

# Pregnancy and Birth: Caring and Preparing for the Life Within

## Overview

Pregnancy and Birth offers a contemporary look at pregnancy and the birth process, and the advances in technology, medicine, and knowledge that affect and influence both. The latest research provides significant information on the causes of infertility in both men and women and new methods of assisted reproduction. Healthy prenatal care, diet, exercises and regular and early visits to a health care practitioner are important for the mother and the child. Prenatal testing is important in order for parents who may be high risk, to better prepare for their child. The various methods of childbirth and preparation classes for birth are depicted as well as a discussion of vaginal delivery and the reasons for Caesarian section. The mother and baby benefit by the supporting roles played by the father, a family member, a friend, or a doula.

## Questions To Consider

1. What choices do infertile couples currently have in order to become pregnant?
2. What can go wrong if the pregnant woman does not get good prenatal care?
3. How effective are the variety of tests in determining possible birth defects?
4. How does the pregnant couple decide which birthing method is best for them and the baby?
5. How can childbirth classes, such as Bradley and Lamaze Methods, change parents' experience of childbirth?
6. How does a woman know she is in labor?
7. What is the process of labor? What does the mother experience?
8. What are reasons for delivering a baby by Cesarean section?

## Vocabulary

Read these terms with their definitions before viewing the program.

**After-Birth** The placenta and membranes that pass out of the uterus after the baby is born.

**Alpha-Fetoprotein Screening** A blood test that measures the level of protein in the mother's blood.

**Amniocentesis** Guided by ultrasound a needle is inserted through a mother's abdomen, through the uterus, into the amnion where the fluid is extracted.

**Anencephaly** A baby is born with no brain or parts of the brain missing.

**Anoxia** Fetal oxygen deprivation.

**Artificial Insemination** A procedure in which sperm from a male partner or unknown donor is injected directly into the woman's cervix.

**Bradley Method** Childbirth methods in which patients and birth coaches are trained in relaxation and abdominal breathing, practice and exercise.

**Breech Birth** A baby is born feet or buttocks first.

**Cervix** Passageway from uterus to vaginal canal.

**Cesarean Section** Surgical procedure in which the surgeon makes an incision through the mother's abdomen and the amniotic sac to lift the fetus out of the womb.

**Chorionic Villus Sampling** Guided by ultrasound, a catheter is inserted through the mother's vagina. Reveals chromosomal and genetic abnormalities.

**Dilation** The opening of the cervix during labor.

**Doula** A woman trained in labor and delivery, who provides supports to the mother during and after birth.

**Effacement** The thinning of the cervix during labor.

**Episiotomy** A surgical cut in the mother's vaginal entrance to prevent her from tearing during the delivery of the baby.

**Fertility Drugs** Drugs used which increase the production of ovulation or sperm count.

**Fetal Monitoring** A stethoscope called a fetoscope is used to monitor heart rate.

**Infertility** A couple is infertile if they have tried unsuccessfully to conceive for one year.

**In-Vitro Fertilization** Ova are extracted from the ovary and combined with sperm in a petri dish. The fertilized ova are then implanted in the woman's uterus.

**Lamaze Method** A prepared childbirth method where the mother is coached in controlled breathing, concentration and relaxation techniques during labor.

**Leboyer Method** Relieves the stress of the newborn to approximate the uterine environment.

**Oxytocin** A hormone, which causes the uterus to contract during labor.

**Ovulation Disorders** Caused by poor nutrition, stress, older age, intensive athletic training and overweight.

**Preeclampsia** A type of high blood pressure associated with pregnancy.

**Prenatal Testing** Tests done to screen and/or diagnose possible fetal problems, genetic or environmental.

**Spina Bifida** A condition in which the neural tube does not close during prenatal development causing paralysis and other complications in the baby.

**Surrogate Motherhood** A woman agrees to provide the ovum to carry the fetus to term for an infertile couple. She then releases the baby to the couple.

**Teratogens** Substances, agents, or events that interfere with embryonic or fetal development. **Transition** The final phase of the first stage of labor, as the cervix is dilating.

**Trimester** The division of pregnancy into 3 stages of 13 weeks each.

**Ultrasound** High frequency sound waves bounced off the mother's abdomen create a picture or sonogram which shows the fetus, placenta, amniotic sac and fluid.

### Instructional Objectives

When you have successfully completed this module, you will be able to:

1. Discuss causes of infertility in men and women.
2. List the types of assisted reproductive technologies.
3. Recognize the major events the mother-to-be experiences in each trimester of pregnancy.
3. Describe the optimum prenatal care including diet, exercise, and health care.
4. Describe the various prenatal tests including the timing, purpose and the basic process of each.
5. Identify types of prenatal intervention.
6. Describe the childbirth choices and childbirth classes currently available.
7. Identify the signs that labor has begun.
8. Describe the three stages of labor.
9. Describe problems and interventions during childbirth.

### Self-Test

After studying the objectives and watching the video, take the self-test to check your progress.

1. List three types of assisted fertilization
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
2. Next to each description indicate if it occurs in the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd trimester of pregnancy.
  - \_\_\_ a. The most tranquil stage of pregnancy.
  - \_\_\_ b. Women feel fatigue and nausea.
  - \_\_\_ c. Women may have swollen breasts.
  - \_\_\_ d. Pressure is felt on the pelvic bones.
  - \_\_\_ e. Changes in size and position of fetus may cause discomfort.
  - \_\_\_ f. The mother feels fetal movements.
3. Describe four aspects of good prenatal care:
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
4. Next to each description write the name of the test or procedure:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ A needle is inserted through the woman's abdomen into the amniotic sac to withdraw fluid. The fluid contains fetal cells that are analyzed.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ An image of the fetus is produced by high frequency sound waves.
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ Blood test that detects possible neural tube defects.
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ A tissue sample is removed from the villi located on the chorion.
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_ A sample of fetal blood is taken with the guidance of ultrasound.

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5. Describe how the two child birthing methods, Bradley and Lamaze, help prepare the parents for childbirth.
  
  6. Describe three choices or settings that parents have pertaining to the delivery of their baby.
  
  7. List the signs that labor has begun.
    - a.
    - b.
    - c.
  8. Describe the main event in each stage of labor:
    - a. Stage 1
    - b. Stage 2
    - c. Stage 3

Select the phrase, which best completes the following statements.

9. If labor is progressing too slowly the physician may
  - a. perform a C-section.
  - b. induce labor by injecting medication.
  - c. reposition fetus if necessary.
  - d. all the above.
10. Most babies are born
  - a. in breech position.
  - b. in transverse position.
  - c. head down facing mother's spine.
  - d. head down facing away from mother's spine.
11. C-sections are performed
  - a. when mother's pelvis is too wide.
  - b. if fetus shows signs of distress.
  - c. if the mother prefers it.
  - d. when labor is particularly short.
12. Fetal distress may
  - a. result from severe anoxia (oxygen deprivation).
  - b. be a misinterpreted reading of the fetal monitor.
  - c. be caused by strong contractions.
  - d. all the above.
13. In the United States the majority of births
  - a. are without complications.
  - b. are usually difficult.
  - c. require C-sections.
  - d. none of the above.