



Loving Couples - Healthy Couples

Importance of Family Planning

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Family Planning Division
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,
Government of India.

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1. Benefits of Family Planning



There are many benefits of Family Planning:

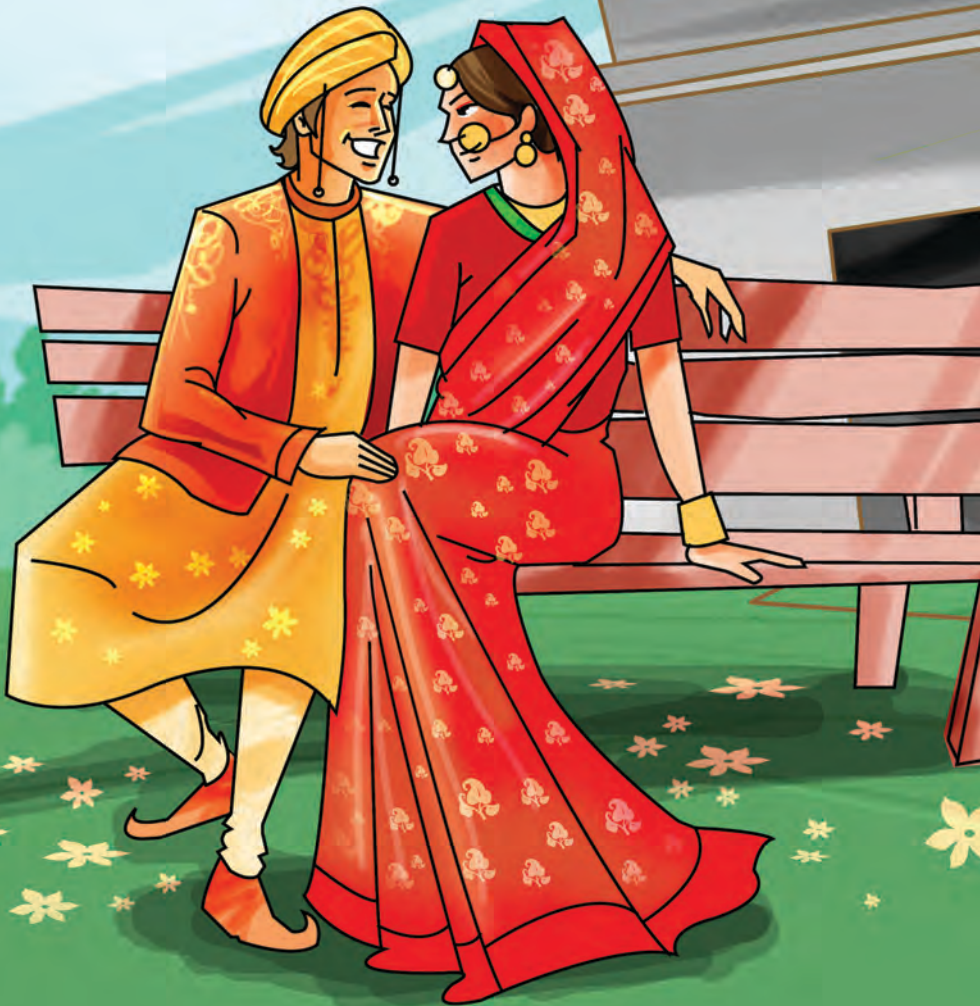
- It is the key to happiness of the entire family.
- When children are delayed, spaced and family size is limited, the mother and children remain healthy and family resources are well spent.
- Fewer the children, better care, education, toys, clothes etc. you can offer.
- The couple can spare more time for one another and can get close. Fewer children mean better care, thus, less expense on illness and more to provide for the entire family.

What is a planned family?

A planned family means:

- The birth of the first child delayed till the mother is over 20 years of age.
- There is atleast three years gap between two children.
- Family size is limited.

