

GLOSSARY

Abdomen: The part of the body below the chest that contains the stomach, liver, bladder, and reproductive organs.

Abnormal lie or presentation: When the baby is not lying in the womb with the head pointed downwards at the time of delivery. The most common abnormal presentation is *breech*.

Abortion: The ending of a pregnancy before the *foetus* is able to live outside the mother's body. It can happen anytime up to the 26th week of pregnancy, but usually happens before the 12th week. It can happen on its own (spontaneous abortion or "miscarriage"), or it can be caused by an operation or procedure (induced abortion).

Adolescence: The period between childhood and adulthood, usually considered ages 10-12 to 18-19.

Afterbirth: see *placenta*.

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome): An incurable disease caused by a virus called HIV (*human immunodeficiency virus*). It affects the blood, making the body unable to fight against other diseases. It can be transmitted during *sexual intercourse*, from mother to infant during pregnancy, or by getting infected blood in the body (for example, during a *blood transfusion*).

Albinism: A condition in which a person lacks pigmentation, so the skin is white, the hair is white or light yellow, and the eyes are blue. It is inherited by a child from the parents.

Amniocentesis: Removal of *amniotic fluid* by inserting a needle through a woman's *abdomen* into the *bag of water* that surrounds the baby. The fluid is tested to detect abnormalities in the baby.

Amniotic fluid: The fluid that surrounds and protects the baby inside the womb before it is born.

Anaemia: A condition in which the blood gets thin and does not have enough red blood cells to carry oxygen to the parts of the body. It is often caused by lack of iron in the diet. Signs include tiredness; pale gums, tongue, eyelids, palms and soles of the feet; and lack of energy.

Anaesthesia: Drugs used to put people to sleep or to make part of the body numb so that they will not feel any pain or discomfort during an operation.

Anovulation: Failure to *ovulate* or release an *egg*. Anovulation is a cause of *infertility*, since pregnancy cannot take place if no egg is released.

Antibody: A substance produced in the body to fight against organisms (germs) that cause diseases.

Areola: The dark-coloured skin around the nipple.

Bacterial vaginosis (BV): An infection caused by germs in the *vagina*, characterised by bad-smelling, grayish discharge from the vagina.

Bag of water: The sac inside the womb that holds the *amniotic fluid* and the *foetus*.

Barrier method: A method of family planning that involves using a device, such as a *condom* or *diaphragm*, to prevent the *sperm* and *egg* from uniting.

Birth canal: See *vagina*.

Bladder: The organ in which *urine* is stored before leaving the body.

Blood transfusion: The replacement of blood in a body by injecting blood from another person into the veins. It is often needed after *haemorrhage*, or in severe cases of *anaemia*.

Breech presentation: When the baby is lying with the buttocks or feet lowest in the womb, so that the buttocks or feet come out first rather than the head.

Caesarean section: An operation in which a baby is delivered by cutting open the *abdomen* and womb and removing the baby and the *placenta*. The womb and abdomen are then sewn closed.

Candidiasis: An infection that occurs when bacteria or germs in the *vagina* grow out of control. Signs are increased fluid from the vagina and itching.

Carbohydrates: Substances in food that provide energy for the body; they include sugars and starches.

Cervical cancer: A disease that causes the cells of the *cervix* to grow abnormally. If not treated, it can cause death. Signs include irregular bleeding from the *vagina*, such as bleeding after *menopause* or after *sexual intercourse*.

Cervical cap: A small rubber cup placed by a woman over her *cervix* before *sexual intercourse* to prevent pregnancy. It is smaller than a *diaphragm*.

Cervical dilatation: The process through which labour *contractions* cause the *cervix* to open to ten centimetres so that the baby can pass out of the womb and be born. Dilatation occurs during the first stage of *labour*.

Cervical effacement: The process through which labour *contractions* cause the *cervix* to get very thin. It accompanies *dilatation*.

Cervix: The opening or neck of the womb.

Chancroid: A *sexually transmitted disease* that causes painful sores in the *genital area*.

Chlamydia: A *sexually transmitted disease* that may cause painful urination and discharge from the *penis* (in men) or from the *vagina* (in women).

Chromosomes: Structures found in each cell in the human body that determine what the body looks like. Each cell contains 46 chromosomes, except for the reproductive cells, the *sperm* and the *egg*, which contain 23 chromosomes each.

