

INDIA'S NO.1 PREGNANCY, BABY & TODDLER MAGAZINE

Mother & Baby

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APRIL 2021

FEELIN' LIKE MYSELF

Ways to be 'you' with a bump



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10 TIPS
TO SURVIVE
MEALTIME
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On the Cover

On the cover **Isha Kachru** and baby **Zoella**

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Ruhi Singh



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Mother&Baby

Editor's Note

It's been over a year since life changed collectively for most parts of the worlds. And if there's one thing that has been synonymous with the year that went by, it is safety. It has been the buzzword recently, preceding other words like standards, norms and protocols. When we say, "take care" to friends and family lately, we mean a lot more than just a cursory greeting. Needless to say, the times have been tougher for families with the elderly and children. New parents are harrowed with the added fear of additional environmental hazards to the little one who is yet to develop defences against everyday triggers, leave alone a highly contagious and unpredictable disease! Mums-to-be are reeling under similar insecurities and anxieties. Mother and Baby has been by your side this past year looking at all aspects of parenthood in the current scenario, including the social and mental. And as life comes a full circle for the planet at large, we revisit the topic of basic safety for you, your baby and your family.

Starting from baby proofing your house to preparing a first-aid kit, we even talk about environmental dangers. We touch upon essential vaccines and delve into toy safety. And while we are at it, we showcase some adorable, kid-friendly masks to adorn to keep your li'l ones safe yet cute!! We may have to follow safety protocols for a while to come. Why not do it in style?



Swati Chopra Vikamsey
Editor



Visual: Akshay Kulkarni; Hair & Makeup: Sachin Gathe

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DR KIRAN COELHO

A successful gynaecologist and practicing obgyn for the last 30 years.



DR DHERANDRA KUMAR

Consultant clinical and child psychologist, he is founder and director of Psyindia, and engaged in direct work with children.



DR ANITA MADAN

A doctorate in education, she is currently the Curriculum Development head with EuroKids International Pvt Ltd where she promotes a developmentally appropriate curriculum.



SONALI SHIVLANI

Mumbai-based childbirth educator, certified by Childbirth & Postpartum Professional Association, USA.



DR GEETANJALI SHAH

Popular Mumbai paediatrician, conducts holistic fitness workshops for pregnant women.



ANIKA PURI

Childbirth educator, prenatal and postnatal massage therapist, certified counsellor, reflexologist and a holistic practitioner of women's health and fertility in Delhi.



NUTAN PANDIT

Breastfeeding counsellor and natural birth therapist who's been teaching in New Delhi since 1978.



EFFATH YASMIN

India's leading IBCLC, biodynamic craniosacral therapist, and founder of Nourish & Nurture, Mumbai, India.

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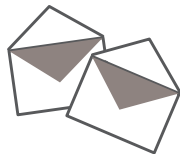
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Dear Swati,
I've been an ardent reader of the magazine ever since my son Aryan was born, and since then, M&B has played such an important part of my mommyhood journey. Not only have I watched Aryan grow over the last five years, I've also witnessed M&B blossom into the masterpiece it is today. The information I've received from these articles is unlike anything I've come across. I'd also like to specially mention how glamorous the covers get with each issue! It truly is a treat to read and I hope to be reading it for a long, long time.

ARUNA SHETTY, MUMBAI

Dear Aruna,
Thank you for such sweet words, and it is our honour to be on this journey with you. We at M&B have enjoyed switching things up over the years and we're glad you've made note of this! Keep an eye out for more exciting issues coming your way.
Cheers! - Swati



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Hi Team M&B

I still remember picking up that first copy back in 2008 and thinking 'wow, finally!'. You are the answer mums-to-be and mums have been looking for, and now, years later, it is my privilege to tell you that I was one of them! I remember the excitement as I filled my subscription form and at the start of the month, as the issues reached my doorstep. I owe my

smooth pregnancy and ease into motherhood, to your magazine, and have

till date gifted five subscriptions to people I know! Keep up the good work.

CAROL-ANN LOPES, GOA

Hi Carol-Ann,

You've just made our day! How lovely to have you with us right from our budding days. Messages like these keep us going and push us to work harder.
Thanks for writing in. - Swati

Hi Team,

Your magazine has been the best friend I could possibly hope for during my difficult pregnancy. I was sick almost all throughout my pregnancy, and faced complications I didn't think were even possible! But Mother & Baby kept me going and today I am a happy mum to my two year-old twins Lakshay and Arianna. I can't thank you enough for all the support I received, and I now recommend it to almost every mum I meet. Much love!

APEKSHA KHURANA, DELHI

Hi Apeksha,

Thank you for these encouraging words, and we're happy to have come to your rescue. The mommyhood journey is a roller coaster of sorts right from the very beginning, and our mission is to make it a smooth ride for you.
Love right back. - Swati



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Shraddha N Shetty



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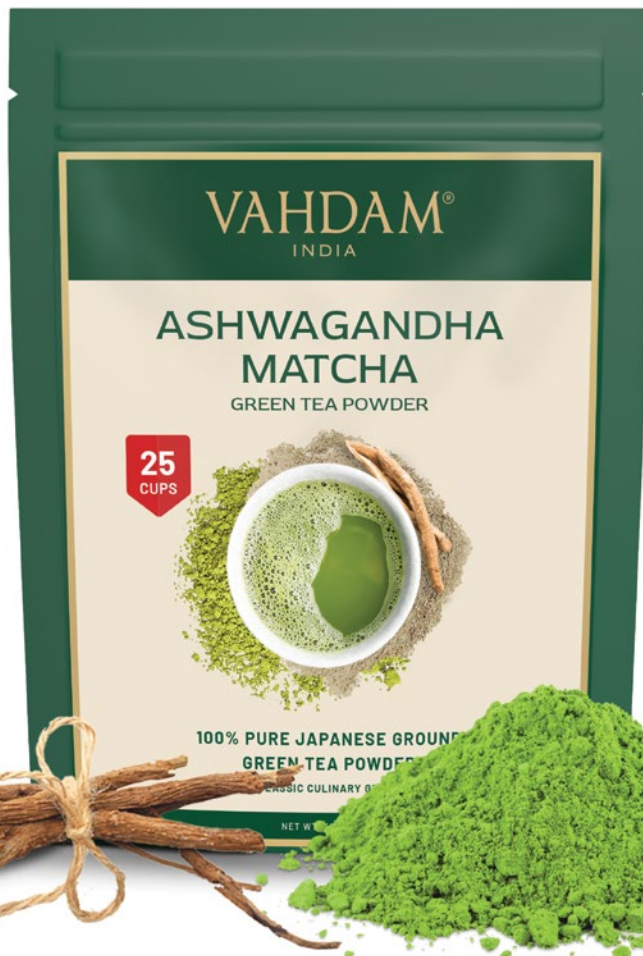
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LIKE A BOSS!

Isha Kachru, partner at India's leading toys manufacturing company Funride Toys, lets us in on how mommyhood has made her feel more empowered than ever..

BY **RUHI SINGH**

SHOOT COORDINATION AND STYLING **RUHI SINGH**

VISUALS **SUSHANT SINHA**

Mum, entrepreneur and fashionista, 29 year-old Isha Kachru was quite the free-spirited, take-each-day-as-it-comes kind of girl in the city, until baby Zoella catwalked into her life and suddenly, everything took a 360 degree turn! "I want to laugh hard when someone asks me how my life has changed. It's truly is no where close to how life was prior to Zoella, I don't even have

a second to be carefree. My world revolves around my baby. Now, I don't have a fixed routine even for my meals, and my schedule is as unpredictable as it gets. And yet, I would not want it any other way," shares Isha. Despite the eminent change, she reiterates that she has started loving her life so much more now, and believes that this is only just the beginning of a great phase for her and her husband Sourabh.





With a masters degree in fashion entrepreneurship from the London College of Fashion, Isha had a brief stint in the fashion and jewellery industry, which helped her gain great exposure. During her courtship with Sourabh, he persuaded her to join his family business, Funride Toys, a toy company that manufactures baby products like trikes, walkers, scooters, etc. "I currently work in the R&D department, and am involved in the designing of new products –focusing on the comfort, safety standards, colours, packaging, etc," she shares.

Isha and Sourabh got married in March 2017, and in October 2019, they decided to start a family. "Within two months of planning and trying, I got pregnant. Telling Sourabh was not as filmy or Insta-inspired as one would probably imagine. I am a very 'boring' person when it comes to giving surprises. Sourabh was at work when I got the news, and I just couldn't wait for him to come home. I picked up the phone and made that call—he wasn't really surprised since it was planned, but his excitement was unmatched. He came home early that day with a cake, and we even went out for a celebratory dinner date," she reminisces.

THE WHOLE NINE MONTHS

The first half of the pregnancy for Isha was a smooth ride. She travelled, socialised and enjoyed outings like before. "I heard many stories about how some mommies in the making might be practically bed-ridden during pregnancy due to various reasons, but thankfully, my body allowed me to carry on with life as usual. Sourabh and I even took work trips to Hong Kong and Germany," recalls Isha. However, her socialising was short-lived, owing to the pandemic and subsequent lockdown. Yet, Isha chose to look on the brighter side of things.





"I got to spend a lot of quality time with Sourabh and our family, which was great. Despite how the other half of my pregnancy panned out, I really have no complaints," she smiles. Just as I begin to ask them about the highlights of their nine-month journey, Isha chimes in excitedly, "Hearing our baby's heartbeat for the first time was magical. It was so surreal—we were still digesting the fact that we were going to be parents, and as soon as we heard the sound of her heart beating inside me, it slowly began to sink in. It was exhilarating and terrifying in equal measure!" she says. The biggest challenge for the parents to be, was to ensure that they remain safe and free from any infection as D-day slowly neared, and they braced themselves to welcome their li'l one in the midst of a pandemic.



AND THEN WE WERE THREE

Isha ensured that she was well prepared for her delivery, with two bags filled with essentials, for the hospital. "I did a lot of research and spoke to my friends who'd had their babies too. I packed nursing bras, comfortable clothes, high-waisted underpants if I had to have a c-section and breast pump—the hospital staff teaches you how to use one, and I figured it would come in handy someday," she says. And for the baby, Isha had a separate bag with feeding bottles, swaddles, diapers and blankets.

With all this prep, the duo were more than ready to step into parenthood in style. After a 15-hour wait, when Isha didn't feel any pain, they had to induce labour and opt for a C-section. Within an hour, baby Zoella was born. "It's so wild to think how life can change in a matter of hours! Going into D-day, I heard so many drawbacks of getting a C-section, but it was alright. My recovery post-delivery was speedy, so much so that I was cleared to workout after eight weeks. I started with light exercises, and that helped me heal even faster," Isha recalls.

Although she took to her new role with ease, Isha notes that having a baby in a pandemic is as tough a challenge as it gets. "Sourabh was, and still is, very particular about letting people come over. I won't lie, it was extremely disheartening to not be able to celebrate the birth of our baby with friends and relatives. They understood that it was the best decision, given the circumstances—after all, it was important to keep baby Z safe," she says. She credits her support system at home for being able to navigate through the initial days of mommyhood, and the anxiousness that surrounds caring for a newborn. "We live with Sourabh's parents, so we were lucky to always have helping hands around us. I didn't really have postpartum blues, but I did experience anxiety for the first two weeks. I remember I would force myself to stay awake, because I was worried something might happen to her if I wasn't not keeping an eye on her. It took me two weeks to accept that nothing will happen to

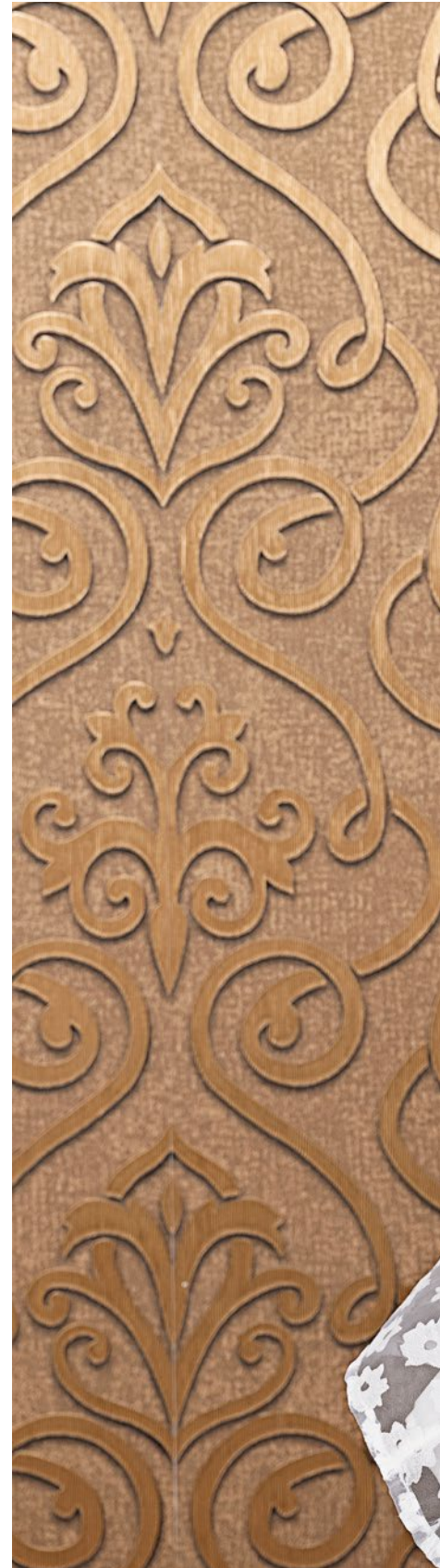
Zoella if I sleep! There was always this sense of insecurity of not being present around her. I cannot describe this feeling in words, but the first two weeks were a mixture of unparalleled joy and incessant worry," confesses Isha.

SIMPLY THE BREAST

Of all the challenges she anticipated, she never imagined breastfeeding to be one of them. She wasn't producing enough milk, which decreased further, after a month. She immediately met with a lactation expert, and learned about how breastfeeding works on the basis of 'demand and supply'. "I was pumping and feeding every three hours alternatively, which is eight times a day. Each of my pumping sessions was 45 minutes long, so I barely slept. Then, someone told me to increase my calorie intake. Since I was desperate and helpless at that point, I started eating more, but that led to weight gain. You can only imagine how it affected me physically and mentally, that I was barely sleeping, and gaining weight rapidly," she recalls. At this point, hubby Sourabh stepped in and took her for a consultation again. There come several moments in a mum's life when she has to pick her battles; Isha did the same. After weeks of trying, she finally decided to put Zoella on formula. Isha has no regrets, because, after all, fed is best.

TRIP DOWN SAFETY LANE

The couple maintain that life with Zoella changed in more ways than one. They savoured every moment of this new adventure, and learned to take each day as it came. The trio even made a little family getaway across the country, to Ranthambore. Considering the COVID-19 situation, the trip had to be well planned and safely executed. "This trip was the first time Zoella saw new faces apart from the ones at home. We took her around and showed her the place. Initially, she cried a little, trying to get accustomed to this new experience, but once she settled down, she was one heck of a happy camper!" laughs Isha.









