Expecting the unexpected

Diet is a crucial part of achieving a healthy pregnancy - do you know the rights and wrongs?
Dubai Healthcare City has over 30 specialists in Obstetrics and with facilities such as The City Hospital’s maternity wing being a popular choice for many mothers-to-be, this issue of Healthmatters looks at pregnancy and child birth.

In Expecting the unexpected (page 12), experts provide tips and advice on preparing for pregnancy and the different key considerations while in Baby blues (page 18) we look at the emotional ups and downs many mothers face after giving birth and learn how to understand and cope with these challenges.

As well as emotional changes, pregnancy also has an impact on women physically. In Mother’s little helper (page 22) we hear how some women are opting for cosmetic makeovers are who struggling to regain their appearance with diet and exercise.

As Healthmatters has explored previously, more and more people are turning to Complementary and Alternative Medicine for their healthcare needs and in The finer points (page 26), we find out how acupuncture is being included as part of the medical treatment for pregnancy-related symptoms. We also look at diet in The right bites (page 32) and what ‘eating for two’ really means.

Our expert profile this month hears from a trained sports psychologist in Sporting chance (page 36) who discusses the power of the mind in sporting success and in Born again (page 38) a patient shares her experience in opting for cosmetic surgery with one of Dubai Healthcare City’s surgeons following childbirth.

Please email letters and feedback to the editor at: vgbaxter@googlemail.com
Dubai Healthcare City has launched a series of health education videos to keep its patients and general public well informed on the current health issues that impact the community. The single-topic videos present various health topics including diabetes, allergies, special needs, oral hygiene (dental), women’s health, IVF, eye care, beauty and skin and alternative medicine. The videos cover common diseases, symptoms and treatments, health tips, and latest medical procedures, which can be accessed or downloaded from the DHCC website.

Dr Ayesha Abdullah, managing director of the sciences cluster, TECOM Investments, DHCC’s parent company, said: “Our objective at Dubai Healthcare City is to ensure the well-being of the community through offering our patients the best care in dealing with their medical conditions. “In addition to providing healthcare, we are also committed to patient education and helping the community proactively manage their health. “Our health education videos provide short, easily accessible health advice by DHCC-based healthcare professionals on a wide range of topics and we look forward to expanding our range of videos over the coming year.”

The health education video initiative is launched with the support of Dubai Healthcare City’s hospitals and clinics including The Diabetes and Endocrine Center, The City Hospital, Child Early Intervention Medical Center, Boston University Dental Health Center – Dubai, Dr. Sulaiman AlHabib Medical Center, Dr. Wafa Gyn & Fertility Centre, Moorfields Eye Hospital Dubai, Aesthetica Clinic, and California Chiropractic and Sports Medicine Center.

An American screening agency known as the US Preventive Services Task Force has updated its osteoporosis screening recommendation to include younger women who have risk factors for the debilitating disease. Osteoporosis is common in the Gulf region and causes bones to become abnormally brittle and prone to fracture. “This (new recommendation) extends it down to any postmenopausal-age woman whose risk is the same as a 65-year-old,” said Dr Ned Calonge, chair of the screening agency. Calonge cited individuals that are underweight, excessive drinkers or smokers or have a family history of the illness as legitimate cases for screening.

Vitamin D, the “sunshine vitamin,” is even more important to good health than previously thought. Well known for its positive role in bone health, vitamin D is now receiving praise for supporting healthy immunity. Emerging research suggests it also helps support breast, cardiovascular, colon, and pancreatic health.

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DHCC stands beside special needs teachers

Dubai Healthcare City has lent its support to the ‘Recovery Begins with Teachers 2011 Education Day’ event in Dubai, which aims to highlight the importance of early intervention and successful inclusion of children with special needs and developmental delays.

Organised by the UAE-based Child Early Intervention Medical Centre (CEIMC) and the Child Learning and Enrichment Medical Centre in collaboration with GEMS Wellington International School, the event on 15 January emphasised the vital role of teachers and the education system in integrating special needs children into the community.

It brought together experts, teachers and families to address diverse issues facing children affected with developmental delays.