Circumcision: The removal of the foreskin of a man's *penis*. For female circumcision, see *female genital mutilation*.

Clitoris: The small, oval organ in a woman's *vulva* that gives a woman the sensation of sexual excitement and pleasure.

Colostrum: A thick yellowish liquid produced by the breast the first 2-3 days after birth, before breast milk starts coming out. It contains *protein* and *antibodies*, and is very good for babies.

Coma: Complete loss of consciousness, like a deep sleep from which a person cannot be woken up. It can be the result of a wide variety of serious medical complications.

Condom: A rubber sheath that covers the *penis* during *sexual intercourse* to prevent the *semen* from entering the *vagina*. It is used to prevent pregnancy and the spread of *sexually transmitted diseases*.

Contraception: Any method a man or woman uses to prevent pregnancy.

Contraceptive sponge: A small sponge containing *spermicide* that is placed inside the *vagina* before *sexual intercourse* to prevent pregnancy.

Contractions: Squeezing or tightening of the muscles of the womb. Contractions push the baby out of the womb during delivery. Regular, strong contractions are the most reliable sign that *labour* is beginning.

Depo-Provera: See *injectable contraceptives*.

Diabetes: A disease in which the body is unable to use sugar properly. Signs of the disease are sugar in the *urine*, urinating a lot, feeling very thirsty, and eating too much. If untreated, it can cause weakness, headache, vomiting, coma, and finally death.

Diaphragm: A flexible rubber cup that a woman puts over her *cervix* before *sexual intercourse* to prevent pregnancy.

Dilatation: See *cervical dilatation*.

Douche: Washing out the inside of the *vagina* with a liquid.

Down's syndrome: A serious condition that a baby may be born with, characterised by mental retardation, slanted eyes, and a broad, short forehead.

Eclampsia: Sudden fits or convulsions which may lead to *coma*, especially during late pregnancy or after childbirth. One out of 200 patients with *pre-eclampsia* will develop eclampsia. Signs that fits may develop include severe headaches, dizziness, and seeing spots or flashing lights.

Ectopic pregnancy: Implantation and development of a fertilised *egg* outside the womb, usually in the *fallopian tubes*. Often results in spontaneous *abortion*, and can cause severe bleeding or death.

Egg: A cell which, when released from a woman's *ovary*, may be fertilised by a man's *sperm*. A fertilised egg grows to become a human baby.

Ejaculation: The expulsion of *semen* from the *penis* at the climax of *sexual intercourse*.

Embryo: The name for a baby in the very early stages of development, usually between the second and eighth weeks of pregnancy.

Endometrium: The inside lining of the womb. After *fertilisation*, the *egg* attaches itself to the endometrium and develops. The endometrial lining is what is shed during *menstruation*.

Episiotomy: A small cut sometimes made by the doctor or midwife in the outside entrance to the *vagina* at the very end of *labour*. The cut allows the baby to come out more quickly or more easily.

Erection: When blood is pumped into the *penis* during sexual excitement, making it stiff and erect.

Expected date of delivery (EDD): The date when a baby is expected to be born. This date falls on the fortieth week of pregnancy, starting from the first day of the last *menstrual period*.

Fallopian tubes: The tubes that connect the two *ovaries* to the womb. *Eggs* must pass through the tubes to reach the womb, and the *sperm* must enter the tubes in order to fertilise the eggs.

False labour: *Contractions* of the womb that may feel like *labour* pains. However, they do not last and do not become increasingly painful and regular.

Female condom: A rubber sheath with two flexible rings that is placed inside the *vagina* before *sexual intercourse* and protects against pregnancy and *sexually transmitted diseases*.

Female genital mutilation: A traditional practice in which all or part of the external reproductive organs of the female are removed.

Fertile period: The 3-4 days during a woman's *menstrual cycle* when she can become pregnant.

Fertilisation: The joining of a woman's *egg* with a man's *sperm* inside a *fallopian tube*.

Fibroids: Unusual growths inside the womb. If they grow too rapidly or if there are many of them, they can cause problems such as too much bleeding during *menstruation*, or premature *labour*.

Fistula: A hole that develops between the *vagina* and the rectum or *bladder*, often as a result of *obstructed labour*.

Foetoscope: A special stethoscope that is used to listen to a baby's heartbeat during pregnancy.

