

# 35 AND PREGNANT

## Navigating the myths and realities

The expression may sound alarming but “geriatric pregnancy” is simply a medical term for pregnancies in women aged 35 and above. Over time, this has evoked fear and concern due to increased health risks. However, it’s important to understand that these risks do not define every pregnancy; many women in this age group go on to have perfectly healthy pregnancies and babies. Today, with growing awareness, healthcare providers are advocating for less stigmatising language. Rather than focusing on age-related risks alone, the emphasis is shifting to individual care.

### Medical advances and improved outcomes

Advancements in maternal healthcare have been life-changing for women over 35. Regular screenings, genetic testing, and prenatal care have improved outcomes, making it safer for women in their late 30s and beyond to conceive. According to an expert at the Cleveland Clinic, chances of having a healthy baby are still much higher than the chance of a miscarriage, between ages 35 to 40.

“I conceived at 38 years of age,” shares entrepreneur and mother of three, Nurjahan Ajanee. “Except for one very discouraging doctor, everyone cheered me along throughout my pregnancy. Besides having to take some additional tests to make sure my child was not at risk of Down syndrome, it was a routine, full-term pregnancy.”

While the likelihood of complications such as gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia, and chromosomal abnormalities increases with age, the ability to manage these risks has also improved.

Moreover, fertility treatments, including IVF, have allowed many women to achieve pregnancy even when natural conception is challenging. The use of assisted reproductive technology has expanded options for aspiring mothers beyond a certain age.

### Healthy habits matter

A way one can have a successful pregnancy after 35 is by maintaining healthy lifestyle practices before and during pregnancy. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and avoiding harmful substances like tobacco and alcohol can significantly reduce the risk of complications at any age. Staying informed through regular check-ups can help even further.

Managing stress and having a strong support system are equally important during this period. Many women who experience successful late pregnancies thank their mental well-being and emotional resilience as key factors in their journey.