**2. Age at Marriage:
Over 18 years for girls
and over 21 years for boys**



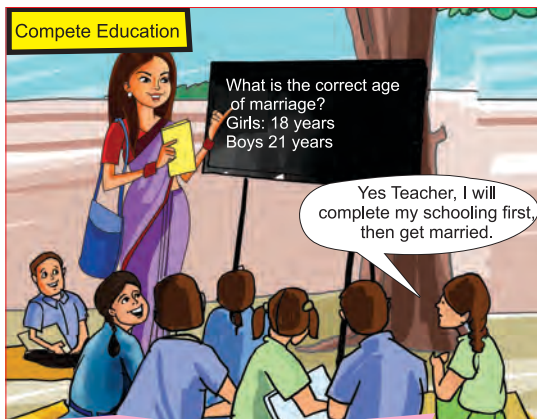
2.1. The Right Age of Marriage

Do you Know ?

Almost one-fourth of the girls in India are married before the age of 18 years.

- If girls are married off before they are 18 and boys before they are 21 years old, it is a punishable offense
- Let them complete their schooling
- Let them become self-reliant

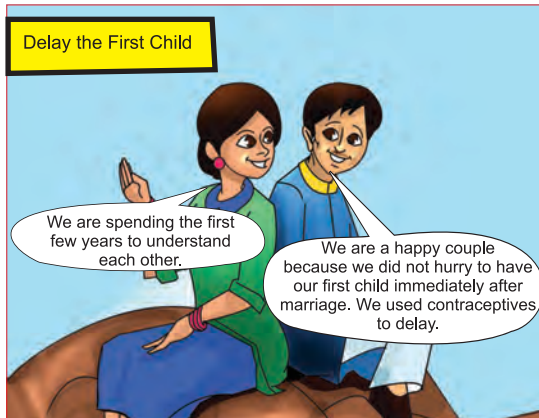
Complete Education



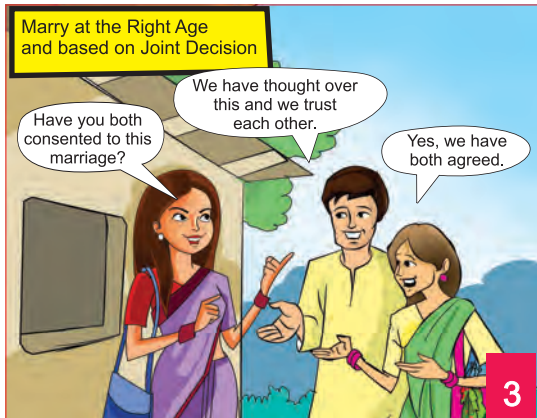
Educated Youth become Educated Parents



Delay the First Child



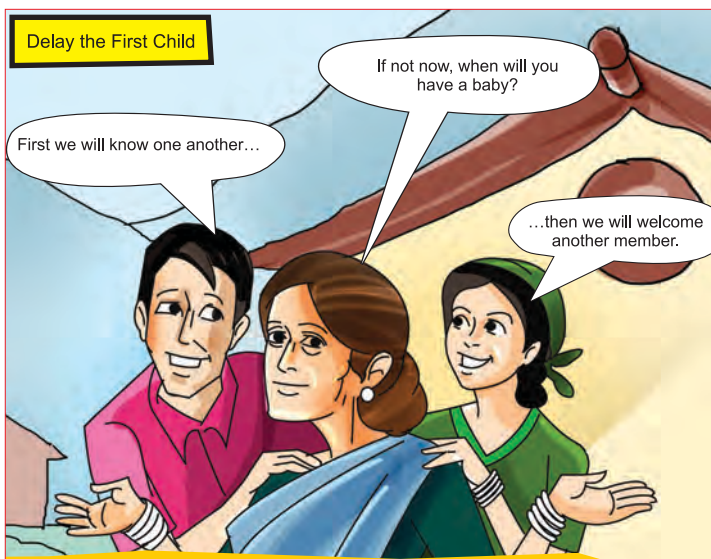
Marry at the Right Age and based on Joint Decision



2.2 Why Hurry? Delay the First Child

**Delaying the birth of the first child benefits the couple.
What should couples do?**

- It is a warm and lovely feeling to be parents, but don't hurry.
- Ensure that you both are healthy first, mature and even financially stable.
- Use this time to know each other and spend more time with each other.
- It will be an extended honeymoon.
- Together visit the nearest health centre and receive counseling on family planning and contraceptive methods, and jointly choose a method for contraception.
- Newly wed couples usually face pressure from family elders to have a child soon. The couple should discuss this and come up with ways and strategies to let them know that they are not in a hurry to have children and will do so after a few years.