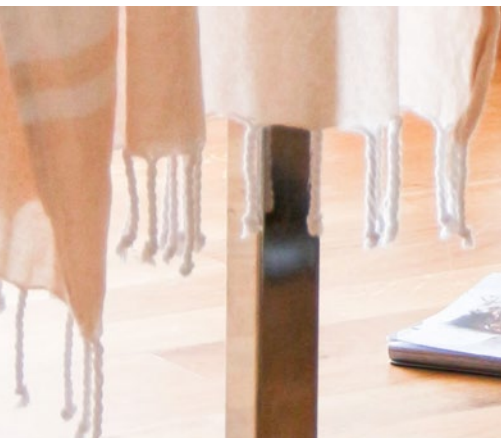
MOMMY & ME

When it comes to work, Isha is determined to keep on hustling and juggling mommy duties at the same time. "I choose to be physically present in the office for meetings as and when required, and work from home the rest of the days. So I also get some mommy and baby time. Since I work in the family business, I can afford some amount of flexibility. As a working mum with a newborn, that's all one ever needs. I'm always grateful that my career doesn't have to take a complete backseat," she beams.

In her journey as a mum, as Isha discovers new challenges and learns something new each day, she is grateful to have the support of her family as she takes on motherhood. And just like that, she hopes to be baby Z's support system as she grows older and has her own set of experiences and challenges to conquer. "As parents, we will always be by her side and will always support her in whatever she wants to be. However, I am very determined that she is financially independent. It's too soon to be talking about this, but it's so important that I help her work towards this goal. She is free to be whoever she wants to, and she'll have mum and dad there to guide her through it all" Isha signs off. **MB**

How To proof in style

We show you how to help keep boo-boos and ouchies at bay, without compromising on your home aesthetics..





Riddhi Rathod

is the principal designer at Rathod's Design, and mum to two. Her focus lies in creating functional, creative and out-of-the-box child-friendly spaces. An alumnus of the Oxford Brookes University, UK, her clientele includes leading organisations and celebrities.

It won't be too long before your curious cat takes in her surroundings and begins to explore, and engage with all that she comes in contact with—touching, tasting, scribbling, tearing, climbing up, jumping down, etc. Baby proofing your home becomes the need of the hour once a baby starts crawling.

There are a number of products available in the market, like safety brackets, blunt corners, drawer locks, TV anchors etc. They're a great investment, but once you start installing them, you slowly begin to realise how these elements don't quite fit in with your Pinterest-worthy home! Although the baby-proofing might be a temporary phase if you have one baby, if plan on expanding your brood, that dreadful padding may become a permanent feature in your home.

A space that looks beautiful, but doesn't take into account the demands of everyday family life will quickly end up being a no-entry zone. Instead, we can design a space that can stand up to sibling food fights, vomiting babies, indoor cricket matches. Most families hold their decoration plans until their li'l ones grow up, thinking that they will eventually destroy it. But, research has showed that youngest of the kids also inspire and appreciate living amid beautiful spaces.

So you know the what and the why, but chances are, you're struggling to figure out how. We at M&B have taken it upon ourselves to show you some ways of baby proofing that are designer approved and add to your décor...

SWAP OUT FURNITURE

Instead of babyproof wrapping on the furniture with hard edges, which looks hideous, swap furniture pieces throughout your home and choose those that are kid-friendly. An ottoman can replace a sharp-edged coffee table, a sturdy wood dining table be placed instead of a glass one. A bench or ottoman with hidden storage is loved by both the kids and adults. Open it up, and you have an elegant solution to your storage problem. Any furniture which enables kids to play around it without fear of sharp edges, is a good addition in the house.

DESIGNATE AN "ADULT-ONLY" ROOM

If you have enough space in your home, you could designate a "adults-only" room. A casual breakfast ledge in the kitchen can be for everyday family meals and a formal dining room can be used for dinner parties. Make sure your li'l one knows the rules and regulations of this part of the house, and that she cannot enter without adult supervision.

CREATE A PLACE FOR PLAY

There are many benefits to an environment where children are welcome. A child who is free to explore in his home will become more independent, self-sufficient, and alert than one who is confined from the 'adult house.' This environment encourages them in constructive play and avoid damaging the furniture around the house. For example, if they are given a blackboard wall, they would probably use their imagination to scribble and draw only there than in any other wall of the house

PLAY AROUND WITH ELEMENTS

1 USE AN OUTDOOR RUG, INDOORS

Outdoor rugs are easy to clean and dry in the sun. Who says they can't be used indoors? This is perfect way to furnish your home without worrying about those spills. Make sure you have non-slip pads under the rugs and carpets.

2 HAVE FUN WITH CUSHIONS

Cushions can really liven up a space and if someone spills on one, just wash it or switch with another pillow cover. Playful colours and patterns add character to the décor.

3 CHOOSE THE RIGHT SHADE

Have a highlighting wall or choose a shade of wall paint in which stains might not be visible easily. It's best to check the colour of the stains on your current sofa before choosing furnishings for the new one.

4 USE BUILT IN STORAGE AND FURNITURE WITH SOFT CLOSE FITTINGS

It is quite a hassle to look for storage furniture (such as bookcases, cabinets, and chests of drawers) with a broad and stable base all the time and check its sturdiness. Instead, get built-in custom furniture made, so there is absolutely no chance of it toppling over your child even if they climb over it. Soft, closing

fittings are extremely useful to protect the kids hands from pinching in the furniture.

5 SORT OUT THE ELECTRICALS

Look out for those loose wires, that could be a safety hazard. Use concealed wiring and light fittings wherever possible. This makes the space look neat as well as be safe. Keep the electrical switch boards inaccessible higher than four feet. Electrical sockets need to be covered with babyproof plugs where accessible.

6 DOUBLE SIDED TAPE

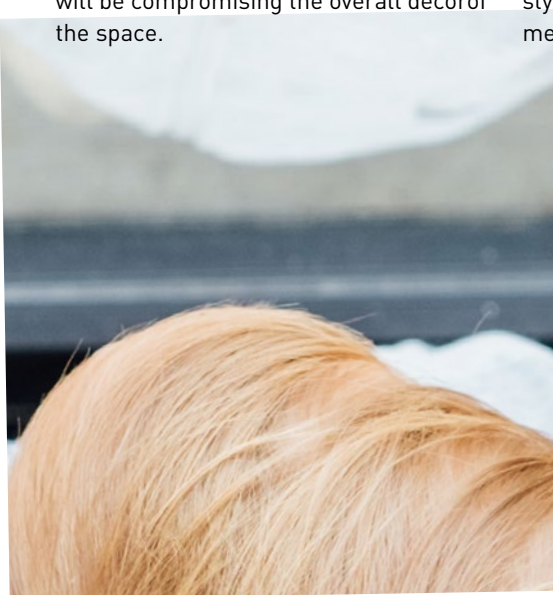
Use double sided tape to stick your expensive home decor accessories in their designated place so the child wont be able to hold it or move it from

its position. Though this wouldn't save them from an indoor cricket play, it will definitely not let your child play with it.

7 FURNITURE AWAY FROM WINDOWS

Kids can climb window ledges, push out window screens, and climb over balcony railings with their curiosity. Reduce the chance of your infant falling by placing furniture away from windows. Inexpensive vs long lasting
There are two attitudes you could have. Either have inexpensive yet stylish furniture and then change it once your baby grows up or have high performance sturdy materials which can withstand wear and tear. None of these decisions will be compromising the overall decor of the space.

Look closely into each space especially from their angle. Sit on the floor at their height and look for all the sharp corners, anything that can fall if pulled or any fragile object. This will give you a wider view on the kids perspective and where you need to put your attention on. By doing this we can create a safe yet stylish child friendly home that adults love as well. If there are a few stains and dents, those can be some memorabilia of their childhood. As long as the kids are safe, Its good not to sweat the small stuff. Isn't that what creates any space into a home? Kid-proofing your home isn't always about smart hacks and styling tips. It can sometimes just be a mere mindset shift! **MB**



HOW TO CHOOSE A baby monitor

An audio monitor is a great gift from technology. It not only lets you listen to your baby from another room, but also helps ensure that the nanny is doing her job well.

Here's how to pick one...

CHECKLIST

- ✓ Check if the monitor provides the widest possible frequency and the best clarity.
- ✓ Look for monitors with multiple channels as it will allow you to find a channel with the least amount of interference (caused by cellphones and radio -operated devices).
- ✓ Keep all of the cords, adapters and transmitters out of reach of your baby.
- ✓ Ensure that you have a pack of batteries handy or see to it that your batteries are recharged.
- ✓ Never solely rely on a monitor for your baby's safety. Whenever you can spare time, take a peek in your baby's room.
- ✓ Keep the monitor away from the kitchen, bathroom or other areas that are near water.

SIZE

Lightweight compact size receivers are easier to carry around. Some can easily fit into the pocket of your apron!



POWER SOURCE

Transmitters and receivers that are battery operated are good for moving around, but you will have to buy a lot of batteries. Look for models that can use rechargeable batteries.

DOUBLE RECEIVERS

Some models come with two receivers, which can be handy if you want to leave one in a room and have the other for moving around your home.

VOLUME CONTROLS

An adjustable volume is handy when you don't want guests to hear every sound your baby makes.

LOW BATTERY INDICATOR

Transmitters and receivers that have a low battery indicator are helpful in reminding you to replace or recharge the batteries.

SOUND ACTIVATED LIGHTS

Receivers that light up when a noise is detected are helpful when you're doing something that prevents you from actually hearing your baby's cries (like working the food processor or vacuum cleaner or watching TV). **MB**



First Aid

Learn to handle any emergency with these handy tips from M&B's panel expert and well-known paediatrician Dr Geetanjali Shah

BY SUBARNA GHOSH

MAKE THE RIGHT ORS

You need: 200ml water, a pinch of salt, one tsp sugar
You must: Stir in the water, salt and sugar together in the given proportion. Taste the solution to check that it is just as salty as tears.

Mums don't need diplomas or certificates to prove their skills when it comes to caring for their little ones. Their special mummy instinct backed by information and awareness can go a long way in dealing with any crisis. While instinct comes naturally, awareness must be cultivated so that one does not make a wrong move. Learning about the techniques of First Aid is the first step towards ensuring that your baby is in

safe and confident hands, before you make it to the medical facility. Paediatrician Dr Geetanjali Shah opines, "What makes a lot of difference when a child is hurt is how it is handled immediately after the incidence. Emergencies can happen not only at home but also while travelling and knowing the basics of first aid can be of immense help for proper recovery." In her years of practice, she has also seen that often, being unaware, parents end up doing things that are completely

against the basic rules and, then, treating the injury becomes more complicated.

CUTS

Sharp metallic objects at home are the common cause for cuts in babies. Even when out to play in the garden, rough surfaces and thorns can pose a threat. Your first job is to check the size of the cut and the extent of bleeding, says Dr Shah. Wash the wound with cold, running water so that the micro particles of dust and





dirt can get cleaned. Use a fresh cotton piece to gently stroke away any dirt particle from the wound, but be careful not to disturb any blood clots that may appear. After washing, a soft, white tissue can help to dry the wound before applying the antiseptic ointment along with the dressing.

If you see that the cut is deep, then the bleeding needs to be stopped

quickly. The technique to do this is to apply pressure on the edges of the cut with your thumbs, as if trying to approximate them. Once the bleeding is controlled, a micropore dressing can be used under a roller gauze to keep the pressure on and reduce the oozing. The injured limb has to be positioned so that it is raised above the level of the heart so that the flow of blood to the open wound is reduced.

RECOVERY POSITION

If the child is unconscious or semi-conscious, make him lie on the tummy with the head turned to one side. Then bend the leg at the knee by keeping it slightly flexed. Never let the child lie on the back. After making him lie down in this recovery position, you can get medical help. When a child has received any kind of shock, the recovery position is essential as the raised leg allows the blood to flow directly to the heart. Parents must remember not to carry the child on

In some cases, you may observe that a foreign body like a thorn or a piece of glass is stuck inside. Dr Shah says that even then the first step would be to control the bleeding by dabbing it with a gauze and keeping it raised above the level of the heart. If the foreign body can be seen easily, a tweezer can be used to take it out. The tweezer can be sterilised by holding it directly under a flame and then letting it cool. If the foreign object cannot be removed easily then one should wait for the doctor to do it. Before reaching the paediatrician, you should make sure that your child does not touch or access the wound.

BURNS

According to Dr Shah, in the case of any burn, running water must be applied for a minimum of five minutes. "This is most important, since it prevents tissue damage and if running water cannot be used then the area needs to be immersed in water," says Dr Shah. Make sure that the dressing is sterile gauze covered with a layer of thin plastic sheet. No fluffy cotton should be used to dress a burn and if the affected area is a limb, then it should not be moved at all. If you find a piece of clothing stuck to the burn area, do not try to remove it and the

ON THE MOVE

- Carry nasal drops for your baby when travelling by air. Administering nose drops half an hour before a flight can help to ease the baby's discomfort by keeping the ears clear.
- If your child is prone to convulsions, remember to carry the suppository medication in your handbag and not with the checked-in luggage.
- Asthmatic children need to have their inhalers close at hand for emergencies so keep it in your handbag instead of the checked-in luggage.
- If you are travelling to a place where there your child may get any allergic reaction, remember to keep the antidote handy.

same holds if a blister appears. Dr Shah says that it is advisable not to smother the area with ointment before the doctor checks it since this can obstruct the expert's view and thus the true extent of damage may not be determined. Though your child is hurt, refrain from giving him anything to eat or drink before going to the doctor since it may be necessary to use a local anaesthetic.

If your baby has been the victim of a major fire emergency, then there may be chances of smoke inhalation with carbon monoxide. The first step would then be to make sure that he is removed to an open space. Dr Shah points out that a common organ affected by burns in children are the eyes. The First Aid procedure would then be to bend the head in the same direction of the affected eye and then pour cold water over it. Before going to the doctor, just cover the eye by taking a bandage around the head and leave the rest for the medical expert to assess.

ACHES

The most common complaint of a growing child is that of a cramped leg. The reasons may vary... from the low temperature of the air conditioner to excessive sweating and low sodium in the body, says Dr Shah. For any muscle pulls, hot fomentation can provide quick relief and administering an ORS preparation can take care

of the sodium deficit. Dr Shah recommends the use of Mag Phos, a homeopathic remedy for aches. She also says that soaking the area in a water that has been added with lavender oil and salt can provide relief to the aching muscles.