Foetus: The term for a baby in the womb from the third month of pregnancy until birth.

Forceps: Instruments sometimes used during delivery to grasp the baby's head and help pull it out of the birth canal.

Genital warts: fleshy growths in the *genital* area caused by a *sexually transmitted disease*.

Genitals: The external sexual organs of a man (*penis*, *testes*) and woman (*vulva*).

Gestation: The process of carrying a developing *foetus* in the womb; pregnancy.

Gonorrhoea: A *sexually transmitted disease* that can cause discharge from the *vagina* or *penis*.

Haemoglobin test: A test that indicates whether or not a woman is *anaemic* by measuring the amount of iron in her blood.

Haemorrhage: Heavy bleeding.

Haemorrhoids: *Varicose veins* of the rectum. They are common during the later stages of pregnancy. Avoiding constipation by eating lots of fruits and vegetables and drinking lots of water can help prevent haemorrhoids.

Hepatitis A (infectious): A disease of the liver that can be easily transmitted from one person to another through

contact with faeces (stool). The symptoms include pain and swelling in the liver, fever, general aches, vomiting, and *jaundice*.

Hepatitis B (viral): A disease that is transmitted through blood or body fluids which has no known cure. A person infected with this disease may experience severe liver damage and die, or may remain a relatively healthy carrier of the disease.

Herpes: An infection that causes small painful blisters, usually on or around the *genitals* or around the mouth. There is no cure for the infection. It can only be transmitted during or immediately before an outbreak of blisters, which come and go.

Hormones: Chemicals produced by the body to do a special job. For example, *oestrogen* and *progesterone* are hormones that regulate a woman's *menstrual cycle* and the changes in her reproductive organs during pregnancy.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV): The virus that causes the incurable disease AIDS. The virus is transmitted through contact with the blood, *semen*, or vaginal fluids of an infected person. The virus destroys the body's ability to fight infections.

Hypertension: High blood pressure. It can be caused by various diseases, including heart disease, kidney disease, and *pre-eclampsia*.

Implantation: The process by which a fertilised *egg* attaches itself to the inside of the womb.

Induction of labour: Using medication or rupturing the *bag of water* which surrounds the baby in order to start *labour* artificially. This procedure is done only if the mother or baby would be endangered by continuing the pregnancy.

Infertility: The inability to become pregnant.

Injectable contraceptives: *Hormones* that are injected into a woman's arm or buttocks every two or three months to prevent pregnancy.

Intrauterine device (IUD): A small device placed inside a woman's womb to prevent pregnancy.

Involution: The return of the womb to normal size after childbirth.

Jaundice: A yellow colour of the eyes. It is a sign of disease in the liver, blood, or other organs.

Labia: The inner ("labia minora") and outer ("labia majora") lips of the *vagina*.

Labour: The process by which a baby is born, especially the *contractions* of the womb that push out the baby and the *placenta*.

Laparoscopy: A surgical operation in which a small cut is made in a woman's *abdomen*, and a special instrument is used to look at her reproductive organs.

Last menstrual period (LMP): The last normal period before a pregnancy. Often used to calculate the *expected date of delivery (EDD)*.

Lie of the foetus: The direction of the *foetus's* body inside the womb; see *transverse lie*.

Lochia: The discharge (fluid) that comes from the womb after delivery. It consists of blood, mucus, and tissue.

Malaria: A disease that is transmitted by the bites of mosquitoes. Signs of the disease are high fever, headaches, and sometimes vomiting. Malaria can cause *anaemia* and other complications during pregnancy.

Mastitis: An infection of the breast, usually in the first weeks or months of

nursing a baby. It causes part of the breast to become hot, red, and swollen.

Meconium: A baby's first bowel movement.

Menarche: The first *menstrual period*. It usually occurs between the ages of 12 and 15, although it can happen as early as nine years or as late as 17 years.

Menopause: The time when a woman stops having monthly periods, usually between the ages of 45 and 55.

Menstrual cycle: From the start of one *menstrual period* to the start of the next, usually about 28 days. Various changes occur in the *ovaries* and the womb during the menstrual cycle, caused by *hormones*.

Menstruation or menstrual period: The flow of blood and tissue from the womb, usually occurring once a month. The flow usually lasts 3-7 days. Menstruation starts at *menarche* around age 12-15, and ends with *menopause* at around age 45-55.