2.3 What are the Dangers of Early Pregnancy?

Do you Know ?

Almost 50% of births are occurring in women who are 15-24 years of age.

Of the maternal deaths, almost 50% are occurring in mothers who are 15-24 years of age.

Childbirth is usually more difficult and dangerous for adolescent girls/women under 20 years of age than for those who are older than 20 years.

- Young adolescent girls do not have a fully developed pelvis and other reproductive organs, therefore, pregnancy for them can result in serious consequences/complications.
- Babies born to very young mothers are more likely to die in the first year of life.



Delay the First Child

We are spending the first few years in understanding each other.

We are a happy couple because we did not hurry to have our first child immediately after marriage. We used contraceptives to delay.

2.4 Health Consequences of Pregnancy at an Early Age

1. Consequences for mother

- Physical growth is impaired and, existing malnutrition and Anaemia worsen because of early pregnancy.
- Possibility of abortion, heamorrhage, high blood pressure, fits, premature labour, prolonged labour, obstructed labour and even death, if the mother does not get proper medical care.
- A young mother can go into depression if she is unable to cope with the stress of pregnancy and delivery.



2.4 Health Consequences of Pregnancy at an Early Age

- Mothers whose pelvis and birth canal are not fully developed often endure very prolonged labour. Relentless pressure from the baby's skull can damage the birth canal and cause incontinence of urine and even prolapse of uterus.
- Many of the young women in this age group give birth without attending an antenatal clinic or receiving the help of a skilled birth attendant. Hence, it is essential to devise programmes to reach out to reproductive advice and services, especially in the remote rural areas where most early marriages and early pregnancies are found.

2. Consequences for baby

- Increased risk of premature birth, low birth weight, health problems and death. The inability of the young mother to provide adequate and/or appropriate care to the new born, leads to higher morbidity and mortality.



2.4 Health Consequences of Pregnancy at an Early Age

3. Husband and wife interaction

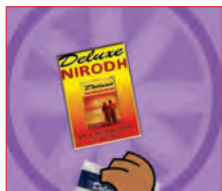
- It is important that the newly married couple understand each other, know each other and then plan their family. The couple should first become economically stable and then have a child.
- They should discuss various family planning options like condoms, birth control pills, etc. and then adopt a method.
- Both husband and wife need to come to an agreement and strategize how they plan to tell other family elders about their decision not have their first child in the first year and that they are not in a hurry to have a child immediately.



2.5. Contraceptive Options for Newly Wed Couples

Contraceptive Options for Newly Weds

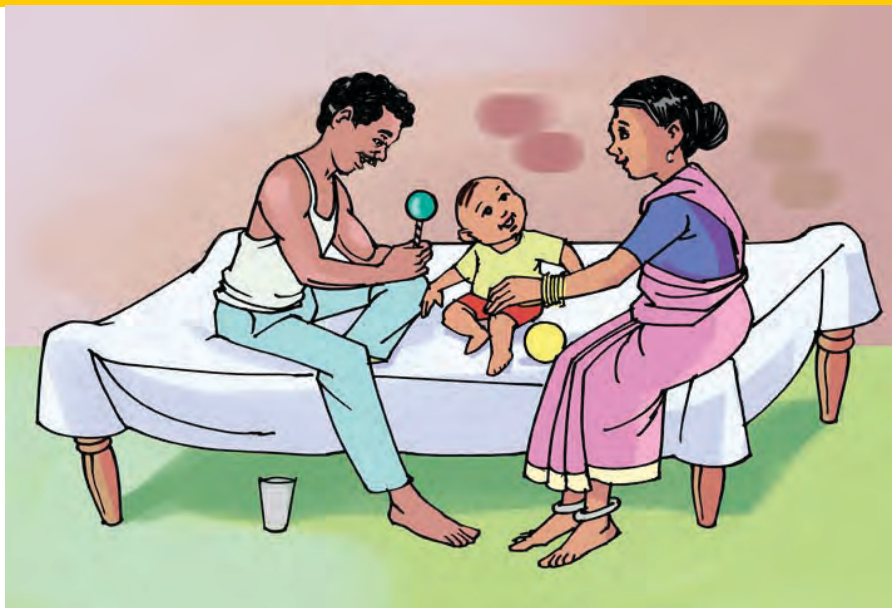
- Condoms for the husband
- Oral Contraceptive Pills (OCP's) like Mala N for the wife