Dr Ayesha Abdulla, managing director, sciences cluster, TECOM Investments, said: “We are proud to support this significant event that stresses the important place for children in a society. Children represent the future of any society and the key building block of a progressive community. Our support to the event stems from our firm belief that children, especially those that need special support, have to be accorded top priority for successful integration into tomorrow’s world.”

Research funded by the US National Cancer Institute has found that smoking could cause damage in “a matter of minutes.”

The study, which was published in the Chemical Research in Toxicology journal, found that chemicals which cause cancer form rapidly after smoking.

The researchers believe this should represent a “chilling” warning to smokers.

Professor Stephen Hecht, from the University of Minnesota, said: “This study is unique, it is the first to investigate human metabolism of a PAH specifically delivered by inhalation in cigarette smoke, without interference by other sources of exposure such as air pollution or the diet.

“The results reported here should serve as a stark warning to those who are considering starting to smoke cigarettes.”

An American study has discovered that as many as one in 16 US surgeons have had suicidal thoughts in the past 12 months. Scientists analyzed surveys completed by 7,905 members of the American College of Surgeons in 2008 and found that 501 (6.3%) said they had thought about suicide within the past year.

The City Hospital’s Dr Richard Reyes, a breast surgeon, has launched a website to help raise awareness over breast cancer – log on to www.breastcancerarabia.com to find out more

Warfarin doubles risk of death in trauma cases

A recent study has found that the risk of dying from a trauma injury is greatly increased if the person involved in the accident uses warfarin, one of the most common blood thinners in the world.

The research studied a whopping 1.23 million patients who had been taken to emergency rooms in the US and found that those using the drug for long term conditions were almost twice as likely to die than normal patients – 9.3% against 4.8%.

“We’re entering a new era of therapy,” says Dr John Ward, hepatitis chief at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, following an announcement that two new drugs for hepatitis C were close to reaching the market. “We really want to begin that clarion call for action for this population who’s at risk.”

Hope for Hep-C sufferers

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Healthmatters is conducting its first readership survey – go to www.dhcc.ae/readersurvey to take part and let us know what you like about the magazine, and what you’d like to see more of.

Smoking starts harming the body in ‘minutes’, not days

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The presence of heart specialists in a hospital is thought to halve the chances of deaths for people suffering from heart failure. The likelihood of survival in a general hospital ward in the UK is half that of a hospital ward specializing in cardiology, new research suggests. The study, published in the journal Heart, studied treatment patterns for the first 10 patients admitted every month with a major diagnosis of heart failure over the course of a year. The authors concluded that people were much more likely to die on general wards, even when other risk factors were taken into account. “The prognosis of patients hospitalised with heart failure remains poor and investigation and treatment suboptimal,” the study’s authors said in a statement. “Specialist services are associated with higher rates of investigation and treatment and improved outcomes.”

Organic milk performs strongly in study

Scientists have claimed that organic milk brands are considerably more consistent in their nutritional value. New research considered the nutritional qualities of 22 brands sold in supermarkets across the European Union, revealing that organic milk had lower levels of harmful saturated fats and more beneficial fatty acids than conventional milk. The study, which was conducted by Newcastle University, however, did not go as far as to suggest that people should switch to organic milk.

Psychologist diagnoses ‘blue Monday’

Monday 17 January is the most depressing day of the year, a psychologist has claimed. Psychologist Cliff Arnall has come up with a formula to show the third Monday in January is the most depressing day of the year – namely “weather plus debt minus salary multiplied by the time since Christmas to the time since failure to fulfil New Year’s resolutions”. The result is then divided by motivational level and the need to take action.
City Hospital doc raises divorce rate fears

In a call for greater awareness of health issues affecting men and their relationships with their wives, Dr Zuhair Sikafi, a urologist at the City Hospital Dubai, has this month highlighted the worrying figures of marital stability in the UAE.

Referring to statistics from the Tawasel Centre for Training and Family, Dr Sikafi noted that divorce rates have reached 42% of married couples in UAE. From less than 100 per year in the early 1960s, divorce cases in the UAE have steadily increased to approach 3,000 in 2008, a daily average of about eight.

Between 1994 and 2008, such cases totalled about 35,000 – one of the highest divorce rates in the world relative to the adult population.

