

# Hello, new life

Pregnancy has perhaps already started preparing you for an unfamiliar way of life ahead. Work, socialising and life is never going to be the same again. Here's how you can prepare for your new life...

BY ARUNDHATI NATH

**THE** day a woman realises that she has conceived, numerous thoughts pass through her. She's happy, excited, scared, anxious and overwhelmed all at once. As the initial months pass by, mood swings, coupled with nausea caused by the pregnancy hormones, can make her moody and exhausted. It is essential to prepare physically, emotionally, financially and spiritually to welcome a new phase of your life.

**RELAX AND DESTRESS:** Dr Kiran Coelho, renowned gynaecologist, Hinduja Healthcare Surgical, Khar feels that when a woman is pregnant, her baby is exposed to everything she experiences—the sounds in the environment, the air she breathes, the food she eats, and the emotions she feels. Hence, it is essential for a mum-to-be to relax. “Maternal stress and anxiety during pregnancy have been associated



with higher incidence of preterm birth, low birth weight, miscarriage, and slow mental development of the baby,” warns Dr Coelho.

## DO YOUR FAVORITE THINGS:

During the nine long months you get before the baby comes in, enjoy doing your favourite things. “I had the most number of holidays during my pregnancy as I knew that would be a difficult proposition after baby arrived. So, every other weekend, the husband and I would take off. Towards the third trimester, I made it a point to meet different sets of friends for lunch or dinner. Once a week, I would ask my mum to make my favourite dishes, and I would relish them. Another thing I enjoyed doing was flaunting my bump with borrowed clothes and taking selfies,” chuckles Akshata Sheth, who is now mum to one year old Pari.

## SPEND TIME WITH YOUR PARTNER:

After a baby is born, a mum’s sole focus is on her newborn. You’ll be sleep deprived and will smell of baby powder while you change diapers throughout the night. Spend quality time with your partner before you get busy with your baby. Enjoy some child-free sex and take pleasure in going on outings together. You’ll miss these moments later.

## ANTENATAL CLASSES/YOGA AND

**BREATHING EXERCISES:** According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, regular exercise helps a pregnant woman keep fit and helps her cope with labour. Walking, swimming, cycling and aerobics are good options to try. Avoid heavy sports or stressful exercises which may cause injury or have a risk of falling. You can also join an antenatal class or learn garbhasana at a yoga centre. “Breathing exercises like pranayama ensure a steady intake of oxygen and prepare the woman for the need to maintain uniform and rhythmic breathing during labour. Focused and relaxed abdominal and low chest breathing skills improve ventilation and enhance relaxation during pregnancy,” Dr Coelho explains.

**WORK ON YOUR FINANCES:** With a new member being added to the family,



your monthly budgets will go haywire. Babies are expensive. There are so many things you’ll need to buy and arrange for. Start saving so that you are prepared for the mounting expenses

**KEEP YOUR SANITY:** During pregnancy, people around you tend to give you tons of advice. It is essential to not feel overwhelmed by this unwarranted flow of tips, tricks and suggestions. Learn about birthing and parenthood, but do not get tensed. Palak Shah, a new mum, says, “There were people all around me with their good and bad experiences and stories. I heard them all and took them with a pinch of salt. I tried to gain mental strength from meditation and would practise it every day for at least five minutes; it was a huge stress buster.”

**BE PREPARED PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY:** Dr Poornima

Ramakrishna, consultant gynaecologist, Apollo Cradle, Bengaluru, feels that getting ready for pregnancy is very important because vital cell division takes from the point of conception throughout the first trimester. “Around the 10-week mark, the growing foetus will be making some critical changes that play a miraculous role in the long-term health and well-being of the baby,” Dr Ramakrishna says. A lot of these changes bring with them emotional and physical changes like mood swings, aches, pains and of course, the piling kilos. Know that all this is likely to happen and is only temporary.

**START A JOURNAL:** If you haven’t thought of this already, here is the time to start your own book about your motherhood. When your baby grows up, you both can go through it together, and laugh some and cry some. ■