Where one can avail contraceptive products and services?

- Condoms and Oral Contraceptive Pills are available at the Anganwadi Centre, with the Anganwadi worker, ASHA, ANM, Sub Health Centre Primary Health Centre (PHC), free of cost.
- In some districts, ASHAs or other community level volunteers also distribute from door-to-door a range of branded condoms and Oral Contraceptive Pills at low costs from door-to-door. Condoms and oral contraceptive pills are also available at the nearest chemist or pharmacist stores.

3. Three Years Gap between Two Children



For a healthy mother and child, maintain at least three years gap between children

Do you Know ?

Almost 50% of the births in India are spaced less than three years apart.

3.1 Three Years Gap between Two Children

- A couple should wait for at least 3 years before having their next child. This gap helps in restoring mother's health and the baby can be given proper care and attention, required for proper growth.
- A couple should adopt a suitable family planning method before they leave the hospital post delivery. They can also seek information/counseling from ASHA, ANM, Anganwadi Worker or the doctor.
- Contraceptive methods to help space children:
 - IUCD (for women)
 - Oral Contraceptive Pills (for women)
 - Condoms (for men)



3.2 Contraceptive Options for Spacing between Children

Family Planning methods which can be adopted within 48 hours of delivery:

For Women:

- **IUCD within 48 hours of delivery:** Before the woman leaves the hospital she can get an IUCD inserted. It is a one-time method and is effective up to 5 - 10 years, depending on the type of IUCD. This is a long-acting spacing method. There are two varieties :
Cu IUCD 380A which is effective for 10 years and
Cu IUCD 375 for 5 years, depending on the type.



IUCD insertion can be done only by a trained health service provider. Whenever the couple decides to have a child, the IUCD can be removed easily. IUCD can also be inserted anytime after delivery, after a minor examination.

- **Lactational Amenorrhea Method or LAM:** As long as the mother (1) exclusively breastfeeds her baby on demand; (2) her baby is less than six months old and (3) her periods have not yet started post delivery, she cannot conceive. But LAM is only effective if all the above stated conditions are met.



- **Oral Contraceptive Pills:** This is a spacing method. Once the child is six months old, mothers can start taking OCPs after consulting a health service provider like an ANM or doctor.



4. Limiting Family Size



For Men:

Condoms - Condom usage is a contraceptive method for men that help space the children, protect from unplanned pregnancy as well as sexually transmitted infections and HIV.

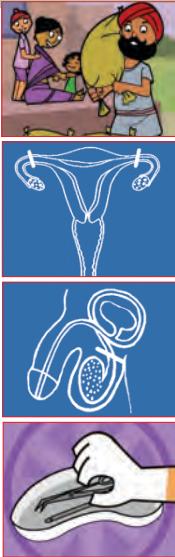


Do you Know ?