Minerals: Substances such as iron that are found in the body and are essential for body functions and the growth of the baby. As they are used by the body, they must be replaced by eating foods that provide minerals.

Miscarriage: see *abortion (spontaneous)*.

Morning sickness: The feeling of nausea that women often feel during the first 12 weeks or so of pregnancy; it can last all day.

Obstructed labour: *Labour* is obstructed when the baby cannot be delivered through the birth canal without serious damage to the mother or the baby. It can happen if the mother's birth canal is too small to permit the passage of a normal-sized baby, or if the baby is too big.

Oestrogen: The female sex *hormone* produced by the *ovaries*. They are responsible for the monthly changes in the womb, and also for the development of the breasts and the growth of hair on the *vulva*.

Oral contraceptives: Pills or tablets containing female *hormones*. A woman swallows one pill each day in order to avoid pregnancy.

Ovaries: Two small organs in a woman's *abdomen* that are connected to the womb by the *fallopian tubes*. The ovaries produce the *eggs* that join with a man's *sperm* to make a baby.

Ovulation: The release of an *egg* from one of the *ovaries*. It usually occurs 14 days before the next *menstrual period*.

Oxytocin: A drug that causes the womb to contract. This drug is used if *labour* needs to be started artificially (see *induction of labour*). It is also used after the baby has been delivered to stop bleeding.

Pap smear: A test in which some cells are taken from the *cervix* and examined. It is used to detect the early signs of *cervical cancer*.

Partograph: A form that is used to measure the progress of *labour* by recording the timing of *contractions*, *cervical dilatation*, blood pressure, and pulse. Use of the partograph provides an early warning when labour is not progressing as expected, and indicates that an operation or other intervention might be necessary.

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID): An infection of the reproductive organs that can result in *infertility*. It is often caused by a *sexually transmitted disease*. Signs of the disease include pain in the lower abdomen, pain during *menstruation*, fever, and bad-smelling discharge

from the *vagina*.

Penis: The male sexual organ.

Placenta or afterbirth: The lining inside the womb where the *foetus* is attached. Food, oxygen, and *antibodies* pass through the placenta to the foetus from the mother's body.

Placenta praevia: A condition where the *placenta* lies low in the womb, blocking the passage of the baby during delivery.

Postpartum: The period after the delivery of the baby; usually defined as the six weeks after birth.

Post-term pregnancy: A pregnancy that lasts longer than 42 weeks (more than two weeks past the due date).

Pre-eclampsia: A condition during pregnancy characterised by increasing *hypertension* (high blood pressure), headaches, protein in the urine, and swelling of the ankles, feet, hands, and face. If this condition is not treated, *eclampsia* can develop.

Premature baby: A baby born before term, or before 37 weeks of *gestation*.

Presentation of the foetus: The position of the *foetus* in the womb, specifically which part of the foetus is lowest in the birth canal. Normally babies lie in various positions as they grow, but as the time of delivery approaches most infants turn head down.

Pre-term labour: *Labour* which begins before the end of the 37th week of pregnancy.

Progesterone: A female *hormone* (chemical produced by the body) that causes changes in the womb, helps in the development of the *placenta*, and affects the development of the breasts.

Prolapse of the uterus: A condition in which the muscles that hold the womb

in place are weak; sometimes the womb starts to come out through the *cervix*. It can happen after a woman has had too many children.

Prolapsed cord: A condition in which the baby's *umbilical cord* comes down into the *vagina* before the baby's head during delivery. This is a life-threatening problem which can lead to the death of the baby unless immediate action is taken.

Prolonged labour: *Labour* lasting more than 12 hours.

Protein: A substance found in various types of foods, especially meat, eggs, milk, beans, and some vegetables. It is essential for growth and development of the body.

Puerperium: The 42 days (six weeks) following the birth of the child. The womb returns to normal during this time.

Quickening: The first movements of the baby felt by a pregnant woman; usually occurs between 18 and 22 weeks.

Retained placenta: A *placenta* that remains inside the womb after the birth of the baby. If not removed as soon as possible by a trained health worker, a retained placenta can cause heavy bleeding.

Scrotum: The pouch of skin that contains the man's *testes*.

Semen: The thick, whitish liquid that comes out of the man's *penis* during *ejaculation*, and carries the *sperm*.