A large number of the divorce cases involve UAE national couples, the target of an ongoing government drive to ensure family stability in a bid to increase the number of citizens in the UAE.

Big breakfast means big appetite

A new study has suggested that the conventional wisdom that a big breakfast makes you less hungry throughout the day could be misplaced. According to scientists at the Else-Kroner-Fresenius Center of Nutritional Medicine in Munich, eating a large breakfast can actually cause people to gain more weight.

The researchers followed 300 people and found that regardless of how much they ate for breakfast, their calorie intake at lunch and dinner stayed the same.

The ultimate impact of eating a larger breakfast, the scientists claimed, was an average of 400 more calories a day in an individual’s diet.
Expecting the unexpected

Planning for a pregnancy can be stressful – but it doesn’t have to be.

When the time comes, even the best laid plans rarely go off without a hitch. With anything, it doesn’t matter how much effort you put into the groundwork, plans have a habit of going haywire. But while it is one thing to miss a restaurant booking while on a perfect city break, or to forget to pick up a present for a cousin during the Christmas shopping, planning for a pregnancy is a different matter altogether. Despite pregnancy being the most natural medical condition there is, and childbirth the most natural procedure, the stakes are such that preparing for the birth of a child is the most important to-do list most of us will ever write.

Luckily, Dubai Healthcare City provides all that even the most prodigious of planners needs to script the event down to the most minute detail. And while it is possible for parents to worry too much about their impending arrival – after all children have been born relatively successfully for a few thousand years now – there is nothing that provides reassurance quite like preparation, argues Dr Zohreh Safai, a specialist in family medicine, and associate professor of clinical Family Medicine at DHCC’s Dubai Bone and Joint Center (DBAJ).

“Bringing a child into this world is a wonderful celebration of life,” says Safai. “While it’s true that pregnancy has its share of wonderful moments and experiences to treasure, it is also associated with many physical and emotional changes, which can be overwhelming.”

Knowing what to expect, says Safai, and understanding the changes that a mother may experience ahead of time can help the patient to take better care of themselves, and the baby. “Early pregnancy is the best time to learn as much as you can about the changes you’ll experience during the next nine months,” adds Safai. “Even before your pregnancy test confirms your pregnancy, hormonal changes — mainly progesterone, estrogen and HCG — are causing day by day visible and invisible changes to your body, which can cause some unpleasant symptoms, especially during the first trimester.”

The crucial thing is to stay calm, agrees Dr Ibrahim Abd Elrahman, a consultant gynecologist at The City Hospital. “The first step is to make a note of the dates of your last period,” he recommends. “If you are not already taking any form of folic acid, start it as soon as possible at a dose of at least 400 micrograms daily. This can be on its own or as part of a pregnancy/pronatal multivitamin. Folic acid is essential in helping prevent neural tube defects.”

It is important to realize that being pregnant doesn’t mean that your life simply stops for nine months. In many ways, the first few weeks of pregnancy should be like any other. “Stop all high impact exercise but otherwise, live your life normally,” says Abd Elrahman. “While it’s true that pregnancy has its share of wonderful moments and experiences to treasure, it is also associated with many physical and emotional changes, which can be overwhelming.”

MATERNITY
Elrahman. “Eat a healthy diet and avoid sushi, shellfish and foods made with unpasteurized milk. It is best to stop smoking and ideally cut out alcohol or reduce it to a minimum.”

However, the various stages of pregnancy do throw up some challenges for the human body – quite literally in the case of morning sickness. “One of the most common unpleasant early symptoms of pregnancy is nausea and vomiting,” says Safai. Although nausea can last all day, it is typically worse in the morning. To reduce nausea, eat small, frequent meals throughout the day and stick with foods that are nutritious and yet easy to digest. “Avoid foods or odors that aggravates your nausea,” says Safai. “Try to get out of bed slowly in the morning, and before getting out of bed eat some crackers. Try taking your prenatal Vitamins in the morning; Vitamin B6 and Motion sickness bands have been helpful in some women. Nausea and vomiting resolves for most women, by the fourteenth week of pregnancy.”