If the current unmet need for family planning could be fulfilled over the next 5 years, we can:

- Avert 35,000 maternal deaths
- Avert 12 lakh infant deaths
- Save more than Rs. 4450 crores
- Additional savings of Rs. 2000 crores, if safe abortion services are coupled with increased family planning services

4.1 Limiting Family Size



Limiting the family size - Once your family size is complete, you can opt for Long-acting Temporary Methods or Limiting Methods. These methods are available free of cost at the nearest health facility and by a trained provider. The methods are:

- **Female sterilisation (Tubectomy)** – This is a permanent method and should be adopted by those couples who do not want to have any more children. It involves tying and cutting of fallopian tubes which blocks the meeting of ovum and sperms.
- **Male sterilisation (Vasectomy)** – This is also a permanent method and should be adopted by those couples who do not want to have any more children. The No-Scalpel Method Vastectomy (NSV) involves a very simple procedure, requires less time, there are no stitches and the person can go home in an hour, hence no hospitalization is required. As part of the procedure, both the tubes which carry sperms from the testicles to the penis are cut and tied separately. This prevents the sperms from mixing with the semen which then becomes sperm-free. Vasectomy does not cause weakness in men — at work involving physical activity as well as sexual life. This procedure take at least 3 months to become fully effective.

Long-acting Temporary Method: IUCD:

- To limit family size and avoid unintended pregnancies, couples should adopt an effective method that offers long-term protection against pregnancy, and also a method that is easy to use.
- IUCD can be used as a long-acting method providing protection upto ten years.
Before the woman leaves the hospital she can undergo the IUCD insertion procedure. It is a one-time method and is effective up to 5-10 years, depending on the type of IUCD.



- There are two varieties
 - Cu IUCD 380A which is effective for 10 years and
 - Cu IUCD 375 effective for five years.
- IUCD insertion can be done only by a trained health service provider. The IUCD can be removed easily.
- IUCD can also be inserted anytime after delivery, after a minor examination:
- After menstruation, when the doctor is sure that the woman is not pregnant.
- Especially after miscarriage or abortion.

5. Timely adoption of a Family Planning Method



What will happen if the couple does not adopt a family planning method on time?

- If the couple does not adopt a family planning method on time, then they can face the problem of unplanned/unwanted pregnancy, bringing in more of physical, emotional and financial stress themselves and the family.
- Sometimes, in case of unwanted pregnancy, the family or couple may want to abort the pregnancy.
- For termination of pregnancy, women often go/are taken to untrained persons, *dais*, etc.
- The methods employed by untrained persons for termination are not safe and the facilities are unhygienic. This can cause serious complications and there is a danger to the life of the woman.
- The couple should try to adopt a suitable Family Planning method so that the risk of unwanted pregnancy is minimized.
- If at all, it is required to terminate the pregnancy, then seek safe and legal abortion at a government health centre or government approved private hospital.

Emergency Contraceptive Pills:

- Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs) are effective for preventing conception due to unplanned/ unprotected sex.
- It helps to reduce unwanted pregnancy and associated abortion, maternal mortality and morbidity.
- ECPs have to be taken by women within 72 hours of unprotected sex.
- ECPs provide protection against unwanted pregnancy, but repeated use of ECPs should be avoided as it becomes less effective.
- ECPs should be used in emergency situations only.
- ECPs should not be considered a replacement for a regular contraceptive.



6. Love and Care for your Child whether Boy or Girl

- Couples should be happy with their child whether girl or boy.
- Girls and boys are equal, and have a right to equal education, growth opportunities, health treatment, love, care and affection by parents and other family members.
- They should not practice gender discrimination or female foeticide by using prenatal diagnostic techniques, which is illegal.



7. Punishment for Violation of PCPNDT Act



- A medical practitioner may get an imprisonment for a term that may extend to three years and with a fine that may extend up to Rs.10,000/- ; and on any subsequent conviction, he/she may get an imprisonment that may extend to five years, with a fine that may extend to Rs.50,000/-.
- The name of the medical practitioner would be reported to the State Medical Council by the appropriate authority for taking necessary action, including removal of his/her name from the register of the Council for a period of five years for the first offence, and permanently for the subsequent offence.
- Any person who seeks the aid of any establishments and professionals for conducting a Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technique (PNDT) on any pregnant women for the purpose of sex selection would be punished with imprisonment for a term that may extend to three years and with a fine that may extend to Rs. 50,000/-. On subsequent conviction, he/she will be punished with imprisonment that may extend upto five years with a fine that may extend upto Rs.100,000/-

