

# REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND YOU



Adopt a healthy lifestyle towards a harmonious  
and healthy family

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# What is reproductive health?

A state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes.

It is the ability of men and women to undertake sexual activity responsibly and safely whether or not pregnancy is desired.



# What is sexual health?

Sexual health is an important component in reproductive health.

If pregnancy is desired, the couple must be prepared to face the responsibilities that come with it.

# **Why is reproductive health important to a family's well-being?**

**A family is the basic productive and reproductive unit in the society.**

**A family that practises a healthy lifestyle will produce children with better reproductive health status.**

**Each family member has a specific reproductive need and if recognised, it will enhance the family's well-being.**

# Roles and responsibilities of family members

## Roles of husband and wife

- Happiness and relationship in a marriage are built on honesty, intimacy and mutual tolerance.
- State your feelings honestly and openly, especially in sexual relationship.
- Every couple must discuss and plan the number of children and space them according to their capabilities.
- To be role models for the younger generations.
- To seek professional help if it is needed.



## Roles and responsibilities of the parents

- To form a harmonious relationship and inculcate good virtues with patience and love.
- To listen and guide their children on issues of reproductive health.
- To protect their children from sexual abuse.
- Educate their children to differentiate between a good and a bad touch. Also on the importance of reporting any untoward sexual incidences.
- To identify unusual behaviour and take the necessary actions.
- To educate their children about the limits of social interaction.



## Roles of the family

- Each family member has specific roles and function for a healthy family development.
- A family that practises a healthy lifestyle will generate positive values to the younger generation.



- To fulfill and provide the basic needs of each family member, including love and protection.
- To defend and encourage healthy sexual attitudes.
- Each family member must broaden his/her knowledge on reproductive health in order to make wise choices.

**A family who practises a healthy lifestyle is a harmonious and healthy family.**



# Reproductive life-cycle

## Newborn and children

- Each child is born with specific gender makeup. Their reproductive system are complete but not fully mature.
- A newborn baby should undergo clinical assessment to ensure he/she is normal. This include inspection of the sexual organs.
- Physical abnormalities which need early management includes:
  - Baby boy such as *hypospadia*, *hydrocele*, *undescended testes* and *inguinal hernia*.
  - Baby girl such as *imperforate vagina*.



## Adolescence Phase

- The reproductive organ matures during puberty. Other changes which also take place during this period is growth spurt (according to gender). The changes are controlled by sex hormones.
- **Adolescent girls** - the ovary will produce progesterone and estrogen. This will result in the breast development and changes in body shape. She will then begin to produce ovum and start menstruating.
- **Adolescent boys** - the testes will produce testosterone. This hormone causes secondary hair development on the facial and body region, change in the voice and muscular build-up and produces sperm.



Adolescence is a period where children go through puberty and reaches adulthood.

# Physical changes during puberty

Voice starts to change to a deeper tone.

Beard and moustache begins to grow.

Shoulders and chest becomes wider.

Pimples begin to sprout.

## Adolescent Boys



May experience wet dreams where ejaculation occurs. This is the sign of puberty.

Penis and testes begin to grow more prominent.

Breasts begin to grow bigger.

Hair begins to grow in the under arms as well as the private part.

Hips start to widen giving it a more womanly look.

## Adolescent Girls



Pimples start to sprout.

Menstruation begins.

May experience a change in the voice from a little girl to a more mature voice.

# Planning for marriage

- Parents must provide proper guidance to their children in choosing a suitable life partner.
- Marriage strengthens the loving relationship between a man and a woman. It is not merely a legal union but also the acceptance of responsibilities for mutual happiness.
- Couples must be willing to compromise, execute their responsibilities and be prepared to face the challenges in ensuring a happy and harmonious family.
- Preparations for marriage includes:
  - Understand the function of sexual organs.
  - Ensure that you and your partner are healthy and free of diseases.
  - Have knowledge on safe sex acts.
  - Planned family.



