



BETTER HEALTH

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

As we reflect upon the range of emotions that we've felt this past year, our latest issue of Better Health focuses on navigating the new normal, with — parenting trends that stick, vaccines for children, superfoods to look out for, and suggestions on pre-pregnancy health care.

This edition also covers a list of essential medical checkups and health risks to keep in mind once you turn 40, as well as the challenges of virtual education on children, owing to the pandemic.

New beginnings

Embracing new parenting techniques, new vaccines for children on the horizon, and nutritious superfoods to look out for in 2022

As we wrap up a rather difficult year — one of many challenges, trends, and plenty of advice — we look forward to new beginnings and consider what changes we'd like to adopt in our lives in the coming year. It is a great time for resolutions and setting new patterns, so here are a few trends to look forward to:

Smart parenting

As millennial moms are becoming a powerful force in the landscape of modern-day parenting, they are shaping the future of parenting in the process. Tech-savvy, well-informed, and trendy millennial moms are looking to the internet and parenting blogs for all their tips, tricks, and advice. They are also raising their kids with less screen time, smart sleepers that automatically rock the child when sleeping, and next-gen wireless breast pumps. Google is the new grandparent, the new neighbour, and the new nanny!



Gender-neutral roles and teamwork

In a community-oriented country like India, they say, "It takes a village to raise a child". The roles of moms, as well as dads, are becoming increasingly recognised, with more millennial dads taking on significant caregiving roles. A Google research found that 59% of millennial dads are watching more parenting-related videos on YouTube. Parents today are also letting their boys and girls choose the type of toys they want, they are dividing the household chores among everyone equally, and are narrating stories of inspiring women.



Say yes to nutrition

While children go absolutely gaga over pizza, burgers, pastries, chocolates, and cakes, they do nothing for your child, except give them a sugar high and increase their risk of obesity. Smart parents are straying away from junk food, given that it does not add to the child's immunity, and is also known to limit the child's physical and mental development. For more wholesome nutrition, parents are now incorporating eggs, milk, dry fruits, bananas, ghee, oats, berries, and local millets such as raagi, into their family's diet.



Safety begins with vaccines

While parents usually get their children vaccinated for Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Measles, Chicken Pox, Tuberculosis, and Whooping Cough, and the essential ones such as Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTP), Inactivated Polio, and Hib B1, the most awaited vaccine right now is the one that protects your child from COVID-19. There are a lot of trials that are currently underway, although we're a few months away from the universal roll-out. But that's surely on our list!



While this year has been difficult for everyone, no doubt, there's no reason to carry any blame and guilt into 2022 for personal or professional goals that weren't achieved. This is a great time to work on new, realistic goals and then draw out a plan on how to achieve them. Make sure to also carve out some time for self-care, meditation, a hobby, or even just a walk in the park. Parental stress is a real thing, and can adversely impact your mental health, and in turn, your family.

Pregnancy diaries

Looking to grow your family? Here's how to prepare for your pregnancy, ensuring that you and your future baby are healthy and thriving!

Pre-pregnancy health care focuses on what you can do before and during pregnancy, to increase your chances of having a healthy baby. While your doctor will surely talk to you about your physical and mental health, and will certainly carry out the appropriate tests, here are a few essentials for you to keep in mind for a healthy pregnancy:

Having a plan of action

Whether documented or not, you've probably thought about having children and how to achieve that. For example, if you don't want a baby, you achieve your goal by using an effective method of birth control. If you're thinking about getting pregnant, start small with 2-3 goals for the year such as finding a reliable gynaecologist, scheduling regular consultations, eating a nutritious diet, and exercising regularly.



Consult your doctor

Before becoming pregnant, talk to your doctor extensively about health care. Discuss your family's medical history and any conditions that may affect your pregnancy. The doctor will also discuss any potential problems, medication that you're on, vaccinations you may need, lifestyle alterations, and other steps to prevent any potential birth defects.



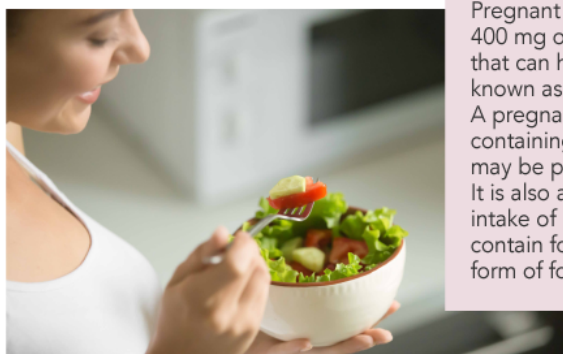
Stop alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs

Smoking, or consuming alcohol and certain drugs can cause many problems in women and babies during pregnancy, such as premature birth, birth defects, and infant death. You definitely want to kick those out, on priority!