8. Where to get Services/Products?

- Counseling on Family Planning methods and related services: ASHA, ANM, Sub Health Centre, Primary Health Centre, Community Health Centre,
- District Hospitals, and accredited private health centres Family Planning services are provided by the ANM and are available at the Sub Health Centre, Primary Health Centre, Community Health Centre and District Hospitals/other health centres.
- Condoms and OCPs are available at the Anganwadi Centre, with the ANM, Sub Health Centre, Primary Health Centre, with the ASHA and Anganwadi Worker, and some are even sold for a small payment to the ASHA or other health workers.
- These products are also available with medical shops or chemists.
- IUCD insertions, Tubectomy and NSV are provided free at public health facilities.
- Sometimes government runs special camps for Family Planning Services. Check with your ASHA or Anganwadi Worker or ANM.



9. Schemes that one can avail

- **Prerna Awards by Jansankhya Sthirta Kosh:** This strategy identifies and recognizes young married couples from backward districts who have adopted 'Responsible Parenthood Criteria', and presents them as role models for other young couples in the district. The Prerna Awards are given to couples who fulfill basic criteria including girls marrying at the age of 19, couple having their first child two years after marriage, and maintaining a gap of three years between first and second child followed by sterilization of either parent. The couples are awarded with a certificate and Kisan Vikas Patras.
- A Toll-free helpline (1800-11-6555) for reliable and authentic information on issues related to Family Planning, Reproductive and Child Health is available. One can call this toll free number from any phone.
- Government of India scheme to compensate acceptors of sterilisation for loss of wages: The Government has launched a scheme to compensate the acceptors of sterilisation for the loss of wages for the day on which he/she attended the medical facility for undergoing sterilisation.
- Compensation acceptors at government (public) facilities for different states is presented below:

In the high-focus 18 states	Vasectomy (All)	Rs.1100/-
	Tubectomy (All)	Rs. 600/-
Non high-focus 17 states/UTs	Vasectomy (All)	Rs.1100/-
	Tubectomy (BPL+SC/ST Only)	Rs.600/-
	Tubectomy (Non BPL+ NonSC/ST)	Rs. 250/-

10. Family Planning Insurance Scheme

This scheme was launched by the Government in November, 2005. The benefits under the policy are as follows:

Coverage	Limits
Death following Sterilisation at the hospital (inclusive of death during process of sterilisation operation) or within seven days from the date of discharge from the hospital.	Rs. 2 Lakh
Death following Sterilisation within 8-30 days from the date of discharge from the hospital	Rs. 50,000/-
Failure of Sterilisation	Rs. 30,000/-
Cost of treatment upto 60 days arising out of complication following Sterilisation operation (inclusive of complication during process of Sterilisation operation) from the date of discharge.	Actual not exceeding Rs. 25,000/-
Indemnity Insurance per Doctor/facility but more than four cases in a year.	Upto Rs. 2 Lakh not Per claim

11. Let's Know More!

Family Planning is beneficial for all:

- Its is very critical that each and every couple discuss and jointly decide when they want to have children, how many children they want, how many years gap will they maintain between two children and after how many children they want to limit family size.
- To avoid unintended pregnancies, there are many contraceptive options that are safe, easy to use, easy to adopt, effective, free and easily available at the nearest health centre or could be made available through your community health volunteer.

Family Planning is a shared responsibility of both the husband and wife:

- Couples should discuss and learn more about the benefits of Family Planning for the mother, the children and the happiness of the family as a whole.
- Couples should make an informed choice about having children and it should be planned. They should contact their ASHA or Doctor for counseling on Family Planning, contraceptive options and their use.



A small family means more resources available for food, clothing, education, toys etc.

A small family means more time for couples between themselves, more love, more togetherness.

All children (both daughters and sons) need proper care so don't discriminate Between son and daughter.

The Family Planning services provided at public health facilities are free.

Compensation packages are provided by the Government to the men/ women who opt for Male/female Sterilisation.

The Government has also introduced a Family Planning Insurance Scheme.