There are a number of symptoms associated with pregnancy: tender and sensitive breasts; foods aversions and craving; fatigue; difficulty sleeping, increased urinary frequency; restless legs; back pain; varicose veins; skin changes; heartburn, and constipation. “You may also develop a very sensitive sense of smell, making previously mild odors unpleasant,” explains Safai. “Understanding the symptoms you may experience ahead of time and how to take care of you will help ease these symptoms. Try reading books on pregnancy. It is also helpful to have some belly buddies to navigate your way through the common complaints of pregnancy, so join an expectant mothers group will help you realize that you are not alone, and it’ll be reassuring to see other pregnant women with the same symptoms.”

While there is a considerable amount expectant mothers can do for themselves, there are other more practical matters that must be seen to – most importantly where it is you are planning to give birth. It is a hugely important decision, admits Abd Elrahman, and he recommends that mothers see a few doctors before settling on the doctor that will see them through the delivery. Some of the things you should consider in your decision are:

- The number of delivering physicians/midwives on staff
- High-risk availability including neonatologists, special care nursery and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)
- The center’s credentials and experience
- Does the center accept your insurance?
- What is the center’s cesarean section rate?
- Proximity to work and home
- Availability of childbirth classes (Lamaze)
- Does the center seem to support your philosophy of childbirth?
- Does the center have an in house anesthesiologist?

“Find someone either through the recommendations of someone you know and trust, or through your own research.”
pregnancy. “Find someone either through the recommendations of someone you know and trust, or through your own research,” he recommends. “You don’t need to see a doctor before six weeks after the first day of your last period and you definitely don’t need a scan before that time, unless you have a history of ectopic or other pregnancy/fertility problems. It is difficult to detect the fetal heart before 6 weeks.”

The next stage is to find a hospital that offers good antenatal and postnatal care as well as good neonatal services,” argues Abd Elrahman. “Preterm deliveries (before 37 weeks) can occur and you want to make sure the hospital can care for your newborn.” Abd Elrahman also implores expectant parents to look at the details of the medical insurance that they paid for – especially with regards to a premature birth. “It’s important to be aware of whether your insurance covers this care and, if not, that you can afford to pay for the antenatal care and delivery,” he says. “Visit the hospital and check out the facilities. Find out about antenatal classes and when they start. Make sure the hospital of your choice is near your home. This is important especially during the later part of the pregnancy. Once you have been through the childbirth itself then the hard work truly begins. But aside from the prospect of caring for that individual for the rest of your life, there are a few practical matters that new mothers and fathers need to think about. “Once your baby is examined by the physician and necessary tests and procedures are done, you will be given a chance to hold the baby and try to breastfeed,” says Safai. “Taking lactation classes by a certified lactation consultant prior to delivery will help alleviate some anxiety and frustrations with breastfeeding.”

The next step is to choose a pediatrician or family physician for the baby, he adds – although ideally you will have thought of this before the birth itself. “You need to schedule regular office visits with your pediatricians/family physician so you baby can follow vaccination schedule.” After that it is over to you – and time to start planning for the rest of your life.

MATERNITY

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www.dhcc.ae/readersurvey/

Closing date: 1st March 2011
Having a child is meant to be one of life’s greatest moments. Creating another life and caring for it is a truly profound experience — and one that unites all of humanity. Unfortunately, though, the sad truth is that for many people the birth of a child does not result in unmitigated joy — in fact it can result in quite the opposite. “Giving birth is one of the most exciting, and fulfilling times in a woman’s life,” explains Dr Zohreh Safai, from Dubai Healthcare City’s Dubai Bone And Joint Center (DBAJ). “And although the arrival of a new baby is a great feeling, and incomparable to any other, at the same time it can be overwhelming, and exhausting. Some women (about 10%) during the first few days after giving birth may experience crying spells, associated with a sense of ‘sadness’, called the ‘baby blues’.”

As a phenomenon, the baby blues appears to be more and more common in the modern world — or at least recognition of it as a condition has at least changed considerably over the past couple of decades. And it is crucial that mothers are made aware of the condition and are helped to understand that it is as natural as childbirth itself. “Following the delivery, there is a chance you may become more depressed,” explains the City Hospital’s Dr Ibrahim Abd Elrahman. “Maternity blues in the first few days after birth are quite normal and you must remain confident you will get over those,” he says. At this stage, it is important that a new mother does not feel that she is failing if she is not physically up to every aspect of looking after the newborn child. “Strong family support is essential,” he says. “It is easy to feel you can’t cope with caring for your baby (feeding, changing, bathing, etc. is even harder to adjust to when you are sleep deprived). Don’t worry — most new mothers feel that way, but in time you and your baby will come to understand each other and will develop a routine.”