# Planning to have children

- Every pregnancy must be planned and mutually desired.
- The husband has to understand the physical and emotional changes that occur during pregnancy.
- Mother-to-be should be at an optimal physical and mental well-being prior to pregnancy.
- This includes:
  - Adopting healthy eating habits.
  - Regular exercise.
  - Stop bad habits such as smoking, alcohol drinking and drugs.
  - Understand the nature of pregnancy, childbirth and the importance of breastfeeding.



- The husband should be prepared to play his role and carry out his paternal responsibilities:
  - Abstaining from smoking, alcohol drinking and drugs.
  - Sensitive to the physical and emotional changes of his pregnant wife.
  - Monitor the development of pregnancy together with his wife
  - Encourage the wife to go for early and regular antenatal check-ups.
  - Plan for a safe delivery.
  - Prepare for the arrival of the newborn.



# Shaping a happy family

- A well-planned family is a harmonious family. Family happiness depends on the well being of each member.
- Elements of a happy family
  - Love and understanding.
  - Physical, mental and emotional protection.
  - Nurturing, educating and guiding.
  - Fair.
  - Economic stability.
  - Family members' health care.





# Planned family

## Elements of a planned family

- Deciding the number of children based on physical, social and economic capabilities.
- Spacing the pregnancy to ensure the health of the mother, child and family.
- Ensuring the mother has time to breastfeed her child.
- A husband who supports the family planning concept which has been mutually decided.



**Not too soon**



**Not too late**



**Not too close**

# Preparation to face climacteric

Every individual undergoes a climacteric phase where there is a decline in reproductive ability. This is more predominant among women.

**Climacteric symptoms among women are:**

- Menopause (cessation in menstrual cycle).
- Emotional and sexual changes.
- The increase of Osteoporosis, heart disease and more prone to infections.



