

• Factors effecting pregnancy outcomes

Several factors can make a pregnancy high risk, including existing health conditions, the mother's age, lifestyle, and health issues that happen before or during pregnancy.

❖ AGE:

- **Young age <15:** Pregnant teens are more likely to develop pregnancy-related high blood pressure and anemia (lack of healthy red blood cells) and to go through preterm (early) labor and delivery than women who are older. At that age uterus, cervix, pelvis are immature they are not ready for pregnant.
- **First-time pregnancy after age 35:** Most older first-time mothers have normal pregnancies, but research shows that older women are at higher risk for certain problems than younger women, including:
 - Pregnancy-related high blood pressure (called gestational hypertension) and diabetes (called gestational diabetes)
 - Pregnancy loss
 - Ectopic pregnancy (when the embryo attaches itself outside the uterus), a condition that can be life-threatening
 - Cesarean (surgical) delivery
 - Delivery complications, such as excessive bleeding
 - Prolonged labor (lasting more than 20 hours)
 - Labor that does not advance
 - Genetic disorders, such as Down syndrome, in the baby

❖ LOW SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS

A lower socioeconomic group increases the risk of problems during pregnancy. They less consume a healthy diet and to obtain appropriate medical care.

❖ OBESITY

Being obese before pregnancy is associated with a number of risks for poor pregnancy outcomes. Obesity increases a woman's chance of developing diabetes during pregnancy, which can contribute to difficult births. Obesity can also cause a fetus to be larger than normal, making the birth process more difficult. Obesity before pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of structural problems with the baby's heart.

❖ LIFE STYLE FACTORS:

- **Alcohol use.** Women who drink also are more likely to have a miscarriage or stillbirth. According to one study supported by NIH, infants can suffer long-term developmental problems even with low levels of prenatal alcohol exposure. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can increase the baby's risk for fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs), sudden infant death syndrome, and other problems. FASDs are a variety of effects include intellectual and developmental disabilities; behavior problems; abnormal facial features; and disorders of the heart, kidneys, bones, and hearing.
- **Tobacco use.** Smoking during pregnancy puts the fetus at risk for preterm birth, certain birth defects, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). One study showed that smoking doubled or even tripled the risk of stillbirth, or fetal death after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Research has also found that smoking during pregnancy leads to changes in an infant's immune system.

❖ CONDITIONS OF PREGNANCY:

- **Multiple gestation.** Pregnancy with twins, triplets, or more fetuses, called multiple gestation, increases the risk of infants being born prematurely (before 37 weeks of pregnancy). Twins and triplets are more likely to be smaller for their size than single infants. If infants are born prematurely, they are more likely to have difficulty breathing.

- **Preeclampsia and eclampsia.** Preeclampsia is a sudden increase in a pregnant woman's blood pressure after the 20th week of pregnancy. It can affect the mother's kidneys, liver, and brain. The condition can be fatal for both the mother and the fetus or cause long-term health problems. Eclampsia is a more severe form of preeclampsia that includes seizures and possibly coma.

❖ **DISORDERS PRESENT BEFORE PREGNANCY**

Before becoming pregnant, women may have a disorder that can increase the risk of problems during pregnancy. These disorders include

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Kidney disorders
- Kidney infections
- Heart failure
- Sickle cell disease
- Sexually transmitted diseases

Women who have one of these disorders should talk with a doctor and try to get in the best physical condition possible before they become pregnant. After they become pregnant, they may need special care.

❖ **MERCURY IN SEA FOOD**

Consuming too much mercury in seafood may harm the fetus. However, seafood contains nutrients that are important for growth and development of the fetus and breastfed infants. Seafood that is lower in mercury includes flounder, shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, tilapia, catfish etc.