Nevertheless, there does come a point where the ‘baby blues’ should have alleviated — and it is at this stage that new mothers and their families need to ensure that they seek professional help. “If the symptoms of the ‘baby blues’ last more than a week or two, then you may need to seek specialist help,” he says. “There is nothing wrong with doing so and it should never be seen as a failure on your part.” Likewise, Safai agrees that, if left untreated, the consequences of an extended period of depression can have a devastating affect on families. “If they’re so severe that they interfere with your activities of daily living, you may have a more severe form of depression, called ‘postpartum depression’, which may require medical treatment,” says Safai. “Some of the symptoms that might suggest postpartum depression may include: Sadness, frequent crying, feeling hopeless or worthless, insomnia, loss of appetite, irritability, and anger — especially toward your partner and/or your baby. If you experience any of these symptoms, make sure to discuss them with your physician. Talking about it helps.”

It is also crucial to avoid pigeonholing any emotional strain as either being down to the ‘baby blues’ or ‘postpartum depression’. Often

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you as long as you live. Cherish every moment, because nothing can prepare you for the day they move away.”

“Maternity blues in the first few days after birth are quite normal and you must remain confident you will get over those.”

me time
Pregnancy and childbirth can sometimes feel like a lonely time for women. Even though they are often either with a supportive husband or family member in the latter stages of the birth, and then constantly with the child after the birth, it is sometimes difficult to engage in adult conversations that do not evolve around the baby, and a person’s sense of self can start to erode. But, in fact, there are a few ground rules that can help mothers to keep a strong sense of purpose and fulfillment throughout the pregnancy process and beyond:

During pregnancy:
Allow yourself time to rest and feel the baby inside you. Get to know the movement patterns and you will be able to detect any changes. Let your obstetrican know about these.

Talk to your baby – it can hear you and the sound of your voice will be soothing after delivery.

Following delivery:
It is important to try to make time for yourself away from the baby.
Expressing milk will allow you to get a little “me” time while your husband looks after the baby and this will also help them bond.

“There will be changes to your body to prepare for the pregnancy during the first few months and you will more than likely put on weight,” he says. “That’s why we think that you will lose a lot of this excess weight in the first 2-3 months after delivery and you can concentrate on losing the rest through diet and exercise after the first 6 months, when your body has recovered from the delivery.”

But no matter what happens with the physical side of things, it is important that both mother and father pay attention to the mental aspect of childbirth. And it is a myth that this is only something to worry about immediately after childbirth. The initial symptoms of the baby blues may go away after a few weeks, but the mental strain is there to stay, says Safa. “Although the arrival of a baby is a wonderful and miraculous experience in life, it is even more challenging than the pregnancy. Adjusting to your changing body, the demands of the new baby, and the daily schedule, can be overwhelming, and exhausting. During the first few weeks of life your baby will sleep most of the day, you should use this time to get rest and have some time for yourself to relax. Getting together with other new moms to share stories, and experiences, can help you adjust to your new role.”

In the long run, however, most mothers will tell you that you would often give anything to get back that time you spent with them as an infant. “It really is incredible how fast your baby grows up,” says Safa. “Before you know it, your baby is running off to college. Watching them grow and develop in front of your eyes are the pleasurable memories, which will stay with you as long as you live. Cherish every moment, because nothing can prepare you for the day they move away.”

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Mother’s little helper

After the best part of a year of self-sacrifice, it’s time to look after yourself

Nobody told you it was going to be like this. When someone becomes pregnant, understandably their news is typically greeted with joy and tales of how the wonders of parenthood will change your life. It is much rarer for the news to be greeted with warnings about the need to buy a whole new wardrobe, say goodbye to your body for at least the next year and then told to prepare yourself for a long hard slog back to physical fitness.