Sexual intercourse: The act by which the man's erect *penis* is placed inside the *vagina* of the woman; also called sexual relations.

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs): Diseases that can be transmitted by having sexual relations with an infected person; they include *chlamydia*, *gonorrhoea*, *syphilis*, and *AIDS*, among others.

Show: A pinkish mucus or light spotting of blood that often signals the start of *labour*.

Sickle-cell disease: A disease that affects the blood cells, causing *anaemia*. It can also cause fever and pain in the joints and in the *abdomen*. It is passed from parent to child.

Speculum: A medical instrument used to examine the *vagina* and *cervix*.

Sperm: The male sex cells formed inside the male *testes*. They fertilise the female *egg* to start a new life.

Spermicides: A variety of creams, jellies, foams, or suppositories that are inserted into the *vagina* to destroy *sperm* and thereby prevent pregnancy.

Sterilisation: Male sterilisation (*vasectomy*) is an operation in which the *vas deferens* is cut and sealed, leaving the man unable to make a woman pregnant. Female sterilisation (*tubal ligation*) is an operation in which the woman's *fallopian tubes* are cut and sealed, making her unable to become pregnant.

Stillbirth: The birth of a dead *foetus*.

Symphiotomy: An operation that is sometimes done during delivery when *labour* is obstructed. A cut is made at the top of the pubic bone to enlarge the birth canal and allow the baby to pass through.

Syphilis: A *sexually transmitted disease* that in its first stage causes small, painful sores in the *genital* area. Later stages are marked by fever, headaches, and pain in the bones and muscles.

Tampon: A tight pack of cotton or other material placed inside the *vagina* during *menstruation* to absorb blood. A string is attached to the bottom so the tampon can be pulled out.

Testes/Testicles: The male reproductive organs that produce *sperm* and male *hormones*.

Tetanus: A disease that may affect a newborn baby, and is often fatal. It causes stiffness in the neck, arching of the back, and spasms, so that the baby cannot breastfeed. It can be prevented if the mother receives tetanus toxoid immunisation during pregnancy.

Transverse lie: A condition in which the baby lies diagonally in the womb with the shoulder ready to come out first; it often results in *obstructed labour*.

Trichomonas: An infection in the *vagina* caused by germs or bacteria. It causes increased frothy fluid to come from the vagina.

Tubal ligation: The removal of a portion of a woman's *fallopian tubes* to prevent *eggs* from reaching the womb and thereby prevent pregnancy. It is a permanent method of *contraception*, also called female *sterilisation*.

Twins: The growth, development, and birth of two babies in the womb at the same time.

Ultrasound: A machine that uses sound waves to create a "picture" of the baby. It is used to evaluate certain problems during pregnancy.

Umbilical cord: The cord that connects the baby to the *placenta* on the inside of the mother's womb. When the stump of the cord has dried up and fallen off, the navel (belly button) remains on the infant's stomach.

Urethra: The tube that connects the *bladder* to the outside of the body in both men and women. The urethra is used to pass *urine* outside the body. In the male, *sperm* also pass through the urethra.

Urinary tract infection: An infection of the *urethra* or *bladder*. Symptoms include pain when urinating and having to urinate frequently.

Urine: The yellow fluid produced by the body that carries away substances the body no longer needs.

Uterus/Womb: The muscular organ inside a woman's belly in which a baby develops.

Vacuum extraction: The use of a small suction cup placed on the top of a baby's head during delivery to help pull the baby out of the birth canal.

Vagina: The passage that goes from a woman's womb to the outside. It is also called the birth canal.

Varicose veins: Abnormal swelling of the veins, especially in the legs. It is common during pregnancy.

Vas deferens: The tube that moves the *sperm* from the *testes* to the *urethra*.

Vasectomy: An operation to prevent pregnancy in which a portion of a man's *vas deferens* is cut in order to prevent *sperm* from leaving through the *penis*. Also called male *sterilisation*.

Virus: A tiny organism, invisible to the eye, that causes certain diseases.

Vitamins: Substances that are necessary for the growth and development of the body. They do not provide energy for the body, but small amounts are needed for good health. A woman who is pregnant or breastfeeding needs more vitamins than usual.

Vulva: The external female reproductive organs.

Womb: *sec uterus*.

Zygote: An *egg* that has been fertilised by a *sperm*.

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