FALLS

Begin attending to a child who has had a fall by assessing the height of fall and the breathing or consciousness. Start by giving a cold compress to the part that has been injured. There may or may not be a cut but the impact of the fall can be internal. If you notice that the area has undergone violent contraction then place a thick layer of cotton and fix it with an adhesive tape until the doctor can take a look. To apply an ice bag, you can fill a plastic bag with ice and salt and use it on the affected area. The salt helps to prevent edema or fluid accumulation. The ice bag help in constricting the vessels and it can be wrapped with the help of a thin towel.

If the child is unconscious then make him lie down in the recovery position (see box) and see that his breathing is not hindered. This will prevent aspiration or the movement of fluids from the stomach to the lungs and will also ensure that the child does not choke with vomit or saline.

DROWNING

As more and more homes choose

to have a bathtub or wading pools in the house, cases of water-related accidents have increased considerably. Swimming pool accidents can also occur in the case of slightly older babies. Dr Shah advises that the first step in the case of drowning is to give immediate mouth to mouth respiration help by lifting him out of water, even before he has been completely removed from it, since the first result of drowning is the blocking of airways. Then the child can be made to lie flat on the back and checked for any obstructions present in the mouth. After mouth to mouth help has been given and breathing is better, he should be made to lie in the recovery position (see box). In the case of hypothermia or lowering of body temperature, blankets can be used to keep the body warm.

CHOKING

Little tots choking on everyday, household objects is not rare. Eatables like peanuts and popcorn are also a threat for babies who are unable to chew properly. The quick way to deal with an emergency of choking is by laying the baby on the lap in a prone position or face down. Then with one hand below the head or neck, one should hit between the scapula or two shoulder blades. If the object that has caused choking is big enough to be seen then it can also be pulled out. A combination of back slaps with abdominal thrusts can help to expel the object that has caused choking.

FEVER

The best way to deal with high fever at home is sponging, says Dr Shah. In the case of any fever, the temperature of the water used should be normal, like tap water. But if the fever has been caused by a heat stroke then the water used for sponging needs to be cold. **MB**

Easter @ home

We show you how to celebrate Easter at home and make it just as exciting..

BY KRISSELLE FONSECA

So what if you can't go out and frolick in the spring glory this Easter? There's no reason not good enough to celebrate in style. And while you're forced to downsize your festivities yet again, we at M&B have taken it upon ourselves to show you how to make the most of it. Here are a few ideas on how to throw a fun Easter do for the whole family at home..

DIY DECOR

Get crafty with the kids with some DIY Easter décor that is sure to keep your li'l one engaged. There's no time quite like the present to give your house the ultimate spring makeover, and why not get your tots involved you're at it. You don't need to do something extravagant, just a few knick-knacks that would make the house a lot more festive. You could make buntings out of colourful card paper, to hang on the wall, or cute paper bunnies to scatter around different corners of the house. You can also get your tots to make easter eggs out of playdough, and place them in baskets, along with with paper bunnies. Given that our celebrations are restricted indoors, it is extremely important to get the vibe going.





EGG HUNT

Easter egg hunts are quite popular in Western countries, and are slowly picking up momentum in India. Instead of merely giving your li'l one her Easter gift, why not make a fun and exciting activity out of it. The rules of the Easter Egg Hunt are simple, the kids have to collect Easter eggs scattered at various points around the house, and the one who collects the most number of eggs wins a prize. If you have a house with a lawn or backyard, it will make the hunt even more interesting as you will have a lot more places to scatter the eggs around. You could also switch the rules up a bit—hide a golden coloured egg called the 'magic egg,' and whoever procured this will win a special prize.

EASTER-THEMED FAMILY PHOTOSHOOT

Since you're probably going to be in your Sunday best, why not make the most of it and have a grand family photoshoot! You can use some of your DIY décor elements as props for the shoot. You don't need to hire a professional if you don't want to, and don't even need fancy lighting or other equipment. The self-timer on your cellphone camera will do the trick, and as for lighting, take your pictures in the morning or mid-afternoon for some of that magical golden-hour sunlight effect that would



take your pictures to the next level. Alternatively, you could take your photos a few days before easter and select the best one to send out as an Easter greeting to your relatives and friends.

BRUNCH PICNIC

You can also organise an Easter brunch picnic for the fam. Whip up some family favourite recipes and let your munchkin get her hands dirty too! If you live in a home with outdoor space, you can make the most of this. If you don't, there's a lot you could do indoors too. Leave all your windows and blinds wide open, so as to let plenty of natural light in. You could also place a few plants around your picnic area, to give it a more natural, earthy feel.



BAKE FESTIVE DESSERTS

Festivals are a great way, or rather excuse, to indulge in your sweet-tooth whole heartedly, and Easter is no exception. Easter eggs made of chocolate, breads, pies, and themed shortbread cookies are some of the most iconic Easter treats that are an absolute must-have. But the one dessert that takes centerstage this day is a classic, heart carrot cake. As a special gift from us to you, here's a tried and tested recipe to help you whip up the ultimate showstopper:

Make an easter basket to gift your neighbours. While you're at the Easter treat making, why not spare a few for your near and dear ones. In these unprecedented times, it's important to spread a little cheer wherever you can, and what better way to do so than to send out a piece of your celebrations. You can place chocolate eggs, a slice of cake or bread in a jute basket, pretty it up with some fresh florals and a handwritten note that you could get your li'l one to write. This heartfelt gesture will certainly feel like a warm hug, and boy do all of us need one! Take your tot along to distribute these gift baskets to teach her the importance of giving, and she will also be able to see the joy and cheer on peoples faces firsthand.

Carrot cake with cream cheese frosting

YOU NEED

For the cake

- 4 eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup canola oil
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 to 3 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 cups grated carrots
- For the frosting:
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 3 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3-3/4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 2 to 3 tablespoons 2% milk
- 1 cup chopped walnuts, (optional)

YOU MUST

- In a large bowl, combine the eggs, sugar and oil. Combine the flour, cinnamon, baking soda, baking powder, salt and nutmeg; beat into egg mixture. Stir in carrots.
- Pour into two greased and floured 9-in. round baking pans. Bake at 350° for 35-40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.
- For frosting, in another large bowl, cream butter and cream cheese until light and fluffy. Beat in vanilla. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar. Add enough milk to achieve desired spreading consistency. Reserve 1/2 cup frosting for decorating if desired. If desired, stir walnuts into remaining frosting.
- Spread frosting between layers and over top and sides of cake.
- Store cake in the refrigerator. **MB**





When in the womb, your baby is safe and secure. Once you welcome her into your world, chances are the environment around would not warrant the same. From dust mites to air pollutants, pesticide-injected foods to degraded toy quality, all could potentially form an unhygienic chain around your baby. Because these things are present everywhere and mock your baby's life at every step, it's hard to keep your baby away from their clutches. Moreover, your baby's system isn't all that strong and sound to fight off the harmful effects of pollutants and toxins acting as uninvited house guests. But being a little alert can make a lot of difference to your baby and her life. Even if you cannot remove all the pollutants and toxins from her vicinity, you can choose the right stuff to ensure safety and a healthy way of living.

If it's hard to break free from that inseparable unhygienic chain, you can create your own chosen hygienic chain to annul the effects of the former. Here, we list simple ways that will help you keep your baby pollution-free and out of the reach of toxic substances to a large extent, and, in the long run, reward you with good health and a safe environment for your baby.

1 TA-TA TO TOXINS!

Want to ensure that your baby is fed pure, natural foods after birth and during the initial months of her life? Then nothing is better than breastfeeding. But, even though all mums would like to nurse their baby as naturally as possible, it's not always feasible. Facing such dilemma are mums whose babies have a problem latching on, working mothers, or even mums who have to travel long distances with their babies. Expressing milk and storing it in the bottle becomes the ideal solution. But the question is which bottle? Will all plastic bottles keep the nutrients of expressed milk intact and fresh? Urban parents know the answer and smartly choose the ones labelled 'BPA-free'. With a surge of BPA-free bottles making their presence known on shelves, the awareness has seeped in if not for the right reason. Bisphenol A (BPA) is a carcinogenic compound found in most plastic bottles that has a tendency to seep into food, making it toxic and harmful for your baby. For parents who depend entirely on infant formula and bottle feeds, checking for bottles with a BPA-free label should be of prime concern, as they are dependent on external sources for all essential nutrients. "Also, if you do use a bottle, make sure you don't keep the bottle cap open for too

Top 10 threats to watch out for!

There are seemingly innocuous things in her environment that could be a potential hazard for your baby. M&B shows you how to protect her from them

BY DEBJANI SENGUPTA ARORA

long. Our environment isn't clean and pollution free, so leaving a bottle open for too long would lead to contamination, BPA-free notwithstanding. Studies have shown that carcinogenic exposure through food and also other mediums can lead to malignancies later in life," cautions paediatrician Dr Sandeep Mehta, attached to Mumbai's Bhatia Hospital. "To protect your infant from toxins in food, it would be ideal to breastfeed. But if at all you choose a bottle, make sure it's BPA-free and still, as a precaution, never put the bottle directly into the microwave because the composition of plastic containers can be altered, when heated and can react with the food. Warm the milk and then pour it into BPA-free bottles," advises Sonali Shrivani, breastfeeding expert and Mother & Baby panelist. Though it might not be a convenient option but glass bottles used to store and feed baby can keep toxins at bay to a greater extent. "In plastic bottles, one cannot always be sure of the material used, glass bottles promises to remain intact in their composition and keep the food safe,"

suggests Dr Mehta, who feels that not only milk but even IV fluids and blood kept in glass bottles will keep them toxin-free.

200H ORGANICS!

When it comes to choosing clothes, cotton is your best bet, especially for infants. You can raise the bar a little higher by choosing clothes made of organic cotton. The skin-friendly fabric keeps your baby safe from rashes and allergies. Even if you're one to doll up your baby, "Make sure that the first layer of clothing is made of cotton. For infants, follow the norm to avoid velcro, buttons or any fabric that can cause abrasions," informs Sonali. Choosing the right clothes is just one aspect of the story; it's also important to take good care of clothes to ensure there are no pollutants left to trigger an allergy. "You can use a regular detergent to wash baby clothes but the last rinse should be with water. Dettol or any other antibiotic liquid can leave stains of chemical so it's better to give them a miss," she says. "If you are really finicky, organic clothing can put your worries to

The dope on BPA

Bisphenol A, often known as BPA is a chemical found in hard plastics and the coatings of food and drink cans, which tend to behave in a similar way to estrogen and other hormones in the human body. BPA is used to make many products, including water bottles, baby bottles, dental fillings and sealants, dental devices, medical devices, eyeglass lenses, DVDs and CDs, household electronic and sports equipment. BPA can also be found in epoxy resins which is used as coatings inside food and drink cans. The harmful effects of BPA only came to light in 2008.

How BPA can harm your child:

- Though animal studies on the dangers of BPA have mixed results, experts believe that BPA can mimic a particular hormone in the body and disrupt the normal hormonal levels and development in the foetus, babies and children.
- The national toxicology programme at the FDA expressed concern about BPA's possible effects on the brain and behaviour of infants and young children.
- Studies have also shown a possible link between BPA and cancer.
- Some experts believe that BPA exposure may give rise to conditions like obesity, diabetes, ADHD, etc.
- The harmful effects of BPA could be more pronounced in children and infants as their systems are not developed enough to fight them, studies suggest.



rest. But the problem is, apart from the higher cost, it's not widely available everywhere in India," says Sonali. "If you can ensure that your cotton clothes are thoroughly washed and all stains and dirt removed, then your little one can breathe easy in cotton outfits," opines Mehta.

3 FEAR-FREE FEEDS!

When it's time for your baby to start on solids, it's going to be a huge challenge for you. Not only will you ponder about what to feed them and what to avoid, you will also be concerned how nutritious your chosen baby food is. To start with, you can give your baby homemade baby food—a mixture of rice, pulse, *ragi* and wheat, washed, dried and ground. Make this in quantity and prepare a fresh feed by adding a scoop to water and bringing it to a boil. "Pick up organic foods. Sure it costs more, but you are sure to get all your nutrients intact. Go for fresh food. Peel, steam and puree fresh fruits for your baby rather than picking a ready-to-eat puree off the shelf. To ensure your baby has the right food with fewer toxins, stop being lazy and start doing it yourself in the kitchen. Wash, cook or bake your baby's food. Once you do it, you will realise how joyous it is and also

keep your baby free of pollutants. As a rule, avoid processed packaged foods for children as much as possible," says Kavita Mukhi, eco-nutritionist and naturalist farmer. "Another way to ensure that the food you choose has less pollutants and toxins is to eat seasonal. That way, you know that there are fewer pesticides, chemicals or hormones used in it. Soak the fruit or veggie in water for about 30 to 45 minutes before you consume it and choose foods that are as close to the farm as possible," says Sonali.

4 TRACK HER TOYS!

Toys are important, as they don't just add the fun element to your child's life but also help in cognitive development. "The irony is that more than toys, babies like to play with things that belongs to adults, like, the car keys, spoons, bowls, etc. Even if you lend them those, they will invariably put them into their mouth. So, ensuring that what you give your child is free of dirt and pollutants should be of prime importance. Sadly, in our country, toy manufacturers don't have to follow stringent guidelines so the onus is on the parents to choose the right toys for safety," says Sonali. The two things that are of major concern while selecting toys are, "The colour and the material used. Since babies below three years of age have a tendency to put things into their mouth, the plastic quality and the paint used (if it has carcinogenic compounds in it) can cause harm.

It may not affect your child's developmental milestones at the moment but can cause troubles later in life, manifesting as poor concentration, reduced intelligence, etc.," says Dr Mehta. It is ideal to avoid toys that are cheap in quality. "It's best to stick to big brands; at least you would know that they are complying



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Eco-nutritionist Kavita Mukhi says keep your baby away from chemicals and toxins. "The food will taste better, keep you healthy and give you energy to achieve your dreams. Absorb sunshine, be active, be productive, be loving and be happy," she advises. Here are her simple rules to get your baby (and you) started on the healthy path:

- Use organic *saindhav namak* (rock salt) and whole sea salt
- Use organic *ghani* oil (cold-pressed) of safflower (*kardi*), peanut, sesame, coconut, sunflower and mustard and organic *ghee* and milk
- Use organic whole unpolished brown and red rice
- Use organic wheat bread or better still Indian *rotis* and organic millets
- Use organic jaggery and unrefined sugar
- Use organic *daals*, spices, herbs, tea, coffee, honey, etc
- And, of course, organic fruits and vegetables from a farmers market near you

THE PLAYTIME GUIDE

The US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has laid down some general guidelines to keep in mind when toy shopping:

- Toys made of fabric should be labelled as flame-resistant or flame-retardant.
- Stuffed toys should be washable.
- Painted toys should be covered with lead-free paint.
- Art materials should say non-toxic.
- Crayons and paints should say ASTM D-4236 on the package, which means that they've been evaluated by the American Society for Testing and Materials.



with the needed specifications and rules to provide you with safe toys. If you notice that the paint of the toy or the coating is coming off, you need to throw it away. Wooden and cloth toys may not look as attractive as the more modern variety, but are a safer choice compared to plastics,” says Sonali. While selecting teethingers and rattles, something your baby will eventually put into his mouth while playing, watch out for what you pick up. “Even rattles come in BPA-free versions; it’s better to choose one of those. Always select toys that are age-appropriate as they also ensure safety levels for the particular age,” says Dr Mehta. Sterilise toys if possible each time before you hand them over to your child.