For many people, the latter experience is a very important part of the pregnancy process. But for many reasons, mothers are often told to simply ‘put up’ with the changes that happen to their body - after all “they should be worrying about the child not themselves”.

This is not a helpful attitude, reasons Dr Michael Salivaras, chief medical officer and director of surgery at the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery Hospital in Dubai Healthcare City. “When you are pregnant, it can feel as though your body no longer belongs to you, but you take it all in stride,” he says. “Unfortunately, your body does not just snap back into shape even after your life returns to normal and your little one starts sleeping, walking, talking and going to school. Pregnancy takes its toll on your body, especially your breasts and abdominal areas.”

Morning sickness, weight gain, heartburn, food aversions, skin changes and fatigue - the list goes on when you think about the challenges a woman has to put herself through as part of giving birth. It is no surprise, then, that the experience can be tough on the body and its appearance - and this is a universal issue. “On average, most women gain 25 to 35 pounds during pregnancy,” says Salivaras. “This weight is stored as fatty tissue in the breasts, abdomen, flanks (love-handles), hips, lower back, buttocks and thighs. The breasts also grow due to weight gain and to prepare for nursing.”

As the baby grows, so does the abdomen and this typically results in the weakening and separation of the abdominal muscles, and stretching of the abdominal skin - commonly referred to as ‘stretch marks’. These unsightly marks are purple-red in color and concentrated around the belly button and lower abdomen, says Salivaras. “These effects often become even more apparent after childbirth and nursing," he says.

“Unfortunately, your body does not just snap back into shape even after your life returns to normal and your little one starts sleeping, walking, talking and going to school. Pregnancy takes its toll on your body, especially your breasts and abdominal areas.”

“Unfortunately, the weight loss is not proportional to the amount of fatty tissue in a given area. That means for some, more weight may be lost from the breasts or buttocks than the abdomen and waist, resulting in smaller breasts despite fullness of...”
the waist and abdomen. Once a woman finishes breastfeeding, the breasts deflate even further and begin to sag. The weak abdominal muscles and the excess abdominal fat appear as fullness and bulging of the belly. Many new moms may still look pregnant even as their child is taking his or her first steps.

In today’s world, however, you don’t always have to settle with what nature gives you. Which partly explains why most new mothers are taking the same route as CL on page 37 and considering their surgical options — or going for a ‘mommy makeover’. It is a certainly a phenomenon that is being seen more regularly at the AACSH.

“Mommy Makeovers counter the physical effects of pregnancy, helping you look and feel your best,” explains Salivaras. “A mommy makeover is performed using a unique combination of plastic surgery procedures designed to counteract the physical effects of childbearing, and restore and enhance your body.”

Typically these makeovers include a combination of procedures such as breast augmentation, breast lift, tummy tuck and liposuction. “The length of each surgery varies based on the amount and type of procedures performed,” says Salivaras. “Some surgeons may perform a mommy makeover as two or more separate operations.”

Having recently been through childbirth, it might seem like madness to volunteer to go under the surgeon’s knife — but these sorts of procedures are strictly regulated and before you decide to go ahead with the procedure you will be given a list of preoperative instructions by your surgeon that you have to conform to. “Your doctor will likely tell you to stop smoking and drinking alcohol as these can impede healing,” explains Salivaras. “It is also a good idea to avoid aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs which are known to increase the risk of bleeding. Certain herbal supplements can also increase bleeding risk, which is why it is paramount to tell your doctor about everything that you are taking.”

It is rare for any recent mother to go under the knife within the first six months of a pregnancy — but this is not just because of sound medical advice, it is also because new mothers are not exactly blessed with a lot of free time. It is a major concern for many people, admits Salivaras. “While time is a precious commodity for all of us these days, stop and think about how much your beauty and health are worth to you,” he says. “Would you be able to accomplish more with a fresh perspective and younger feel? Would it be easier to succeed at work and at home when you’re feeling great about your appearance? Many of our patients say ‘absolutely’, and tell us they wish they had their plastic surgery after child birth and pregnancy sooner.

