

Information for New Antenatal Clients

Pregnant women have to face a lot of physiological and emotional changes. Support from their families is very important. Apart from providing routine antenatal checkup, Maternal and Child Health Centres have also prepared series of health talks and workshops for the parents-to-be.

Antenatal Checkup

1. Medical and obstetric histories

- Past health and history related to previous pregnancies, family history of particular diseases and health status of current pregnancy can help our staff to work out a plan of antenatal care for individual woman.
- The first date of last menstrual period can be used to estimate the expected date of confinement.



2. Body weight and blood pressure measurements

- These are indexes of the health of both the mother and the fetus.
- Types of clothes worn affect the accuracy of body weight measurement. Pregnant women are advised to wear clothes with similar weight in the subsequent visits.
- It will be very difficult to measure the blood pressure accurately if the clothes are too thick or the sleeves are too tight.



3. Urine tests

- During every routine checkup, urine sample is tested for the presence of sugar and protein.
- *What does it mean if sugar is found in the urine of pregnant women?*
 - Due to hormonal changes, it is common to find small amount of sugar in urine during pregnancy. Blood test is required to confirm gestational diabetes.
 - Generally speaking, if a pregnant woman is over 35 years old, obese, have family history of diabetes mellitus, history of gestational diabetes or delivery of a baby with birth weight over 4 kg, the chance of having gestational diabetes is high.
 - If a pregnant woman with gestational diabetes does not receive proper treatment, then both she and her fetus will be seriously affected.
- *What does it mean if protein is found in the urine of pregnant women?*
 - There are many reasons for the presence of protein in the urine. The commonest reason during pregnancy is urinary tract infection.
 - It may be due to pre-eclampsia which often associates with raised blood pressure and usually occurs in later half of the pregnancy. Serious sequelae can be resulted without prompt and proper management.
 - Another common reason is contamination of urine sample by vaginal discharge due to improper technique in collecting urine sample.

Please use the correct method of urine sampling to improve the accuracy of urine test:

1. Drink some water but do not eat in the morning.
2. After the first time urine in the morning, prepare a clean bottle with a wide mouth to collect the second time urine.
3. Use wet cotton wool pad or toilet paper to clean the perineum to remove any vaginal discharge.
4. Only the mid-stream urine is collected.



4. **Oedema**

Midwife will check if the pregnant women have oedema in every routine checkup. If there is co-existing high blood pressure or protein in urine, or oedema condition worsen in a very short time (several days), pre-eclampsia would be suspected. Prompt referral to specialist is necessary.

5. **Physical checkup**

Doctor will check if the heart, the lung and other organs of the pregnant woman are healthy. The abdomen will be examined to monitor the growth and the position of the fetus. The heartbeat of the fetus will be detected by using an instrument.



Daily Activities

- ✚ Pregnant women feel tired frequently. Adequate rest is necessary to avoid losing appetite which will affect the growth of the fetus.
- ✚ It is useful to attend antenatal exercise class. If unable to attend such class, please keep regular stretching exercise. Other exercises such as swimming and walking are also suitable during pregnancy.
- ✚ Personal hygiene is important. Body temperature will be slightly increased. Wearing cotton clothes can help to absorb the sweat. There will be more vaginal discharge due to hormonal changes, and candidiasis is extremely common. Using sanitary pads, wearing cotton underpants and taking shower instead of tub bath can help to prevent infection. Vaginal douching is not encouraged.
- ✚ In the late stage of pregnancy, slight amount of breast milk will be secreted from the nipples. Remember to clean with water everyday.
- ✚ Sexual life can be maintained during pregnancy unless there is vaginal bleeding.



Abnormal Conditions

If any of the following conditions occur, one should consult the doctor or attend the emergency department of hospital immediately:

- ✚ Preterm leaking
- ✚ Vaginal bleeding
- ✚ Persistent abdominal pain
- ✚ Severe oedema accumulates within short time
- ✚ Severe headache
- ✚ Significant decreased fetal movement i.e. less than 10 times within 12 hours