Intake of folic acid

Pregnant women should consume 400 mg of folic acid – a B vitamin that can help prevent birth defects known as Neural Tube Defects. A pregnancy health supplement containing 400 mg of folic acid may be prescribed by your doctor. It is also advisable to increase your intake of leafy vegetables that contain folate, which is the natural form of folic acid.



Avoid toxic substances and environmental pollutants

As far as possible, avoid exposure to any hazardous chemicals, environmental pollutants, and other toxic substances such as synthetic chemicals, metals, fertilizers, pesticides, and animal droppings. Even small amounts of exposure during pregnancy, infancy, childhood, or puberty may cause illness.



Maintain a healthy weight

Being overweight or obese increases the risk of several serious diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers, and may even cause complications during pregnancy. Being underweight also puts you at risk of serious health problems. Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is about long-term lifestyle changes.



Being mentally prepared

Getting mentally fit and dealing with our new reality is more important than we think it is. Having your mental health in good condition, thinking positively, and keeping your negative feelings at bay, are crucial factors for the baby's health. However, if these feelings persist and interfere with your daily life, seek professional help.



What to expect when you hit 40?

Some ways in which female bodies change after 40 and what you can do about it

As a woman, your health risks evolve over time and need to be addressed before they become problems. Here's a list of our suggested routine medical check-ups that you would want to keep up-to-date with:



Pelvic exam and pap smear

After reaching 40, you should undergo a complete pelvic exam, Pap smear, and an HPV test. Cervical cancer makes for 16.5% of the total number of cancer cases in Indian women⁴, making it the second most common form of cancer, following breast cancer.



Bone mineral density test

Osteoporosis is a degenerative bone condition in which essential minerals, such as calcium, seep out of the bones, making them weak and brittle. The International Osteoporosis Foundation estimates that osteoporosis affects approximately 200 million women globally. Women are at a higher risk of osteoporosis than men. This is due to the declining levels of the hormone estrogen, which plays a protective role in women's bones.



Vitamin D, serum calcium, and other hormone tests

Vitamin D deficiency is particularly common and can exacerbate the problem of bone loss, leading to osteoporosis. Low vitamin D levels are also associated with depression and seasonal affective disorder. Other potential deficiencies include calcium, iron, riboflavin, and B vitamins.



Complete breast examination, mammogram

According to The Times of India, compared to any other illness, breast cancer will cause most deaths among women in India, by the year 2030. Because the risk of breast cancer increases with age, all older women should have a mammogram/ultrasound and follow the recommended guidelines. It is essential to undergo a clinical examination by the qualified physician to detect early lumps and anomalies. Testing for BRCA mutations for breast and ovarian cancer susceptibility is recommended, especially if you have a family history of cancer.



Diabetes, obesity, and hypertension screening

Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death for women aged 45-54. A healthy diet and regular exercise can help reverse the effects of pre-diabetes. Consider getting a blood sugar test, Hb A1C, and a lipid profile done to diagnose diabetes, pre-diabetes, and other allied conditions.



Thyroid tests

Some common complaints of women over 40 include weight gain, hair loss, brittle nails, and fatigue. A common cause of this is hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid). These glands secrete hormones that control the body's metabolism. Any change can cause serious changes in the body. Women are more vulnerable to this because of the severe hormonal changes that occur during pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and menopause. Women should ideally have this test every 3 years after the age of 40¹.



Ovarian cancer

Ovarian cancer is most common in postmenopausal women. This cancer is caused by changes in the DNA of cells that lead to the development of cancer. To prevent the risk of ovarian cancer, it is best to get tested before menopause. Tumour markers such as routine ultrasound, CA1.25, CEA, etc. can easily detect the early onset of the disease.

Whether you're 20 or 40, remember to take good care of yourself. It's always good to consult a medical professional if you notice anything out of the ordinary. As they say, better be safe than sorry.

