The Lancet Oncology.

Diabetes and weight loss: finding the balance

If you are overweight and have type 2 diabetes, dropping pounds lowers your blood sugar, improves your health, and helps you feel better. But before you start a diabetes weight loss plan, it is important to work closely with your doctor or diabetes educator - because while you are dieting, your blood sugar, insulin, and medications need special attention.

Cutting back on just one meal can affect the delicate balance of blood sugar, insulin, and medication in

your body. Experts from WebMD recommended the following balance in a diabetes weight loss plan:

- Maintain a healthy ratio of carbohydrate (carbs), fat, and protein. The ideal is 50% to 55% carbs, 30% fat and 10% to 15% protein.
- For people with diabetes, a refresher course on carbs may also be in order. That's because carbs have the biggest effect on blood sugar, since they are broken down into sugar early in digestion. Eating complex carbs (whole-grain bread

and vegetables, for example) is good because they are absorbed more slowly into the bloodstream, cutting the risk of blood sugar spikes.

- Simply cutting lots of carbs -- a common dieting strategy -- can be dangerous. When your body doesn't have carbs to burn for fuel, your metabolism changes into what's known as ketosis and fat is burned instead. You will feel less hungry, and eat less than you usually do but long-term ketosis can cause health problems. Ketosis decreases oxygen delivery to the tissues, which puts stress on eyes, kidneys, heart, liver. That's why the low-carb, high-protein diet is not really safe for people with diabetes. Diabetics need to try to stick with a more balanced diet so your body can handle nutrients without going into ketosis.
- Exercise is another important issue that is beneficial for both diabetes and weight loss. Regular exercise with foot care can boost up your plan to lose weight and control sugar better than before.

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Knowing for better living

In Bangladesh

Anemia affects

46% of pregnant women

&

33% of non-pregnant women

Take plenty of Iron and Vitamin rich foods like fish, meat, fruits and green leafy vegetables.

Take care of pregnant women to ensure Iron and Vitamin rich diet everyday.

Consult your Doctor.



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TRAVELLING



Health tips for long-term travellers

If you are going to spend a long time in a foreign country—for education or work, for example—have a plan to protect your health while you are away from home.

Find a healthcare destination

Before you go, get checkups from your regular doctor and dentist to make sure everything's in good shape. You still might need care while you are gone, so plan in advance where you will go if you get sick or are hurt. Do not forget to take any routine medicine (such as drugs for high blood pressure or an asthma inhaler).

Avoid injuries

The number one cause of preventable death in travelers is injuries, particularly traffic accidents. Always wear a seatbelt, be careful when crossing the street (especially in countries where they drive on the other side). Another major cause of death is drowning, so take precautions when swimming, diving, or boating.

Get vaccinated and preventive medicine

Talk to your doctor about what shots you might need to prepare for your trip. You might need booster shots of routine vaccines or travel-related vaccines or preventive drug such as for malaria, depending on your destination. Travelers' diarrhea is very common in long-term travelers. Be careful about what you eat and drink, and ask your doctor about taking an antibiotic in case you do get sick.

Source: CDC

HEALTH NEWS



Japan plans investment in medical technology

Addressing the need of skilled manpower in medical technology, Japan has taken initiative to invest in the health sector of Bangladesh, through bilateral medical technology cooperation, says a press release.

Speakers announced the establishment of an institute on radiology and imaging in a seminar organised by Medical Excellence JAPAN, a project of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan held at a local hotel in Dhaka.

Speakers also identified the crucial role of the train doctors and technologists in medical that is the first requirement for installation of sophisticated medical devices.



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