5 DOO-DOO CARE!

When you talk about keeping your child safe from pollutants and toxins in the environment, do not forget the diaper. The diaper area is warm and moist—the perfect breeding ground for yeast and bacteria that could probably give rise to a rash. You might invest in the best diapers in the market, one that promise long-lasting dryness, but that doesn’t keep your baby safe from a diaper rash. “The most effective diapers can absorb up to 90 cc of urine and others depending on their capacity can absorb anywhere between 30 to 60 cc. That means, if your baby is healthy and urinates well, even with the best diapers you would need frequent change,” explains Dr Mehta. Long-lasting dryness should not be interpreted as ‘diaper on, worries gone’. “Cotton nappies would be the best to avoid infection, rashes and irritation in the diaper area but it is not a practical solution

either. Apart from frequent changing, even the fibre that's used to make the diaper is important. Superior quality fibre would cause less irritation in the sensitive area. To know if your diaper is of good quality, sprinkle a little water on it and allow it to settle. If the diaper remains straight, you can trust the fibre used. If it crumbles, it isn't safe for your baby's privates," points out Sonali.

6 SLEEP HER SAFE!

We all know that sleep is essential for a baby. It stimulates brain development, growth and general well-being. So, it's not only important that your baby sleeps tight but also safe while she snoozes. Co-sleeping has its own advantages but Sonali advises that it is better to choose a separate sleeping space for your baby. In this way, you are keeping your baby away from germs and mites that may have taken refuge in your king-size adult bed. "Look for an anti-flammable or flame-retardant foam mattress for your baby's crib or cradle. Also, take care that you do not make your baby sleep with soft toys in the bed. These toys might retain dirt and grime which, if inhaled by your baby, can lead to certain respiratory troubles. The same is true if you leave soft toys on your baby's bed for too long. The fur shed by these toys can give rise to similar hazards," warns Sonali. Let's not forget the risk of her getting suffocated by soft toys or pillows.

7 GEAR UP HER GEAR!

While choosing baby furniture, make sure to select something sturdy and robust. "Again, check for the paint and the plastic quality, whether they comply with international standards. Apart from this, furniture should be cleaned thoroughly and regularly by the caregiver," says Dr Mehta.

8 WORD PLAY

We all love buying books for our babies and toddlers. But are they all really safe for them?

"Bright colour picture books of various types are fun to see, touch and learn from. Make sure that when you choose board books, they have a thin film covering the pages so that the ink used does not come in direct contact with your baby's skin. Even if you do not get your child enough books, newspapers and magazines will be her favourite hands-on playthings. Since your baby could tear a piece of the page and stuff it into her mouth, be vigilant so that you can avoid her choking on it. Also, the ink used in newspapers is not of good quality so it's wise to keep your baby away from it," opines Sonali.

9 PAINT IT RIGHT!

Recent studies have indicated that the lead in the paint of your walls can cause harm to your child's development and general health. "It is most dangerous when you are scraping the walls for a renovation or repainting them. Keeping your baby away during those days would keep her out of danger. Once the house is painted, the chances of lead affecting your baby reduces. It also makes sense to fix any leakage in the house that would make the paint come out in clumps, as that would increase the chances of lead contamination," says Sonali.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- ◆ Keep your child away from peeling paint and broken plaster. Wash her hands often, to rinse off any lead dust or dirt.
- ◆ Wash your child's toys often, especially teething toys.
- ◆ Use cold water—not hot—for infant formula or cooking. Let the cold water tap run for at least a minute before using the water to flush lead picked up from pipes.
- ◆ Store food from open cans in glass or plastic containers.
- ◆ Use lead-free dishes. Some dishes may have lead in their glazes. Don't use chipped or cracked dishes to

GET AHEAD OF LEAD

Lead is a harmful carcinogenic substance found in old paint, dust, soil and water. Infants and children could suffer from lead poisoning from old, lead-based paint. If floors have dust from old painted walls, or paint chips, a baby could suck on lead-dusted hands or toys or breathe in lead dust. Some toddlers eat paint chips, soil, or chew on lead-painted window sills and stair rails. Excessive amounts of lead in the system of children could lead to:

- Lower IQ
- Behaviour problems
- Growth problems
- Anaemia
- Kidney damage
- Hearing loss

store or serve food.

- ◆ Keep your child away from remodelling and renovation sites. Old paint can have lead in it.
- ◆ Avoid having your child play in soil, especially around the foundations of older buildings and near roadways. Use a sandbox instead.
- ◆ When windows are open in warmer weather, wash the sills and window wells any time you see dust, but at least once a month.
- ◆ Make sure you give your child iron and calcium-rich foods to prevent lead poisoning.

10 BABY FRESH!

"Babies smell good and fresh by nature and do not need any oils, lotions or powder as opposed to what we feel. In fact, moisturising your own palms would make sense when you touch your baby's sensitive skin. So, if you are still keen to pick up oils and lotions for your baby, go herbal and organic, allergen-free and fragrance-free. Avoid the ones that are promoted on the basis of their fragrance as they would contain a lot of chemical components," says Sonali. **MB**

Bump To Birth



While surrogacy is certainly a boon for childless couples, there are many factors around it that must be kept in mind. We shed some light on the process, procedures and laws around surrogacy...



Womb in your heart

Starting a family can be a wonderful time in one's life. However, while there are many who very much long to have children, for one reason or another, they are unable to conceive. There is a solution, though, in the process of surrogacy. According to Dr Rita Bakshi, Chairperson of the International Fertility Centre, "Surrogacy involves the carrying of an embryo and the birthing of a baby by one woman, referred to as the surrogate, for a couple. The embryo is usually created through the intended mother's egg/donor egg and intended father's sperm/donor sperm using In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF). It is then transferred in the uterus of the surrogate, who acts as a human incubator, carrying the couple's baby through to the birth."

IS SURROGACY RIGHT FOR YOU?

There are a lot of things to consider before taking the decision to go in for surrogacy. An infertility specialist or a counselor can help you and your partner see things in the right perspective. Other options such as adoption or further infertility treatment can also be considered.

Dr Sudhir Naik, IVF consultant and board member, Profert IVF Fertility Clinic, Kandivli, says, "To be thinking about surrogacy, you should be in a strong, supportive relationship. It is also useful to have fully explored other options like adoption before you decide that surrogacy is the path you wish to choose."

Surrogacy may be appropriate if you have a medical condition that makes it impossible or dangerous to get pregnant and to give birth. Using a surrogate may be a good choice for you if you're unable to conceive because of uterine irregularities, absence of the womb, recurrent pregnancy loss or if other fertility treatments have failed.

According to Dr Naik, "Surrogacy is a process which has ethical, legal, psychological and financial implications. Hence, a detailed consultancy is required to find out the medical reasons why surrogacy is indicated, to do a psychological evaluation of the intending parents, to explain the legal formalities which need to be complied with, to explain the financial costs and to explain the medical procedure and the investigations which need to be done before the procedure begins."

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

The process of surrogacy is often a demanding and emotionally taxing experience. It can require vast amount of time, money and patience to succeed. It also depends on the level of complication, success of the treatment and the availability of the surrogate. One cannot ignore the uncertainty and the waiting part that comes along in the process. Finding a healthy, willing surrogate carrier can take months, whether you screen candidates through a hospital or an agency. Dr Naik explains, "It would be difficult to predict the exact time required to complete legal formalities. The medical process would require investigating and pre-procedure work may take around three months. Once you've finalised the agreement, your surrogate undergoes IVF and embryo transfer treatment until she becomes pregnant. It can take three or four treatments to achieve a successful pregnancy."

WHAT DOES THE IVF SURROGACY PROCEDURE IN INDIA INVOLVE MEDICALLY?

- For IVF surrogacy or gestational surrogacy, the intended mother and the surrogate will be receiving medications in order to match their menstrual cycles. Their cycles need to be synchronised as closely as possible so that the endometrial lining of the surrogate's uterus is

prepared for embryo implantation.

- The intended mother may be given a fertility hormone that will increase the number of eggs she produces. It means that more eggs can be fertilised. With more fertilised eggs, the clinic has a greater choice of embryos to use in IVF treatment. Throughout the drug treatment, both patients are monitored daily. Approximately 34–38 hours before her eggs are due to be collected, the intended mother is given a hormone injection to help her eggs mature.
- Egg retrieval from the genetic mother is done 34 hours later. On the same day, the intended father gives his semen sample.
- The eggs of the genetic mother are fertilised with sperm of the genetic father in the laboratory by providing correct conditions for fertilisation and early embryo growth.
- If embryos are produced, they are transferred to the womb of the surrogate under ultrasound guidance. Tests are done to confirm pregnancy in about 15 days.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SURROGACY?

The most important benefit of surrogacy is that it provides a couple a chance to have a child of their own. The reason it is preferred to adoption is that the child will have genetic material from one or both the parents. The process also benefits the surrogate mother economically, as she is compensated for bearing the child for the childless couple.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF SURROGACY?

There are some common risks involved in the process of surrogacy. It is a highly controversial topic and can involve many legal complexities. While the baby is inside the womb, a strong connection can be formed between the surrogate mother and the child. This can be very hard to give up when the time comes.

Dr Naik further states that there are also certain medical risks associated with surrogacy:

- The surrogate mother runs the risk of experiencing complications related to pregnancy that may have a negative effect on her health.
- The existing children of a surrogate mother may be harmed if her pregnancy results in high levels of stress for her.
- In case of the intended mother, there can be reactions to fertility drugs like hot flashes, headaches, restlessness, feeling of irritation and depression.
- IVF treatment has a chance of producing multiple births, which increases the chance of a premature birth and a baby that is below the normal birth weight.
- It is very bad for any child to be the object of a custody dispute, if proper legal documentation is not done. In addition, the rejection of an infant – for example, rejection of an infant with a disability by both intended parents and surrogate mother – is a significant problem in surrogacy.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT WAYS CHILDREN BORN THROUGH SURROGACY MAY RECEIVE BREASTMILK?

Babies born through surrogacy can receive breastmilk and the many health benefits it provides. Dr Aniruddha Malpani, MD, Malpani Infertility Clinic, Colaba, Mumbai, says, "The baby may drink breast milk acquired through a milk bank or the intended mother may induce lactation before the birth of the baby. Lactation may be induced in a number of ways. The most common way women induce lactation is through manual stimulation. With this method, lactation is induced by massage, nipple manipulation and sucking either by the baby or breast pump. The second common method used is hormone therapy, whereby a woman is prescribed galactagogue medications to induce and increase her milk supply." Induced lactation milk, skips the

colostrum phase and resembles mature breastmilk. The induced lactation can take a few weeks or months so it will be a good idea to begin the process during the final trimester of the surrogate's pregnancy.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE STEPS WHERE THE SURROGACY PROGRESS MAY FAIL?

"Failure can occur when the embryos (created from the intended parent's egg and sperm) are being transferred. In some cases, there is a possibility that the embryo might not implant on the uterine lining. Why embryos don't implant is still one of medicine's unsolved mysteries," states Dr Malpani. When questioned about the situation where the surrogate refuses to part with the baby at the last moment, he answers, "It has never happened with us. The two key things in surrogacy include proper surrogate selection (we only accept women who have their own babies and have completed their family); and counselling. Further, we get the surrogate and her husband to sign a legal contract, which protects the rights of the intended parents." And what if the surrogate suddenly disappears midway through the pregnancy? "Such incidents never occur. This is why it's important that patients select a reputed IVF clinic," he avers.

WHAT IS THE PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN OPTING FOR SURROGACY IN INDIA? HAS IT INCREASED OR DECREASED OVER THE YEARS?

The exact number of women opting for surrogacy in India is not known. "It is certainly increasing, because there is more awareness of this treatment option. However, the number of women who need surrogacy is very small," informs Dr Malpani. And there remains the cost factor. "One IVF treatment cycle costs about ` 2 lakh. Surrogacy treatment is much more expensive – about ` 12 lakh (though this varies from clinic to clinic)," he adds. **MB**



THE LEGAL ASPECT

India does not have a law or legislation governing surrogacy. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has set national guidelines to regulate surrogacy and has held commercial surrogacy legal in India. The process starts with pre-surrogacy legal counselling of the commissioning couple and the surrogate, surrogacy agreement and finalisation of the agreement. If the surrogate is married, her spouse is a part of the counselling and has to be in full agreement with the procedure. It's the surrogacy agreement that governs the contractual relation between the parties. It means that surrogate mothers need to sign a contract with the intended parents.

Amit Karkhanis, a prominent surrogacy lawyer and partner at Kaylegal and Associates, Mumbai, says, "A surrogacy agreement is a comprehensive document that deals with the relation between the commissioning couple and the surrogate. It is the only foundation which governs the parties to surrogacy. The rights, liabilities, responsibilities are determined by the contents of the surrogacy agreement. It includes details about the need for surrogacy, purpose and situation of both parties, the terms under which the surrogate has agreed, compensation, payment schedule, etc. Later on, after signing the contract, the parties cannot claim that their intention was any different from what is mentioned in the surrogacy agreement." However, there are no stipulations as to what will happen if this agreement is violated. According to him, critical situations can arise if the surrogate asks for additional compensation. "In some cases, the intended parents may fail to pay the full compensation. There is also a chance that a wrong embryo might be transferred into the surrogate's womb. These are very rare cases but they do violate the agreement," observes Karkhanis. "In case of violation of this agreement, the party can approach a court of law," he adds.

In view of the ICMR guidelines, once the baby is born, the intended parents become the parents of the child and are named so in the birth certificate. The IMCR's ART Bill



2010 says that the woman who agrees to be a surrogate cannot be less than 21 years or over 35 years. It adds that the couple will have to bear all expenses of the surrogate mother, including insurance charges. About the financial compensation, he states, "It varies from one agency to another but the amount a surrogate receives can be anywhere between ` 3.5 - 4 lakh." The Bill also makes it clear that in case of a divorce between the commissioning parents, the child born through surrogacy will continue to be their legitimate child.

When asked whether the intended mother is entitled for maternity leave or not, he states, "Ideally, she should be granted leave but it is a case of surrogacy where she herself is not carrying the baby, so the right for her maternity leave has not been recognised under the law so far.

Talking about certain legal to-do's that are necessary to safeguard the rights of both parties, he says, "Consistency and transparency in agreements is a significant step towards ensuring fairness. My advice to the parents would be to ensure a well-drafted surrogacy agreement that covers all the 'what ifs' in the process, addressing every issue that may arise and get the surrogate and her husband to understand their legal rights and liabilities. Also, a bare minimum compensation for the surrogate should be fixed by the law. Some sort of authority should be appointed to monitor and register the surrogates and the number of times they have become surrogate."

