

Reproductive Health

Reproductive health: A total well being in all aspects of reproduction such as physically, mentally and emotionally is called reproductive health. All the reproductive organs should be healthy with normal functions.

Reproductive health– problems and strategies–

Major problems: Major problems associated with reproductive health are–

- **Overpopulation:** explosion in population causes a scarcity of every basic need and hence affect the well-being of reproductive health.
- **Sex education:** due to lack of sex education people are not concerned about safe and hygienic sexual practice.
- **Adolescence related changes:** the changes which take place in adolescent can lead to sex abuse and hence can affect reproductive health.
- **Sexually transmitted diseases:** sexually transmitted diseases can affect the reproductive health.
- **Sex abuse and sex related crimes:** sex abuse can cause physical injury, unwanted pregnancy, vaginal discharge, pelvic pain etc.
- **Female foeticides:** female foeticides can affect reproductive and sexual health of a woman.

Strategies:

➤ **Family planning:** The increase in human population, health and education of all the children as well as marriage and child bearing capacity of individuals are some special concerns for the overall reproductive health.

➤ **Sex education:** Introduction of sex- education in schools and colleges is another step to provide right information to the youth.

- Sex education saves young people from misconceptions about sex related issues.

➤ **Infrastructural facilities and material support:** Medical assistance be provided should and people should be cared in reproduction related problems like pregnancy, delivery. STDs, abortions, menstrual problems etc.

- Implementation of better techniques and new strategies from time to time is also required to provide more efficient care and assistance to people.

➤ **Ban on amniocentesis:** Amniocentesis is a foetal sex determination test based on the chromosomal pattern in the amniotic fluid surrounding the developing embryo.

- Amniocentesis is done to determine sex legally should be banned as it increases female

Population explosion: The rapid increase in human population over a relatively short period of time is called population explosion.

➤ **Reasons for population explosion**

- A rapid decline in death rate, Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Infant Mortality Rate(IMR).

- An increase in the number of people in reproductive age.
- Control of diseases and better public health care with greater medical attention.

➤ **Steps to control population explosion**

- People should be educated about the advantages of a smaller family.
- Statutory raising the marriageable age of male and female is an effective means to control the population.
- The couples of reproductive age are motivated to family planning by adopting birth control measures.

Birth control: Various contraceptives methods are available to control the birth of a child like natural method, barrier methods, intrauterine devices, oral contraceptives, injecting hormones, surgical methods.

➤ **Natural methods:** this method avoid chances of meeting of sperms and ovum.

- **Periodic abstinence:** In this method, couples avoid coitus from day 10 to 17 of the menstrual cycle when ovulation could be expected. This period is also called the fertile period.
- **Withdrawal or coitus interruptus:** In the method, the male partner withdraws the penis from the vagina just before ejaculation to avoid insemination.
- **Lactational amenorrhea:** The menstrual cycle and ovulation do not occur during intense lactation and so the chances of pregnancy are low. This method is effective only upto six months after child birth.

➤ **Barrier methods:** barriers are used to prevent the physical contact of sperms and ovum.

- **Condoms:** The barriers which are made of thin rubber latex sheath to cover the penis or vagina in males and females respectively are called condoms.

- Also prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases
- Condoms trap the ejaculate and prevent semen from entering the vagina.

Example– Nirodh, is a popular brand of condoms for males.

- **Diaphragms, cervical caps and vaults:** made up of rubber which are inserted in female reproductive tract to cover the cervix during coitus to prevent conception by blocking the entry of sperms through the cervix.

➤ **Intrauterine devices:** Inserted by doctors in the uterus through the vagina which increases the phagocytosis of sperms within the uterus.

- These are available as non-medicated IUDs such as CuT, Cu7, multiload 375 and hormone releasing IUDs such as LNG-20, Progestasert.

➤ **Oral contraceptive pills:** Small doses of progesterone or progesterone estrogen combinations are used by the females in the form of tablets.

- These are taken daily for 21 days starting from the fifth day of the menstrual cycle and after a gap of 7 days it has to be repeated again.

- Hormonal pills prevent ovulation and implantation by inhibiting the secretions of FSH and LH from the pituitary glands.

- Saheli, an oral contraceptive pill, is a non-steroid preparation used by females.

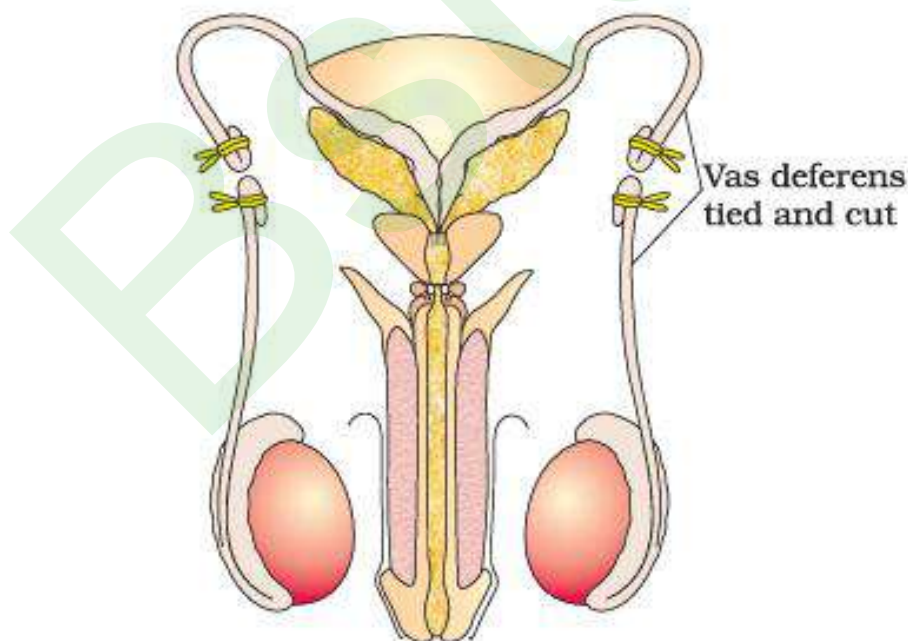
➤ **Injections of hormones:** Progesterone along with other estrogen are used by females as injections under the skin,