Children of the pandemic

The physiological and psychological implications of virtual education, and how parents can help their children overcome

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the education sector worldwide as cases continue to rise and there is uncertainty about when and how things will return to normal. Online education takes up more space as we move forward. Most children feel connected and happy when they learn with other children. The need to adapt to remote learning has created many challenges. Let's take a look at some common challenges facing online education and how to overcome them.

Eye strain and headaches

The transition to online classes for children, means spending significantly more time in front of screens. Exposure to blue light emitted by display screens can strain their eyes and consequently cause itching, dryness, and burning. Taking frequent breaks from screen-time may help. Additionally, they may need glasses or an anti-glare screen cover. You may even follow the 20-20-20 rule, which assumes a 20-second pause for every 20 minutes of screen-time.



Poor posture

Improper posture that comes with sitting in one place for a long time, puts pressure on the muscles and ligaments of the back, causing neck pain, back pain, and even headaches. Ensure that your child is comfortable, while practicing appropriate ergonomics. Laptops or monitors should be raised to eye level, with elbows at a 90-degree angle to a flat surface.

Behavioural irregularities

Everyday lives have changed, affecting children in many ways. Some children may feel good about spending time at home, while others may find it difficult. The experience of isolation at home is very unusual and often exacerbates behavioural problems. This can result in mood swings, irritability, and other behavioural problems. It is important to establish transparent communication with your child, with an approach to understand their needs and feelings.



Demotivation and lack of direction

Some children may lack the motivation to learn in the absence of adequate social interaction, or active participation that they would otherwise get in a school setting. Encourage your child to participate in virtual study groups. Set achievable short- and long-term goals that will encourage your child to progress further, such as finishing a storybook.

Loneliness

Social deprivation can be a problem to your child's development, as most children are now confined to their homes. Use this time to build relationships at home. Provide as many social interaction opportunities as possible, such as group quizzes, or video calls with family.



Children are extremely adaptable, with the ability to bounce-back from adversity – they should be perfectly able to fully recover from any impact of lockdown without it causing any lasting psychological changes.

In this exclusive section, we cover some engagement sessions that we are carrying out, for professionals in India. With these sessions, we aim to raise awareness about essential topics surrounding women's health.

Current trends on women's health and wellness

A detailed panel discussion covering significant women's health and wellness concerns – delving deep into some current trends, and their impact on physical as well as mental health. We strive to make this an interactive session, giving you the opportunity to address any queries that you might have, with a medical specialist.



Womb to World

'Womb to World' is a 3-week programme spread across 3 hours, over 3 days each week, that sets out to answer any questions you might have, as expectant mothers. **Conducted by a senior gynecologist, dietician, and physiotherapist**, the program answers all queries specific to each, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd trimester of pregnancy.



Journey to Joy

'Journey to Joy' is a unique incentive designed to help mothers-to-be get through their pregnancy, with greater security and comfort. **With our team of senior gynaecologists, dieticians, and physiotherapists steering you through your decision-making with specialised trimester-specific advice**, this program ensures that you experience the best possible care.



Child development programme

A series of online webinar sessions, this programme has been pieced into two parts – one for children in the age group of 0-5 years, and another of 6-14 years. The programme includes 10 webinar sessions on child development, where we walk through their entire journey – **from birth, to becoming an independent adult.**



1-on-1 virtual screening by a senior consultant gynaecologist and paediatrician

Virtual screening sessions for individuals including expectant mothers, **addressing their reproductive health, and their children's health care in**



then children's health care in the pandemic.



Preconception counselling

A significant concern in current times, couples need to fully understand what goes into preconception care. This session is a platform for you to receive the right guidance, and to **receive the right counsel, and to plan your pregnancy effectively.**



Webinars

Conducted by senior consultant gynaecologists, paediatricians, dieticians, and physiotherapists, these webinar series are broken down to focus on various issues — working women's health, expectant mothers, children's health, COVID-care programmes, and topics around gynaecology and fertility.



Experience the convenience that comes with utilising our services, without having to leave the comfort of your home during your pregnancy and childcare journey.

- 1 Video consultation**
Consult our medical specialists virtually
- 2 Home vaccination**
Leave nothing to chance, get yourself and your children vaccinated against infectious diseases
- 3 SafeKid initiative**
An endeavour to vaccinate those between 6 months to 18 years, to strengthen immunity
- 4 Paediatric COVID-19 home care services**
Exclusive care packages ensuring your little one's recovery
- 5 SafeConnect**
Dedicated 24*7 helpline to support all women and their children

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