How To Be You With A Bump

Make the shift to
mum-to-be while still
living the life you love. Yes,
it is possible...

If your life used to revolve around Friday night mojitos and a daily caffeine drip, finding out you're pregnant can leave you wondering just how you'll still feel like you over the next nine months. Even a simple decision suddenly becomes overwhelming (can I still go for a run? Will I actually survive without wine?) Losing control of your body and changing your lifestyle to accommodate your growing baby can take some getting used to. But pregnancy doesn't have to mean missing out—it's just a question of approach. In other words, stop thinking about what you can't do and start enjoying what you can.

YOU USED TO...

BE A HAPPY HOUR REGULAR

If you struggle to remember a weekend (okay, let's admit it, even a week night) that wasn't perked up with a relaxing glass of red, then nine months of deprivation might be a scary prospect.

BUMP IT UP While advice used to be to avoid alcohol completely, the Department of Health now recommends keeping it to one or two units a couple of times a week at the most (a small glass of wine is one and a half units), so your pregnancy doesn't have to be totally drink-free. It's up to you.

Sometimes, nausea, tiredness and a desire to be as healthy as possible can put even the most alcohol-loving woman off while expecting, or you may find Virgin Marys and ginger beer appeal more. But if it's tough, find other things to help you unwind, such as watching the latest hot Netflix series. "Your brain takes around six weeks to break a habit, so keep up your new routine for that long and you'll start craving your new evening treat," says UK-based psychologist Dr Sandra Wheatley.

YOU USED TO...

BE A GYM BUNNY

Whether you're a total workout fanatic or a leisurely swim kind of girl, being pregnant often sparks total exercise confusion. While you might not want to hang up your trainers completely, nor do you want to do anything that might put your growing baby at risk.

BUMP IT UP Around 30 minutes of gentle exercise four times a week is ideal—it could actually reduce the risk of pregnancy complications, such as gestational diabetes, according to research by Johns Hopkins University, UK. Before you plunge into, er, lunges, consider how much you did before. "You shouldn't take up a new routine or push yourself," says pre and postnatal fitness expert Joanna Helcke, from Zest4LifeUK. "Your body and joints are looser because of the pregnancy hormone relaxin, so avoid contact sports and high-intensity exercises, such as squash, as they could lead to injury," she says. You don't want to overheat, either, so tone down your sessions and opt for gentler exercises, like a light jog, swimming or brisk walk.

YOU USED TO...

PARTY TIL 1AM

If your idea of a good night is to stay out until dawn and spend the rest of your weekend recovering, you can expect a routine shift. Even if you're not zonked by 10pm, you may find your nesting instinct kicks in anyway, making you more inclined to stay home.

GREAT STUFF ABOUT PREGNANCY YOU HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF YET

THE FUSS Everyone loves a pregnant woman. Strangers will admire your tummy, smile at you, offer you seats...

THE ACCEPTANCE Permission granted to be unreasonable, tetchy and generally hormonal. Okay?

THE GLOW No promises, but pregnancy hormones should make your skin radiant and your hair shiny.

THE LIE-INS You're supposed to rest, right? Yay for you.

THE EXCUSES Can't lug those heavy bags around, sorry. There's an ever-growing excuse to skip chores – you are carrying a baby, after all

THE GIFTS Here's your chance to throw a bump party or baby shower.

THE TREATS Pass chilled vibes to your baby with a pregnancy massage.

BUMP IT UP Keep partying but, if you struggle to keep up with your friends now there's a bump in tow, don't feel bad. "Wearing shoes that don't make you want to cry after an hour, and giving friends the heads up you'll be leaving earlier than usual will take the pressure off," says UK-based psychologist Gladeana McMahon. If you can't face your normal antics, tell your friends how much you still want to spend time with them, then come up with alternatives. Ask if they want to come round for dinner, or suggest a cinema trip or afternoon tea.

YOU USED TO...

SURVIVE ON COFFEE HITS

When you're faced with a tedious work meeting or are wading through treacle after a bad night's sleep, you might not have realised how much you relied on caffeine. But your baby won't appreciate

that fourth skinny latte as much as you.

BUMP IT UP The good news is, you don't have to give up caffeine completely in pregnancy. The UK Department of Health advises keeping to 200mg a day—research links excessive coffee consumption to miscarriage and low birth weight. "A mug of filter coffee contains 140mg, while milk chocolate contains up to 25mg per 56g bar," says nutritionist Charlotte Stirling-Reed. Or 200mg is the equivalent of two or three cups of tea (depending on how strong). Make the most of it by drinking it at 10.30am—research suggests our body clocks are most receptive to caffeine a few hours after waking up. You could also spin it out by swapping to a mocha. Brew one-part coffee and add a teaspoon of cocoa (which can boost memory and blood circulation, says research from Harvard Medical School). Mix it all up with some hot milk for calcium, important for building your baby's bones.

YOU USED TO...

LOVE A ROMANTIC NIGHT OUT

You're used to long dinners à deux being a regular thing. But now you either fall asleep halfway through your main course or feel too sick to enjoy it. Plus, he finds it a little embarrassing that you have to grill the waiter over every dish ("Is this goat's cheese really pasteurised?") **BUMP IT UP** You won't always be able to predict how you'll be feeling in the evening, especially as it'll keep changing throughout your pregnancy, so it helps to be flexible. A weekend lunch date may work better than an evening meal. Or try going to a market or exhibition together instead, which will give you something else to talk about—and remind you what you were interested in BP (before pregnancy). "It's fine to chat about your bump, but make sure you allow time for other conversations, and keep having fun together," says Relate relationship expert Paula Hall. **MB**

Eating out when pregnant

Meet the EXPERT



M&B' panellist **Sonali Shrivani** is an Internationally Certified Pregnancy Consultant and a child nutrition counsellor. She is the executive director of CAPPA India, and also trains aspiring birth professionals to achieve certification in pregnancy, birth and lactation counselling.

During a recent diet consultation, when I got to the section on 'eating out' preferences, the young couple on call immediately said, "No way, we have completely stopped eating outside food since we got the news that we are expecting." I am getting to hear this more and more during my consults, as parents want to do the best for their babies, without wanting to take any chances. I can't really blame them—afterall, COVID-19 still looms large, and there is still no known effect on a pregnancy. But is it really necessary to completely forego small pleasures and enjoyments? Well, maybe not.

The first challenge to eating out is the risk of getting stale food. We're so blissfully unaware of when the food has been cooked and how it has been stored. Many facilities are notorious for serving leftover food the next day or in the buffet section. Hence,

it goes without saying that during pregnancy, you might want to avoid buffets. If you feel that something is stale or it does not taste right, immediately stop and discard that food. A small bite may be a threat, but eating a whole meal of stale food will surely cause a problem.

The second thing to keep in mind is to avoid anything which is uncooked. Here, we are talking about salads, fruits, juices, chutneys, etc. It is best to eat salads and fruits as freshly cut as possible, and this cannot be expected in a restaurant where the items can be cut hours before they are served. A good rule to follow is, 'If you cannot heat it, don't eat it.' Many of us like to order takeout on days when we feel too lazy to actually cook a meal. I recommend ordering from a reputed place, and once the food is delivered, heat it again before consuming it.

The third factor is the health aspect. Let's face it—restaurant food is tastier and more appealing, but have you ever stopped to think of why? It's got loads of oil, sodium, food flavourings and colour, which is artificial. They often use of soda, which hastens the cooking process, and helps maintains the colour of the food. All these ingredients are not the best choices for an expecting mum. Once in a while, of course, you can indulge your taste buds, but do not make it a habit. Keep the concept of balanced meals in mind and ensure you pick foods which help you to cover all the food groups in your meal. Avoid fried foods and foods made with refined flours.

It is also important to consider the portion sizes while eating out. Many restaurants serve large portions, and as a social requirement, or since you are spending longer at the dining table, you may tend to overeat. Always ensure that you listen to your body's satiety cues. Eating more than required multiple times will result in excess weight gain, which in turn will increase your risk for pregnancy complications such as gestational diabetes, hypertension, etc. Many expecting parents even want to know what are the precautions that need to be taken especially while eating out during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 is transmitted by food, including fresh fruits and vegetables. The virus can be killed while cooking food at temperatures of at least 70°C.

Food buffets are not recommended because of the risk of close physical contact with others, using the same serving spoons and multiple people touching the surfaces of the buffet area.

If you do decide to visit a restaurant, you might want to pick an outdoor dining space that follows the norms of 50% occupancy laid down by the government. Avoid overly crowded places as it is not possible to wear a mask while dining.

The bottom line is that occasional eating out is fine, as long as you keep in mind the safety aspects, and do not allow yourself to go overboard. A major portion of your diet during pregnancy should come from wholesome, home-cooked meals. **MB**



In the 'prick' of health



Vaccination is crucial for all babies. Make sure you don't skip any

BY POORNIMA NAIR

WHY IS IMMUNISATION IMPORTANT?

A child is born with poor immunity as compared to an adult, and is prone to a whole lot of diseases, caused by bacteria and viruses. Immunisation assures that your child gets protection and is prevented from suffering the disease and its complications.

AT WHAT AGE SHOULD MY CHILD BE IMMUNISED?

Immunisation usually starts almost as soon as the child is born. He should be given the BCG, oral polio and Hepatitis B vaccination soon after birth.

WHICH ARE THE ROUTINE VACCINES THAT ARE GIVEN TO BABIES?

The routine vaccines given to babies are BCG, Polio, Triple or the Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus vaccine (DTP), Hepatitis B, H Influenzae Bacterium vaccine (HIB), Measles vaccine, MMR vaccine, Chicken Pox vaccine, Boosters of polio and DTP, Typhoid, and Hepatitis A vaccine.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT STAGES WHEN FOLLOW-UPS NEED TO BE DONE?

After your child is immunised

immediately after birth with the BCG, Oral Polio and Hepatitis B vaccination, he needs to come for the next vaccination at the age of six to eight weeks. From then on, practically every month, the child needs to be given some vaccination or the other till the age of six months. This is followed by the nine months vaccine. After one year, there are three or four vaccines every year, going on till the age of 16 years.

ARE THERE ANY LATEST DEVELOPMENTS WITH REGARD TO THE NATIONAL IMMUNISATION SCHEDULE?

A lot of newer vaccines have come into the market in the last couple of years. These include the Injectable Polio vaccine, Rotavirus vaccine, Pneumococcal Vaccine and the flu vaccine, which includes protection against swine flu.

DOES THE IMMUNISATION SCHEDULE VARY IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF INDIA?

No, the basic immunisation schedule does not vary inside India. It's only the optional vaccines that vary from person to person.

ARE THERE OTHER VACCINES

RECOMMENDED BY DOCTORS WHICH ARE NOT PART OF THE SCHEDULE?

Yes, some of the newer vaccines like Injectable polio vaccine, Rotavirus vaccine, Pneumococcal vaccine, Chicken Pox vaccine, Hepatitis A vaccine, and Typhoid vaccine are not part of the national schedule.

ARE VACCINES COST-EFFECTIVE?

Vaccines are always cost-effective, because the diseases that they prevent can cause serious symptoms and even death. Therefore, there can be no price which is too high for administering a vaccine, as it is a life-saving entity.

DO THEY ACTUALLY GUARANTEE LONG-TERM PREVENTION OF DISEASES?

Many vaccines, given once, provide life-long immunity, while some others have

a time limit for protection. Provided the vaccines are manufactured, stored and given properly, and provided the child's immune system is normal, most vaccines do offer long-term immunity against the diseases for which they are given.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE IMMUNISATION SCHEDULE AND VACCINATION SCHEDULE?

Immunisation and vaccination are terms used interchangeably. There is no difference in them.

WHAT ARE THE DOS AND DON'TS I MUST FOLLOW BEFORE TAKING MY CHILD FOR VACCINATION?

You should ensure that your child is not suffering from high fever or any major disease, when the vaccines are

being given. This does not mean minor coughs or colds or loose motions, but major diseases like pneumonia, jaundice, typhoid, malaria, dengue fever, etc. You should also see that he does not suffer from any bleeding disorder or from any disease that causes immuno-suppression.

You should clearly tell the doctor before vaccination about any side-effects from the previous vaccinations, any known allergies that the child has, any medications that he is taking or any major diseases that he is suffering from (such as asthma, epilepsy, jaundice, bone marrow malfunction, diseases of the blood etc).

Since most vaccines have some side-effects, it is always better to vaccinate

children in the morning rather than late evening, so that the you are awake and alert to any side-effects. Also, you should know that though most vaccines have minor side-effects, only in rare cases, serious and fatal reactions have been known to some of the vaccines. You should also ensure that the vaccines are being administered by a qualified and competent physician.

HOW CAN I ENSURE THAT MY CHILD'S IMMUNISATION IS UP-TO-DATE?

You have to read the vaccination card or file to know when the next vaccine falls due. You could set some reminder so that you do not forget the next due date for the vaccine. **MB**



Pelvic Floor Exercises

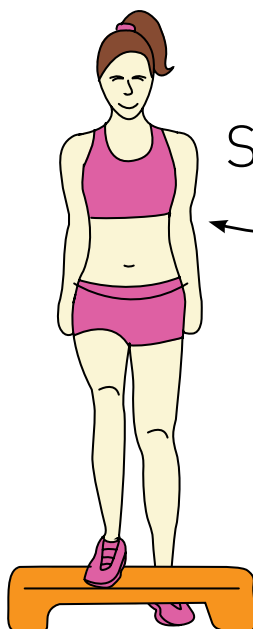
"Since I gave birth, I keep wetting myself every time I laugh or sneeze. Is this normal?"