- The effective period is longer than pills but action is similar.

➤ **Surgical methods–**

- **Vasectomy:** The sterilization process in males is called vasectomy.

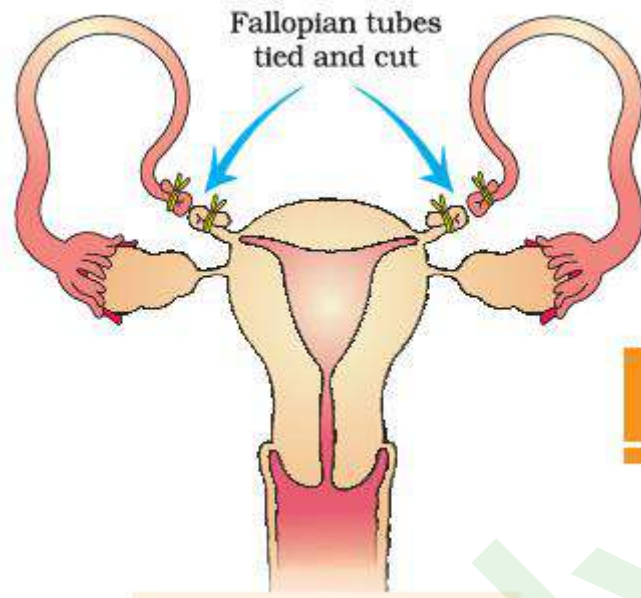
In this process, a small part of the vas deferens is removed or tied up through a small incision on the scrotum.



- **Tubectomy:** The sterilisation procedure in the females is called a tubectomy.

In this method, a small part of the fallopian tube is

removed or tied up through a small incision in the abdomen or through vagina.



Medical termination of pregnancy (MTPs): Intentional or voluntary termination of pregnancy before full term is called medical termination of pregnancy.

- MTPs are used to get rid of unwanted pregnancies and the pregnancies which could be harmful or fatal to the mother or to the foetus or both.
- MTPs are safe upto 12 weeks i.e. the first trimester or pregnancy.
- Government of India legalized MTP in 1971.

Sexually transmitted diseases(STD' s): Diseases which are transmitted through sexual intercourse with infected person are called sexually transmitted diseases or venereal diseases or reproductive tract infections(RTI).

Gonorrhea, syphilis, genital herpes, genital warts, hepatitis, AIDS, chlamydiasis are sexually transmitted diseases.

➤ STD' s can transmit through–

- Sexual contact with infected persons.
- Sharing of needles or surgical instruments contaminated with infected blood.
- Transfusion of contaminated blood.
- STDs can also be transmitted from an infected mother to the foetus.

➤ STDs can be prevented by taking preventive measures like–

- Avoid sex with unknown persons or multiple persons.
- Always use condoms during sex.
- If the early symptoms like itching, fluid discharge, slight pain, swellings occur in the genital regions, one must consult a doctor.

STDs if left untreated can lead to pelvic inflammatory diseases, abortions, stillbirths, ectopic pregnancies, infertility or even cancer of the reproductive tract.

Infertility: Inability to give birth to a child or inability to conceive is called infertility.

- The reasons for infertility can be physical, hereditary, drugs, psychological etc.
- The couples could be assisted to have their own child through certain special techniques called assisted reproductive technologies.

Assisted reproductive technologies–

1) In vitro fertilization (IVF): IVF involves fertilization of ovum outside the body followed by embryo transfer (ET).

- Ova from the wife/donor female and sperms from the husband/donor male are collected and are induced to fuse to form zygote in the laboratory.
- The zygote is then transferred into the fallopian tube called zygote intra-fallopian transfer (ZIFT).
- If the embryo is with more than 8 blastomeres, it is transferred into the uterus called intrauterine transfer (IUT).
- The transferred embryo completes their further development within the uterus.

2) Gamete intra fallopian transfer (GIFT): Here, ovum is collected from a donor female and is transferred into the fallopian tube of another female who cannot produce ovum, but can provide a suitable environment for fertilization and further development of the embryo.

3) Intra cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI): In this method, sperm is directly injected into the ovum under lab conditions.

4) Artificial insemination or intrauterine insemination: Here the semen collected either from the husband or a healthy donor is artificially introduced either into the vagina or into the uterus of the female.