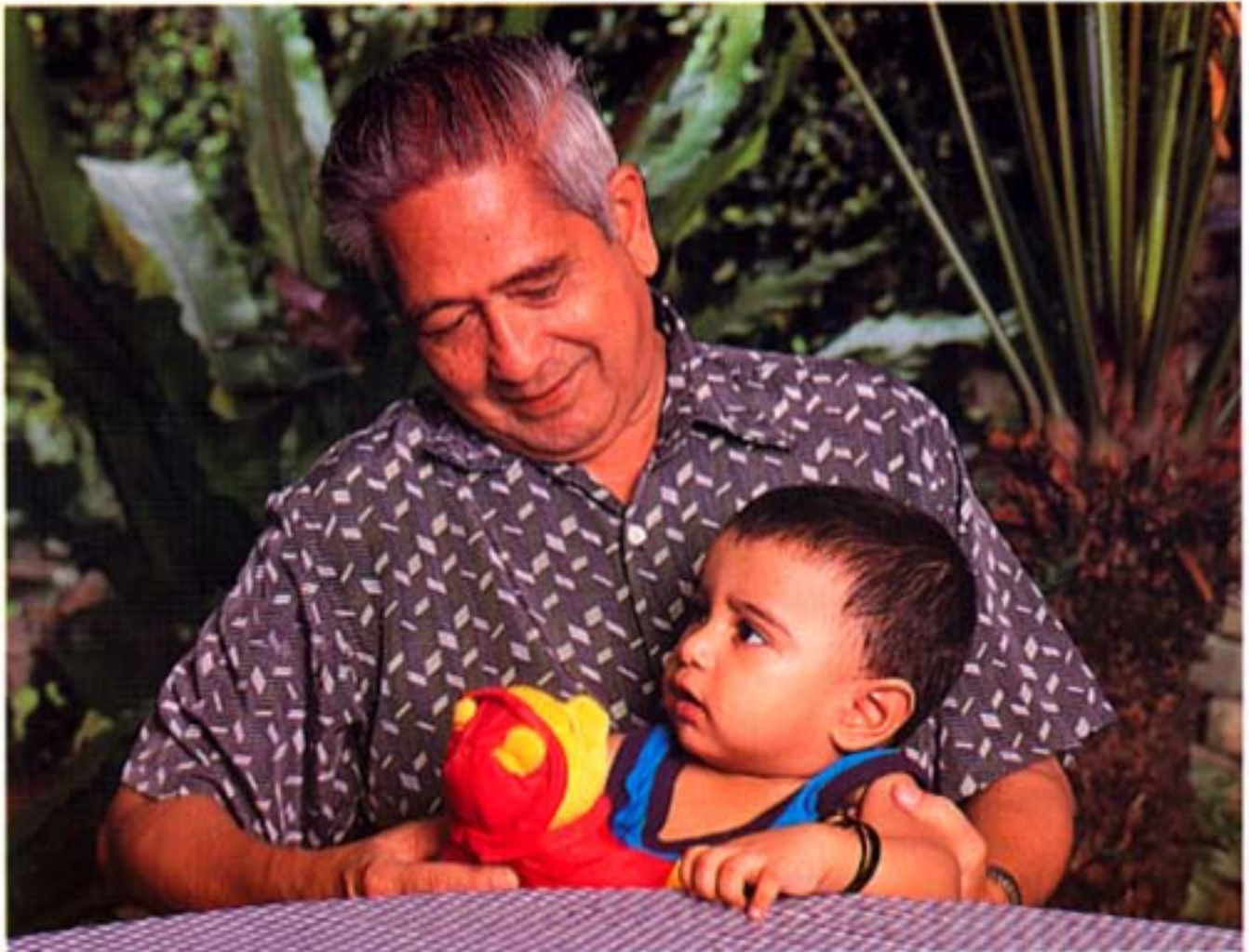
**Early signs  
of menopause:**

- Hot flush.
- Vaginal dryness.
- Cold sweat.
- Fatigue.
- Insomnia.

## Climacteric among men

**A decrease in testosterone level with ageing can cause these symptoms:**

- Lack of stamina and interest in sex.
- Lack of confidence.
- Lack of concentration.
- Sullenness.
- Easily annoyed and sensitive.
- Insomnia.
- Anxiety.
- Hot sensation.
- Bone and joint problems.
- Limbering of skin.



**Adopting a healthy lifestyle may help reduce climacteric symptoms.**

## **Reducing climacteric symptoms:**

- Healthy diet.
- Regular exercise.
- Refrain from smoking.
- Do regular BSE and get regular Pap Smear screening (for women).
- Sufficient sleep.
- Fill leisure time by doing productive activities.
- Take vitamins and other health supplements (if necessary).
- Women Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) with proper medical advice.

**Seek professional help if climacteric begins to affect your life.**

# Golden years

- Growing old is another phase in life. It can be filled with positive and meaningful experiences.
- An elderly person can also enjoy a normal sexual relationship.



# Other issues related to reproductive health

## 1. Safe sex

- A sexual relationship in the context of marriage.
- Usage of contraception if not ready for pregnancy.
- Seek treatment immediately if you are suffering from STI.
- Use condom if suffering from Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI).
- Avoid high-risk sexual relationships.

### **Aspects of high-risk sex include:**

- Indulging in sex at an early age.
- Having multiple sexual partners.
- Having casual sex.
- Prostitution.
- Couples with multiple sexual partners.
- Pre-marital and adulterous relationships.

## 2. STI - Sexually Transmitted Infection

- **Types of infection**

- Chlamydia.
- Trichomoniasis.
- Syphilis
- Gonorrhoea.
- HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus).
- HPV (Human Papilloma Virus).
- Hepatitis B.
- Herpes.

- **Health implications**

- Causing damage to the reproductive organ and leading to infertility.
- STI can lead to other health risks. For example, syphilis increases the risk of contracting HIV.

- **Implication on the foetus**

- Possibility of death.
- Premature birth.
- Abnormal development.
- The foetus may contract STI.

- **Prevention**

- Broaden your understanding on reproductive health.
- Practise safe sex.



### 3. Sexual abuse

- Rape.
- Sex with minors (even with consent).
- Sexual violence.
- It is a traumatic experience which can leave permanent psychological and emotional scar on the victim and family.
- The-victim may experience:
  - Sexual problems.
  - Indulge in high-risk sexual relationship.
  - Emotional stress.

#### **Prevention methods**

- The family is responsible to protect its members from any form of sexual abuse.
- Sex education.
- Knowing the limits in relationships.
- Inculcate positive values pertaining to sexual conduct.
- Getting early treatment.



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