UK-BASED PHYSIOTHERAPIST RUTH WHALEN SAYS

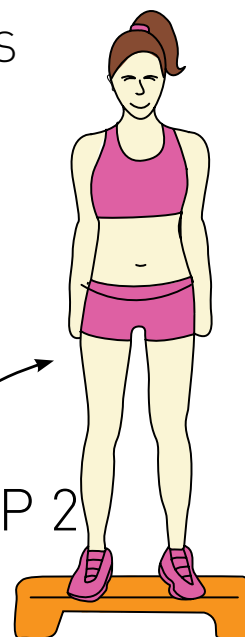
"It's very common to leak small amounts of urine when you cough, sneeze or laugh after having a baby (and during pregnancy)—a condition called stress incontinence. It happens when your pelvic floor becomes weak both from carrying the weight of your baby and the birth itself. "The pelvic floor muscles are the ones you contract when you want to stop yourself going to the loo. Pregnancy puts a huge amount of pressure on this area and it also has to stretch during birth. All of this makes them less efficient, and it can take a while for them to get back into shape. A cough or sneeze is a powerful activity that puts pressure on your bladder. Weak pelvic floor muscles can't handle this pressure and urine can accidentally come out. "Strengthen your pelvic floor muscles through kegel exercises. Ideally, you need to be lying down with your knees bent (you can do them sitting). First, pull your pelvic floor up and back, tightening your core muscles as you go. Hold this for as long as you can up to 10 seconds, then release. Repeat 10 times. Next, do a series of quick squeezes. With these, repeat the above move but without the hold, so you squeeze and release quickly up to 25 times. "Also, guard against leaks by learning to anticipate a cough or sneeze and contracting your pelvic floor while it happens. If you continue to struggle with stress incontinence, consult your GP. You can be referred to a physiotherapist, who will guide you through the exercises and make sure you're doing them correctly." **MB**

FIRST STEPS

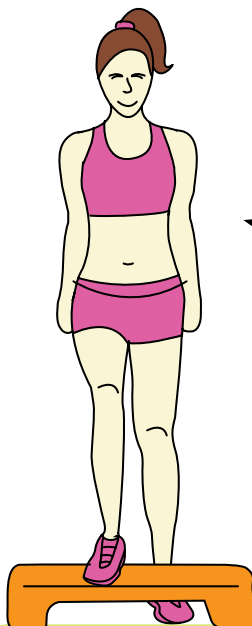
STEP 1



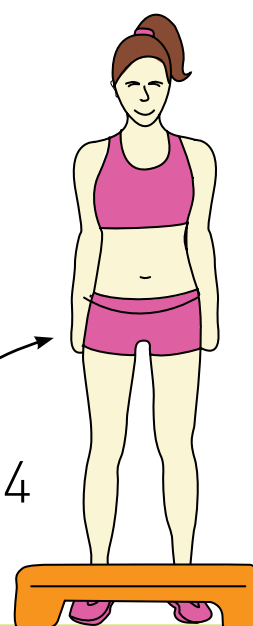
STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



GET INTO PRAM-PUSHING SHAPE WITH THIS STEP-UP EXERCISE THAT TONES YOUR LEGS AND BUTTOCKS

- 1 Put your right foot on a low step or raised surface.
- 2 Keeping your chest straight, lift your left leg and step up, leaning your weight on your right foot.
- 3 Step down with your left leg, then your right leg.

- 4 Repeat this 12 times. You can hold a baby's bottle in each hand if you want to tone your upper body, too.
- 5 Swap sides and follow the routine again, this time with your left foot starting on the step.

Homecoming and after...

Congratulations! Your little bundle of joy has finally arrived. The pregnancy and birth are behind you and now you can concentrate on baby activities. But, although you may be too busy to realise it, this is the time to take good care of yourself too. Here's our ready reckoner on how to smoothe your postpartum period...

BY PRITI SALIAN

PAMPER YOUR PERINEUM

The perineal area is sore when you have had a baby and an episiotomy or perineal tear which becomes essential in the first couple of deliveries, only adds to the pain. The best way to soothe yourself is by sitting in a tub of warm, shallow water called a 'sitz bath' for a few minutes, as long as you can manage comfortably. Dr Manisha Mittal, Delhi-based obstetrician-gynaecologist, advises wearing loose cotton clothes that do not stick to your perineal area. This will reduce your discomfort. "Avoid sitting cross-legged and, most importantly, keep the area clean by splashing it with cold water and changing your pads frequently. In case the episiotomy goes right up till the rectum, consume a light diet so that you may comfortably pass your stools," she says. Also, always wipe yourself from front to back after a bowel movement to minimise infection. Your gynaecologist may advise an ointment to soothe the area and, of course, an antibiotic cover to reduce chances of an infection. In case your perineal area gives you intense pain even after 10 days, go in for consultation.

In case of C-section: Keep the stitched area dry and hygienic. In fact, the clothes that are in contact with the stitches should also be impeccably clean to avoid any kind of infection. "Do not use a hot or cold compress to



soothe the pain,” adds Mittal.

MANAGE THE BLOOD

Your vaginal discharge after you have delivered your baby is called lochia. It is bloody and bright red initially and changes to pinkish-brown within a week or 10 days and gradually pales towards the end. The quantity also reduces with time. “For the first two to three days after delivery, you may need to change your sanitary pad every two to three hours, but after that normally the bleeding should settle down to about two to three pads in a day,” says Mittal. The discharge may go on up to 40 days in some of you while it may last only a week in some. However, if it doesn’t seem to reduce even after 40 days, you need to call on your gynaecologist. It’s also better to use pads rather than tampons, even if they stay on, to avoid infection during post-natal bleeding.

BEST FOR YOUR BREASTS

This is an extremely important part of postpartum care. Take good care of breast hygiene (though there’s no need to clean them after every feed) and wear loose clothes to avoid fungal infections like thrush. In case you develop cracks in your nipples, get them treated immediately as they may develop into an inflammation of the breasts called mastitis and may prevent you from feeding your baby.

Don’t mistake mastitis with breast engorgement which is a common problem with new mums. It is a situation where your breasts feel heavy, overfilled and painful if they are not emptied at frequent intervals. Engorgement would occur if your milk production exceeds its consumption, in cases where the baby is unable to suckle or feed well. To avoid this, ensure you feed your baby at least every two hours, from alternate

breasts. “Ideally, you should allow your infant to empty one breast completely (you’ll know when it feels limp), then move on to the other for two minutes before unlatching and then continue with the second one during his next feed,” says Mittal. In case your breasts are still engorged, you must empty them either by a breast pump or manually. If you can’t manage it on your own, ensure your gynaecologist is there to help you.

ABS IN THE CRUNCH

After undergoing labour or a C-section you are already drained out and then there’s an irregular sleep pattern and vaginal discharge and so many other things that completely take you over. You also become oversensitive to various kinds of pain that you could be experiencing in different intensities. Besides all this, stomach pain due to accumulation of gas, and “afterpains”, which happen due to the involution of your uterus, can make you uneasy.

Your uterus had grown in size to accommodate your growing baby, and now has to shrink to its original size to resume its function. This shrinking takes about six weeks and sometimes causes afterpains. These spasms last you no more than five days after the birth of your baby and usually don’t cause too much discomfort. “But if you want, you can take an antispasmodic to reduce this pain,” says Mittal.

However, the pain due to flatulence certainly could disgruntle you and for getting over this you can try your mother’s advice of drinking water boiled with cumin (jeera) or carom (ajwain) which really does work! Alternatively, you can take medication for flatulence on your doctor’s advice. As for a specific ache like lower back pain, you can apply an analgesic gel.

“Throughout the postpartum period, you undergo hormonal changes and this, along with the perineal pain, might hold you back from passing stools comfortably, so you may develop constipation,” explains Mittal. Sometimes, constipation may also lead to the formation of haemorrhoids. So, eat a lot of fibrous food and drink warm water at night and in the morning so that elimination becomes convenient.

TAKE IT EASY POLICY

You have just delivered your baby, so you deserve to rest for 40 days, just like your elders might have advised you. “In order to let your body recover completely, give it rest for six weeks,” says Mittal. Don’t worry about getting inactive as your newborn will keep you adequately busy. “You can work within the house as and when your body allows, but if you want to resume work, you must wait for at least one-and-a-half months after a vaginal delivery and for three months after a C-section,” she adds. The same goes for resuming any kind of fat-reducing exercise.

SEX? NOT YET...

For the first six weeks, while your uterus is involuting, your body is prone to infections and if you have intercourse, you may easily contract a few. “So, even if your vaginal bleeding has stopped, it is advisable not to have intercourse with your husband for the period,” says Mittal. But you can always use other ways of getting intimate, like hugging, kissing and just giving each other complete attention for a while; it sure will do your spirits a lot of good.

POPPING THAT PILL

Most of you new breastfeeding mums have a mortal fear of taking medication, however sick you may be. You tend to avoid it for fear that the

medicine may pass into your milk and adversely affect your baby. "But the good news is that most medicines used for common problems and mild infections like cold, cough, fever, sore throat, stomach upsets, etc, cause no harm to your baby," says Mittal. So, you can consider improving your health without upsetting your child's, of course after checking with your gynaecologist. Also keep in mind that the better your physical and emotional health is, the better your milk production. As for supplements, calcium and iron are good for you and can be taken for certain periods after consultation from your doctor.

Do address all your health problems; if required, with medication. If you are stressed, physically or emotionally, you can't bond well with your newborn and your near and dear ones are constantly worried about you. So, rest, relax and indulge your baby. **MB**

POSTPARTUM RITUALS

In India...

You could be a new mum in any part of India, but your wise and concerned mum or mum-in-law will do her best to take care of you by using some of the age-old traditions. The most common ritual which is practised all over the country is an oil massage which is said to have little use besides relaxing your nerves. But most new mums can never seem to get enough of this! There's a long list of foods said to be good for milk let-down and general health and well-being of the mother, like sweets made in ghee, nuts and fat rich food. "But they must be taken in moderation, or else they could play havoc with your digestive system and end up adding to your weight," cautions Mittal. "In fact bland food is best to keep digestive problems at bay," she adds. "Wearing a tight saree during the postpartum period or tying the tummy with a soft cloth is common in Maharashtra. They say it helps in pulling in the stomach muscles," says Mumbai-based homemaker Shobha Deshpande. Many doctors also advise wearing an abdominal belt especially after a C-section. Meena Mehrotra from Kanpur says, "Harira, which is ghee with turmeric and dry fruits, is given to new mums in UP for the antiseptic properties

of turmeric and the belief that ghee helps in milk let-down." Most parts of India also have a tradition of making the new mum rest for 40 days for good recovery. They then perform a puja before she gets on with her household duties.

And around...

"In Fiji, a new mum is advised to stay away from her husband for one to three months probably because her elders don't want her to conceive again during that period," says Jiu Tikoitoga from Viti Levu, adding, "If possible, a relative also comes to look after her and the baby for this period and she is given boiled and bland food to keep her system fit."

Binita Bista from Kathmandu says, "In Nepal, we have a tradition of the new mum going and staying with her mother for a while after delivery where she is fed on lots of rice and chicken curry, given warm water to drink and massaged with mustard oil boiled with garlic and carom seeds."

"In Sri Lanka, we eat bitter melon, jackfruit in coconut milk, rassam and fish and lots of fibrous food," says Nilanjani Peiris from Colombo. "We bathe with water boiled with neem leaves and have a ritual of heating garlic over coal and taking the fumes in the perineal area for better



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Baby & Toddler

What does a nutritionist feed her **TOP 10** *tips to survive eating with children*

At face value, Dr Jane Bowen is a hard-core academic. With a PhD in nutrition and two bachelor degrees, her work as a research scientist and dietician might seem a little removed from the trials of the daily grind



But there are plenty of practical challenges in Jane's life too. With three children aged 6, 4 and 2 to love and nourish, Jane and her husband know all about the sleep deprivation, the emotional highs and lows and the apparently endless daily chores that come with parenting.

So amongst all the cuddles, washing and toddler negotiations, what does a nutritionist feed her kids?

Here are Jane's top 10 tips to surviving meals with children, and setting your kids on the right track towards nutritious eating for life.

1 BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL

The general approach I have is to be a good role model when it comes to food. I think it's not reasonable to expect the kids to eat something if I'm not eating it too. The food I keep in the house is mainly the stuff that I'm happy for all of us to eat. Having non-ideal food options available all the time normalises them, and makes them a part of everyday eating. There are enough of those foods wherever else they go.

2 THINK ABOUT FOOD BEHAVIOURS

One of my children does not have a sweet tooth at all. But the behaviours that we often show about sweet foods being highly prized – such as 'you're not getting dessert until you finish that' or 'you have to wait until the end of the party for the lolly bag' – are subtle hints slowly teaching her that maybe she should be wanting those things. I avoid using such motivators whenever possible. I also try and have a solid routine with food to keep my childrens'

appetites regular and less prone to snacking.

3 EAT DINNER EARLY

The typical time for our evening meal is 5-5.30pm. We have dinner early because I think the more tired they get, the less they can control their emotions. And especially when they're little, this means they can get overwhelmed and food is a classic thing that can overwhelm them.

4 HAVE STRATEGIES UP YOUR SLEEVE

If we get home after a full day at work, school and childcare, my favourite go-to options for dinner are pasta or stir-fry, because they're quick and I can easily throw a few vegetables in there. If they can't handle a plate full of food, I put it on a smaller plate and call it 'mini dinni' – somehow it helps them wrap their head around it. If we're really entering meltdown territory, I'll steam some vegetables and give them a plate of that with some watered down soy sauce. I let them eat it while they watch TV. To be honest, that combination of vegetables with soy sauce and TV is quite magical.

5 PLAN AHEAD

I plan the meals for the week ahead before I go shopping, and buy according to that. During the working week we generally have the same kinds of things for breakfasts and lunches, and variations on the same themes for dinners. On non-work day dinners I can spend a little more time being creative and involving the kids – which is slow and messy but worthwhile for them. In the cooking too, it's all about organization. For stir-fry: start cooking the rice, and by the time it's done you can have the vegetables ready

with a bit of egg, throw in canned legumes, ready to go. Sometimes I cook on weekends for the week ahead.

6 DON'T INSIST ON AN EMPTY PLATE

Insisting on an empty plate teaches children to override their appetite and eat until everything is gone rather than until they feel full. Having said that, I have a fair idea what it takes to fill up my kids. So if they say 'I'm finished' and they're way below their normal volume, I do encourage them to eat more as otherwise in half an hour they'll be saying 'I'm hungry'.

7 AVOID MAKING DESSERT A PERMANENT FIXTURE

We have dessert sometimes, and it's usually fruit or yogurt or both. We rarely have a tub of ice-cream in the freezer, as I think once it's there we just eat it every night until it's gone and then their taste buds get attuned to that level of sweetness.

8 LET YOUR TOT MAKE SOME FOOD DECISIONS

I don't think it's wise to completely deprive children of making decisions around food. For example, on the odd occasion we use our school tuck shop I guide my daughter in making a decision about what to eat. We'll talk about it, I'll show her several items as options that I've okayed and then leave her to decide what she wants.

9 MAKE EATING ABOUT NUTRITION NOT FULLNESS

I think about foods in terms of what they have to offer in terms of nutrition. Brown foods are

often good foods – nuts, wholegrain breads, pasta and crackers for example. In contrast, foods like white rice crackers or plain biscuits are not intrinsically 'bad', they're just not giving your children any nutrients, any protein, any healthy fats or fibre. They're just empty, nothing kind of foods, often salty too. For breakfast, I offer muesli, WeetBix, toast and fruit. In lunchboxes, I include cut up vegetables, cheese, sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs. And I always put in something that I know they don't really like, just so it's there to remind them to try things.

10 TALK ABOUT FOOD AND HEALTH

Some research says that it's demotivating if you tell kids 'this food is healthy'. I disagree. My children respond really well to me telling them the reasons they should eat something in particular. I encourage them to eat certain foods, and say 'the meat is good for you and it will help you to be able to do cartwheels because you'll have stronger muscles'. I don't focus on weight, just on health and what our bodies can do. When they ask for less healthy options, I say 'no, because it's not good for your teeth', or 'it's not going to make you feel good', and 'it's going to fill you up so there'll be no room left for the foods that make your body strong.' Kids are way more intelligent and capable of taking on information that we often give them credit for. It also takes some of the reason for saying no away from me, and puts it back on them and how their body will respond to treat foods. **MB**

Jane is a member of CSIROseven, a group of Australian scientists working towards research breakthroughs. She is a Research Scientist and Dietitian for CSIRO Food and Nutrition, based at South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute.

A mum's guide to buying the

right toys

Child development expert Indira Mallya feels that toys play a meaningful role in your child's life. Choose right.

In India, we do not have specific guidelines on legal standards, safety and quality of toys. Many times we end up buying toys that are very attractive but not child-friendly, thus wasting time, money and energy, in a futile exercise. Before buying any toys, you may want to glance at age-wise requirements for your children. Some of the toys suggested between two age groups maybe the same, but they are to be used differently in multiple ways by the higher age group.

BROAD GUIDELINES

Toys should be treated as more than mere play things. Buy meaningful and appropriate toys for your children, by checking against the following:

Toys should:

When it comes to actually using toys by the children, the age wise sections are not mutually exclusive because the children maybe using simultaneously, toys from previous stages also, but in newer ways.



- Provide fun and excitement.
- Be appropriate for your child's age, interest and abilities so that he can enjoy and master the toys.
- Utilise the different senses and address different areas of your child's development.
- Be safe and longer lasting.
- Be open-ended and simple in presentation, which allows the toys to be used in multiple ways, thereby optimising the use of your child's imagination, creativity and spontaneity. Some examples of open-ended toys are, balls, dolls and soft toys representing animals and people.

3-6 MONTHS

Key features of children's stages and corresponding suggestions for toys. Babies are fascinated with movement, sounds, and uncomplicated black and white visuals and bright colors. They discover their bodies using eye-hand coordination and reaching and grasping movements.

Suggestions for play: Interactions with mother or caretakers, vivid colored mobiles, rattles and grasping toys.

6-8 MONTHS

They can hold small toys. They can transfer them from hand to hand as well as drop in and take out from a container. They also are finding out the cause and effect principle which is fulfilled by repeating activities over and over again, until they have mastered them.

Suggested toys: Some toys from immediate previous months as well as textured balls, big rings, soft toys and dolls and unbreakable mirror.

8-18 MONTHS

Infants almost deliberately make an action because they realize what the result is going to be. They explore and experiment in the space around them.

Suggested toys: Some toys from the immediate previous months, and, stuffed animals, push and pull, take-apart and fit back, stacking, pounding and shape sorting toys, blocks and simple puzzles.

18-24 PLUS MONTHS

Toddlers will continue to use the play materials of immediate previous months. However, they will also start

to enjoy "pretend play" which centers around family life roles.

Suggestions for play: Dolls, kitchen sets and empty household cartons/ materials (easy to manage), toy cars and buses, dress up clothes and designated areas that can be converted into a kitchen, a grocery store or anything else of their choice.

2-5 YEARS

During these years, the children show marked progress in their overall development vis-à-vis skills in the area of language, sensory-motor, social, emotional, creative and intellectual development. These skills are usually picked up at specified ages, but with individual differences in age and pace of development.

Suggested toys: Apart from using some toys from the previous months, the children love to use their imagination and creative self expression especially by using the building and construction toys.

Since they begin to make huge gains in gross and finer muscle skills, they love to beat the drums and percussion instruments in rhythm, pound the pegs in their holes with a wooden hammer, and, work with a variety of puzzles. The movement and communication skills encourage children to play with toy phones, clocks, housekeeping, four wheeler toys and bouncing balls of big and small sizes.

They also like computer/hand held electronic games.

TOY SELECTION CRITERIA FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

- Very young babies like to interact with their mother. So, use your facial expressions, voice and hands to talk, sing and play with your baby.
- Select brightly colored two toned mobiles with attached objects, to be hung on the crib and out of reach of your baby. The mobile should not be

too dazzling with colors, and not be moving too much as your baby has just learnt to see the spectrum of colors and learnt to focus on nearby objects.

- Select rattles which have a vivid color and a subdued noise level, and, can be gripped by your baby.
- Check to see that the soft toys and dolls:
 - Have embroidered eyes and no projectiles, embellishments or thread which can come apart easily and end in your baby's mouth.
 - Older babies bang and chew on the toys so the above rule should be kept in mind.
 - Do not have stuffing of tiny beans, thermocol balls and the like, which could prove hazardous to your baby, if they fall out of the toys. They may put those things in their mouths and possibly swallow or choke on them.

COMMON GUIDELINE ACROSS AGES FOR TOY SELECTION

- Toys that promote violence, gender stereotypes and class/race discrimination are not recommended for children.
- Make informed choices before buying the toys. When possible read/find out the age, safety and operating instructions, and care of the toys.
- Buy toys such that they can be used in multiple ways whenever possible, and promote many of the child's skills and creative imagination as well as spontaneity.
- Make sure that all batteries (which have hazardous material) in the toys, whenever present, are screwed down and cannot be pried open by your child.
- Check to see that all the toys can be washed or cleaned regularly to maintain hygienic standards.
- Before you buy any toy, check to see that it is well put together, sturdy, the paint is non-toxic, and, that it is light weight and easy to manage.
- Screen time for all older children including TV viewing, education material viewing, computer play and DVD games should be for one to two hours per day.
- Educational toys promote interactions between adult and child, which is most supportive and unconditional play. Toys can never be substituted for the love, care and attention of the parent/caretaker.
- Provide children with safe toys which fit the budget of the family. They need not be very trendy and expensive. Just make sure that the toys will promote learning and growth in each area of development. Choose toys which will promote children's creativity and imagination. In turn, the physical, social, emotional, communication and cognitive skills will be enhanced as the children play and solve problems that will help them in their real lives.



- Which have magnets, are secured tightly. Better still, avoid buying them.
- The cloth used on the toys is fire retardant.
- Have a cord or string less than 30 cms /12" to avoid entanglement and possible strangulation.
- Can be hand or machine washed and kept clean for your baby.
- Check to see that items such as teething materials are made of a good and sturdy material and in different shapes and sizes, which can be gripped by infants, chewed upon or thrown down as is their wont.
- Select musical and other sound emanating toys, that are not too noisy and loud enough to cause possible hearing damage in children.
- Check to see that the smallest piece of the toy is bigger than the child's mouth, as young children (up to 3 years), are prone to swallowing foreign objects and sometimes choking on them. Stay away from buying small toys for the same reason.
- Choose lightweight and easy to handle, big, 3 to 4 pieced puzzles, blocks such as a cloth covering foam or blocks, or, made from safe and sturdy plastic. Same holds true for the pop-up, push and pull, peg in and stack up toys.

TOY SELECTION CRITERION FOR PRESCHOOLERS

- Do give away toys from the previous months if your child does not want to use them as he will now need more challenging toys due to rapid progress in his overall development, and because he will have developed some friends in the latter half of preschool years (4 plus years). Do invest in some toys which can be shared with friends.
- During this age buy dolls with clothes that can be put on and removed with as little help from adults as possible.
- Select some educational DVDs with interactive teaching concepts at various levels, appropriate for this age

CARING MOTHERS NEED HELP!

*Beautiful toys, expensive toys
Within my budget, but sometimes
not, My baby gurgles then she
grasps When we play, sigh,
sometimes not. Your toddler walks,
sits and crawls When being
adventurous, oh sometimes not.
Her preschooler emulates, being
always busy With daring antics,
well sometimes not.
Hark mamas! Your wards are
happy With toys you offer, but
sometimes not. You have the will,
we have the criterion
Whip it out on the run, nay
sometimes not!*

group. This is better than investing in electronic toys with flashing lights and constant change of movements.

- But, do have some time restrictions on screen time. 1 to 2 hours per day which includes TV, computer games/ DVDs, should be more than enough. If your child is used to action oriented electronic toys, there is not much to do but just watch what the toy does. Apart from this, he will not attend to any one thing for very long and not learn to focus on things like books or non- moving toys.
- Choose light weight wooden hammers and peg in toys, so that your child is safe from being hurt if he miss-hits. Other light weight toys can be small sport equipment and interlocking plastic toys, and construction material.
- Select puzzles medium to big in size, with an assembly starting from 8 to 15/20 plus pieces per puzzle. This will vary from child to child.
- Choose colorful, plastic toys and utensils for your child's housekeeping and kitchen play corners. They should be adequate for 2 to 3 children, as your preschooler is sure to bring in his friends to play.
- Do check for age, safety and care

instructions when buying.

Infants and toddlers are constantly using their senses to discover the world around them. They want toys which they can touch, feel, squeeze, poke, smell, see and hear. Bright colors and interesting noises in their toys provide them with fun and excitement. Toddlers and preschoolers, on the other hand, like toys that can be opened, pulled, stacked or pounded at their levels of skills. Both, toddlers and preschoolers enjoy directing, organising, problem solving and constructing, according to their levels of development. **MB**



Dr Indira Mallya

is a freelance writer and child development consultant. With qualification in Child

Life in Health Care Settings and masters in Social Work, Dr Mallya has worked as a research associate, lecturer and associate professor. Her engagements include training of students, parents, children and the community and she has done extensive research in areas of Human Development (HDFS).

Make sure that you get your baby's hearing screened early and evaluated regularly. Experts tell M&B, it's imperative to get the first hearing test done within 48 hours of birth or before three months of age in order to prevent hearing impairment

Can
she
hear
you?



**HEARING LOSS IN BABIES
MAY BE CONGENITAL (AT BIRTH)
OR ACQUIRED.**

CONGENITAL FACTORS INCLUDE:

- * Some Genetic (familial) conditions cause deafness – if there is a family history
- * Infections (toxoplasma, rubella, CMV) in early pregnancy
- * Birth defects that affect the formation of the cochlea or hearing nerve

ACQUIRED FACTORS ARE:

- * High jaundice
- * Birth hypoxia (low oxygen)
- * Toxic effect of some drugs
- * Infections after birth – some viral infections, meningitis and ear infections

**HEARING LOSS CAN BE
PREVENTED IF:**

- * If the expectant mother seeks treatment for infections during pregnancy
- * Avoids ototoxic drugs
- * Avoids exposure to loud noise
- * Gets early treatment for baby's ear infections or other infections like meningitis

NOISES OFF

In our day to day life, we often take the five senses of hearing, sight, touch, smell, and taste for granted. For a child, it is all the more important to apply these senses, especially during her growing years, when she explores her environment. If she is devoid of one, her social, emotional and cognitive development can get affected for life. Senior consultant surgeon, ENT & neurotology, Dr Ameet Kishore, at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, New Delhi says, "Worldwide figures suggest one to two babies per 1000 newborns have a permanent childhood hearing impairment. However, there are not many studies done in India. In India, the figures are likely to be two to three per 1000."

Hearing loss is a handicap that needs to be dealt with at the nascent stage. Dr Kishore points out that deafness in a baby can be due to a variety of reasons. "It can occur before birth (in the pre-natal period), at the time of birth (peri-natal period) or after birth (post-natal period). Some of the causes of hearing loss before birth may be an infection like cytomegalovirus, toxoplasmosis, rubella that the mother-to-be may have, severe pregnancy induced hypertension, diabetes mellitus, unsupervised medications, and so on," he affirms.

If the baby does not cry immediately after birth, or goes through birth trauma, it may lead to a hearing loss. "If the newborn baby develops jaundice requiring blood transfusion, or has any other infections such as meningitis, or is preterm, is premature and/or has a low birth weight (less than 1500 gms) and requires mechanical ventilation for more than ten days, or requiring strong medication (ototoxic drugs) the hearing may be adversely affected," he explains.

Babies with conditions like Down's syndrome, JLN syndrome, Waardenburg syndrome and Usher's syndrome, are at risk for hearing loss. Babies with any head-neck-face abnormalities are also at

high risk for hearing loss. Babies born in a family where there is a history of hearing loss or those born out a consanguineous marriage are at higher risk of having a hearing loss. Fifty per cent of babies born with a hearing loss have no known risk factors. So it becomes all the more important to get every baby to have his/her hearing tested soon after birth.

Audiologist Neevita Narayan from New Delhi, comments that at present there is no universal law for hearing screening at birth, or later. "However, within 48 hours of birth a child should undergo a screening hearing test. The test is not mandatory yet but, hospitals at the government level do this test and good private hospitals also carry it out. Firstly, we need to confirm the hearing loss and the reason for the loss. If it's the inner ear, we give the child three months to establish the hearing loss. Through repeated tests when the loss is confirmed, we give the child hearing aids. Then, through the early intervention programme, we give language stimulation and check the progress with hearing aids. We also counsel the parents on cochlear implantation," she asserts.

Dr Kishore urges parents to get the neonatal hearing screening test done within 48 hours of birth. "If missed, hearing test must be done before three months of age. Thereafter, the family and primary caregivers (paediatricians) are made aware of the normal hearing milestones that would be expected in an infant. If there are any concerns in infancy or early childhood that the child may not be hearing or developing speech as one might expect – a referral to the local ENT and audiology service is recommended for hearing checks. Another hearing test could be done when the child is ready for schooling," he insists.

TYPES OF HEARING LOSS

Dr Kishore classifies hearing loss into conductive (due to a problem in conduction of sound through the external



or middle ear) and sensorineural (due to a problem in the inner ear or hearing nerve). He says, "Conductive hearing loss may occur due to wax, perforated ear drum—due to trauma or infection, ear infection, fluid in the middle ear, fixation of the bones of hearing, maldevelopment of the outer or middle ears (atresia – where the canals of the outer ears are not formed) whereas sensorineural may be caused by weakness of the nerve endings in the cochlea (inner ear) – due to trauma, infections that affect the nerve endings, toxic effect of drugs, hypoxia (low oxygen levels), excessive noise, birth defects affecting formation of the cochlea or nerve. Some babies suffer from a mixture of both components—conductive and sensorineural. The severity of hearing loss/disability is graded as mild, moderate, severe, profound. Hearing loss may also be divided into congenital or acquired." Once a hearing disability / impairment is suspected, this needs to be confirmed and the ear examined. The child needs to be seen by an ENT doctor and the hearing assessments done by an audiologist.

Depending on the type of the hearing loss and the severity, the treatment options vary. If the hearing loss is reversible (such as in many cases of a conductive loss)—infections, fluid in the middle ear—this can often be treated with medication. Occasionally surgery may be required. In cases where there is maldevelopment of the outer or middle ear (such as canal atresia – poorly or not formed ear canals), there is no space to wear a normal hearing aid. In this situation, a special type of hearing aid can be worn on a headband—Bone Anchored Hearing Aid (BAHA).

However, in all cases of sensorineural hearing loss, the loss is irreversible. In these situations, it is important to



take the help of a hearing device to restore the hearing ability of that child. These would be hearing aids in the first instance. If the hearing loss is so severe that hearing aids do not help, then a cochlear implant is required. Along with the use of a device to restore hearing, early intervention rehabilitation in the form of regular and monitored hearing and speech therapy is very vital.

WAY FORWARD

There is hope for your child, if he suffers from hearing loss. Dr Kishore assures that a number of small children have had cochlear implants for profound hearing loss and are doing very well. Mrs Narayan also agrees. "Inner ear disability cannot be prevented. Illness can happen to anyone. We have had 10-month-old children who have successfully had

implants. Some of them also attend mainstream schools. By and large these children are capable of doing very well academically and professionally like other children. My role is to diagnose the severity and degree of the hearing loss and I am also involved in the management and treatment. It is part of my job to ensure that these children get a chance in mainstream education," she avers.

There are also some cases wherein children have undergone surgery to correct hearing loss. Dr Kishore says, "Surgery may either be to correct a conductive hearing loss, that is, remove fluid from the middle ear and place ventilation tubes (to avoid recurrence), close a hole in the ear drum, repair damaged bones of hearing in the middle

ear. In severe sensorineural hearing loss, where hearing aids have been tried and seen not to provide adequate benefit, a cochlear implantation is done. Rarely, an auditory brainstem implantation may be the only option. In cases where there is maldevelopment of the outer or middle ear (such as canal atresia – poorly or not formed ear canals), there is no space to wear a normal hearing aid. In this situation, a special type of hearing aid can be worn on a headband or attached to a surgically implanted pin at the back of the ear— Bone Anchored Hearing Aid (BAHA)." Though, there are ample treatments to seek, if you get the hearing screening done within 48 hours, your li'l bunny may have a better chance to experience the beautiful sounds of life along with you. **MB**



Being a mum is a full-time job. And if you have another job to take care of, god save you! But finding the balance between your child and your life need not be all that difficult. Meenal Arora, founder director of Shemrock Futuristic Schools, and a mum herself, gives you some tips

As a working mother, you may feel an enormous burden to make time for your child, not realising that it is day-to-day tasks that offer the best opportunities to create natural moments that will be remembered for a lifetime. Simply reading a story to her before going to the bed, or telling your child every night that you feel so blessed to have her in your life, take only a few minutes and are perfect ways to create quality time. Besides, there are a number of different ways you can be actively involved in your child's life while still pursuing your career. Spending quality time with your little one is one of the best investments you can make for your child's well-being, self-confidence and successful future.

FOLLOWING ARE SOME TIPS

SET PRIORITIES—Create a balance between the mother in you and the ambitious career-oriented woman. Set your priorities and maintain a balance between your family and work. Once you have made family your priority, it is fairly easy to weed out the activities that take up too much of your time like

watching TV, idle gossiping, Internet chatting etc. Instead, designate some of your free time as family time. Turn off your phones and television sets to ensure quiet, uninterrupted time with your child.

HAVE A HEART-TO-HEART TALK—

Seize every opportunity for having heart-to-heart talks with your child. You could do this while you cook a meal, while organising her room, or while you drive to the market together. Talk about your day, her day, what she watches on television, what she likes to do, your childhood, her toys and so on. Allow your child to talk about her feelings and concerns, and how she feels about herself. Also be sure to listen and ask lots of 'why' and 'how' questions. Inculcate in your child and yourself a habit of discussing the daily activities every day.

BECOME YOUR CHILD'S PLAYMATE—

Find out what games she likes and schedule time to play video games, board games and puzzles etc. with her. Become her playmate, and teach her games you used to play when you were

of her age. You may also create your own games by using ordinary objects around the house to create a space to play and have fun: make music with spoons and pots, create a puppet show or even a treasure hunt.

HELP HER WITH LEARNING—Helping children with their homework helps you to spend quality time with your child while being involved in her learning activities. This not only helps develop your child's interest in learning but also improves her attitude towards her school. Further, it boosts her confidence and morale as she sees you get involved in her world.

PLAN FOR OUTINGS ON A REGULAR BASIS—

Plan regular trips to the museum, park, zoo, library and other places of her interest. Involve your child in planning the outings so that it becomes her activity. If children feel they are part of the planning, they not only feel important but tend to be committed to making it a success, and have a much better time. Also, this will help you spend some time away from work with your family.

DINE WITH THE FAMILY REGULARLY—

Families that eat together stay together. Make sure that you eat dinner together with your child every night. This will provide you an opportunity to bond together as a family while you discuss the day's events with each other. It can be a great time to ask questions about your child's day without interruption.

In the end, remember, parental support is not just about buying expensive gifts. The best gift parents can give to their children is a few minutes of their time each day. Spending quality time with your child provides her with an opportunity to be heard, to learn, and to be loved. By giving the gift of time to your child, you can establish a rich and trusting foundation to build wonderful family memories. **MB**

Working mums 101



Starstruck!

Your baby's horoscope for the month



Aries

Although her energy levels will be at an all time low this month, there's no cure like some fun activities to lift her spirits. Give her puzzles or other mentally stimulating exercises to keep her occupied and engaged. All she needs is a little motivation, and a few words of encouragement to pep her up and get back to her happy-go-lucky self.



Taurus

If you've been contemplating getting a furry new family member, there's no time like the present. She'll show keen interest in interacting and playing with pets at the park, and seeing her squeal in excitement will surely tug at your heartstrings. She will also charge at all the activities she engages in with full gusto, so be sure to save on some extra energy for yourself to be able to keep up with her!



Gemini

This month will see your tot exploring new shapes during playtime, and she'll be particularly attracted to block shapes. This is also a great time to engage in activities that will allow you some quality mommy and baby time. You can enroll into a yoga class with your li'l one or any other physical activity that she'll enjoy.



Libra

Your otherwise hyperactive Libran baby will be very calm all through this month. She'll engage in plenty of activities to keep her wonderfully occupied, leaving you with plenty of time to carry out your remaining chores. You might want to keep her energy levels in check and make sure she's drinking plenty of water, as she might face bouts of dehydration.



Scorpio

This month, your Scorpion baby will be listening to everything you say. And listening, not just with an intent to understand, but also with an intent to obey. She will absorb everything you have to offer, and will follow all the instructions you have to give. Bright and active, even though she'll be in her element, and literally raring to go, she will surprise you with a heightened sense of understanding and comprehension.



Sagittarius

You'll need all the extra energy you can get! Your Saggi baby will keep you constantly on your toes, and will charge at all her activities with full gusto! She'll also be focused in whatever she's engaged in, and will be extremely active. You'll feel a lot more lethargic this month, because between all the running behind your tot and managing the household, there won't be much energy left for anything else! You might also want to be cautious as she's prone to a number of boo boos and ouchies given all the running around!

Vishakha Khanolkar Palav

is the Art Director for Mother & Baby India, a Commercial Artist and Photographer. She is also a Tarot Reader with a special focus on Numerology
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**Cancer**

Your Ms goody two shoes will allow you a care-free, fuss-free month ahead—no tantrums, mealtime meltdowns or night time niggles—this is what mommy dreams are made of! She'll listen to everything you say and show you an obedient, mama's baby side unlike ever before. She'll keep you on your toes, but at the same time, she'll display a sense of understanding if you forbid her from doing certain things.

Leo

Your leo lion will show you a rather understanding and mature side this month, quite peculiar qualities for a growing tot. She will also be a whole lot more patient whilst figuring her way around certain games or activities. This would be the best time to encourage her to learn a new activity or hobby.

Virgo

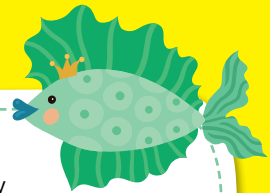
Your baby is gonna give you all the feels this month! Twice the cuddles and kisses, she'll give and need a whole lot more love than usual. This season will see her wanting to be pampered more than usual, and she'll be a whole pile of love towards you and everyone else at home. Make the most of this love-filled munchkin! She might tend to get crankier than usual this month, but nothing to worry about if you keep her well-engaged.

Capricorn

She will be super excited and up for all adventure! She'll want to connect with nature. You'll find her instantly drawn to flowers and squealing in excitement at the sight of butterflies. If you have a pet at home, you'll see how she's spending a lot more time engaging with them. You may also want to consider a safe outdoor trip, as the fresh air will do her quite good.

Aquarius

This month, your Aquarius babe will need some more activities to be engaged in, and will prefer the company of her peers. You can organise a safe, socially distant playdate for her to enjoy. You can also stir things up with new activities or toys for her to play, or even get the whole family involved in an outdoor activity.

Pisces

You've got quite the lazy Susan on your hands, mum. This month, she'll need a lot more active time or newer hobbies to engage in. You could try baby yoga or even dance. All she needs is a little push and something to look forward to, and she'll be back to her usual self in no time. Make sure to give her lots of fruits or fresh fruit juices to keep her energy levels up.

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Sweet Something

Spruce up playtime with this easy-to-make origami lollipop candy



Shilpa Sawant,

Is a Mumbai-based architect, founder of Astitva

Architects and her own venture, SAS Design. In addition to sophisticated, aesthetic interiors, she has avid interest in the Origami, the Japanese paper art. She has been conducting Origami workshops digitally, and is also a visiting faculty member for interior design at Sir J.J. College of Architecture.

www.sasdesign.in

Instagram: @origami.sas

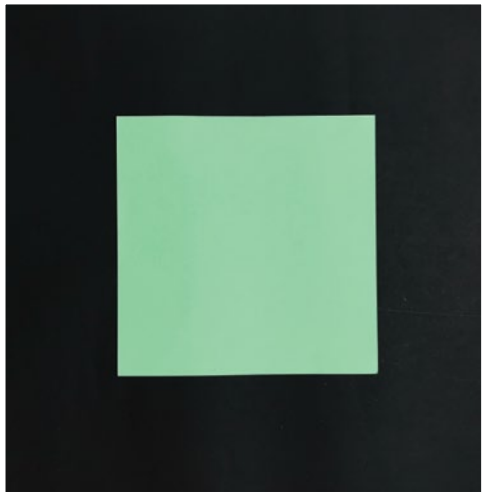
YOU NEED

10x10 cm square
paper
Scissors
Glue

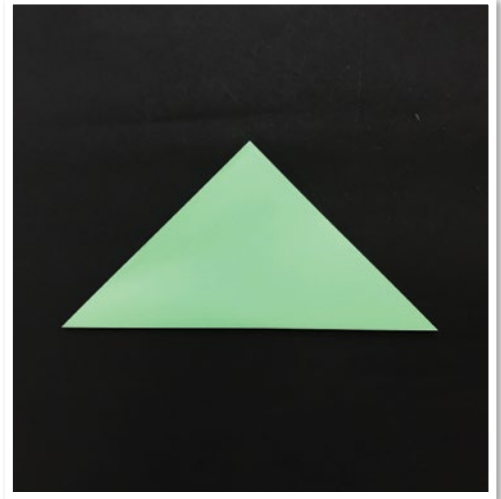


13. Enjoy your Origami Lollipop!!!

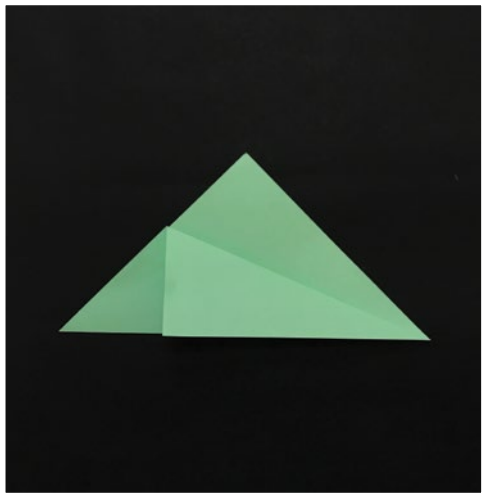
YOU MUST



1. Take 10 cm
X 10 cm square
paper.



2. Make a valley
fold diagonally to
achieve a triangular
shaped paper.



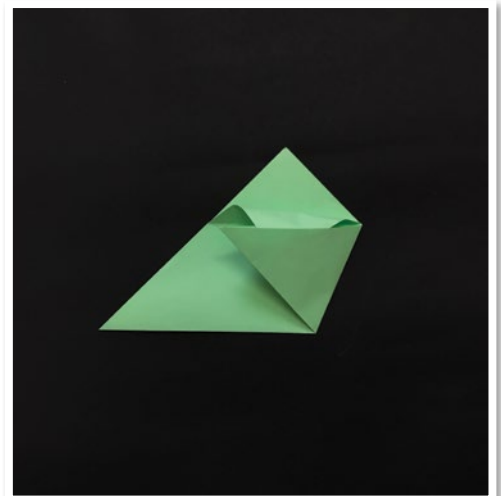
3. Make a
valley fold on
the upper flap
dividing into
half.



4. Open out the flap
and you will have a
guide crease made.

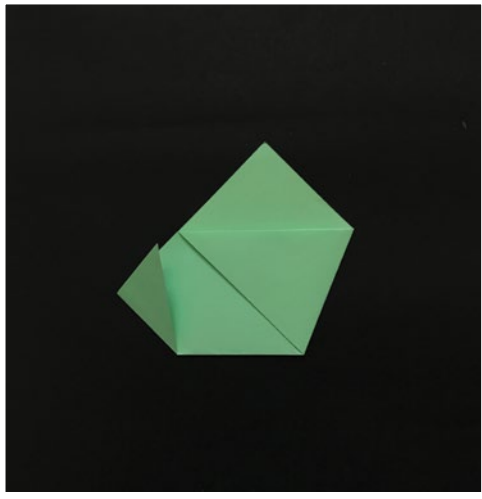


5. Make a
valley fold
aligning the
bottom right
corner to the
left point on
the crease.



6. Gently Put
the top flap into
the pocket.





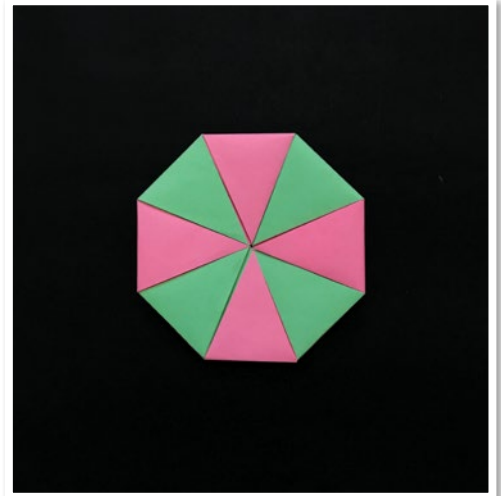
7. Bring the left bottom point towards point in the step no. 5 as seen in the picture.

8. The Module is ready. Make 8 modules of exact same size.



9. For assembly, lock in the single loose flap into the next module's pocket. You can use glue to fix it.

10. This is the complete assembly.



11. Flip the assembly over and the Lollipop candy is ready.

12. Make a paper roll and a bow to attach it





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