Still, it is important to understand what the recovery process would entail. This mostly depends on the nature of the surgery you have done, but you will need to arrange for someone to help you get around the house and help you with your medication for at least the first 48 hours after your mommy makeover. “Trying sleeping on several pillows on your back and keep your legs slightly bent at the hips to minimize the tension on your incision, reduce pain and result in a thinner scar and avoiding heavy lifting, contact sports and jogging for up to six weeks,” says Salivaras. “In addition you will need to wear an abdominal binder after your tummy tuck. You can shower usually within 72 hours. You will likely go back for follow-up with your surgeon within five days. Swelling should subside within five weeks, and the results are apparent in within three months.”

For most women, though, the perception that they are pampering themselves to the detriment of their child is a much greater fear — but it needn’t be, argues Salivaras. “Other women are worried about focusing on themselves, rather than their families. Many of our patients find that it’s essential to do both: recognize that how you feel as a mom is integral to the strength of your family. It is simply not self-centered or vain to take care of you or to want to feel youthful, sexy and self-confident. Having a positive self image certainly benefits you, but it also can improve your interactions with loved ones. You may be a mommy, but never forget that you are still your own person.”
The finer points

Acupuncture is making a name for itself in the field of maternity

Pregnancy and childbirth may hold enough physical fears for expectant mothers without getting needles involved, but acupuncture is becoming increasingly popular amongst the medical and maternity community. A staple of Chinese medicine for thousands of years, acupuncturists believe there are more than 2,000 ‘energy points’ connected with what they refer to as ‘meridians’ - or energy pathways. Considering the hypersensitivity of the human body throughout pregnancy, it is no surprise that treatments administered throughout the nine-month process and after form a significant part of a typical acupuncture practice’s workload.

That is certainly the case at Dr Shurong Mandaraki’s Emirates Integrated Medical Centre, which plays a major role in Dubai Healthcare City’s vibrant Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) community. As a qualified GP and an expert in Chinese medicine, Mandaraki is well placed to advise patients in both CAM methods and allopathic practice. Crucially, she explains, despite many people’s worst fears, it is important to recognize that acupuncture is a relatively low risk procedure that has few if any downsides.

“Acupuncture is toxin free treatment,” she says. “We balance the energy flow in the body with the method of inserting only very thin stainless steel needles into the energy points of the body without any medicine on it. In Chinese Medicine we consider the different conditions and illness of the body are result of imbalance of the vital energy flow of the body.”

The idea that our body is powered by a network of energies is common in CAM medicine - but there is a reason why other forms of medicine, such as Ayurvedic, believe in similar theories, says Mandaraki. Indeed, she says, acupuncture in pregnancy is now one of the areas of CAM therapy that is gaining acceptance among the allopathic, or evidence-based, medical community. “Today all over the world acupuncture has been added as part of the medical treatment during the pregnancy for pregnant related conditions and other illness not related to the pregnancy”
“We balance the energy flow in the body with the method of inserting only very thin stainless steel needles into the energy points of the body without any medicine on it.”

Throughout her career Mandaraki has helped countless couples through the pregnancy process, but there is one in particular that stands out, she says. “The best experience of my career with pregnant ladies is the one with Tina,” she recalls. “Tina came to me nearly 10 years ago with dangerously high blood pressure when she was close to seven months of pregnancy. The doctor had told her that if the blood pressure continues she might have to terminate the pregnancy.” The situation looked bleak, but with a few sessions of acupuncture, says Mandaraki, her blood pressure dropped significantly and Tina’s first son was born healthy at the last week of the pregnancy. But this wasn’t the end of the story. Almost a decade later, Tina turned up in Mandaraki’s surgery in tears. “She was five months pregnant but the placenta had teared and all the Doctors she visited had told her the same thing: ‘Terminate the pregnancy immediately’. Tina was not a young Mum, so her and Mandaraki decided to take the risk and, with careful management, ‘Tina’s second son was born in the 38th week’.”

Proof is in the piercing
As with many elements of CAM, critics will often point to a lack of evidence to support the efficacy of treatment methods. Nevertheless, critics are clearly not harming the popularity of acupuncture. One recent Harvard University study found that Americans visit acupuncturists more than five million times a year, while the US’s National Institutes of Health claims that it is rapidly gaining in popularity with doctors, dentists and other practitioners. With acupuncture, though, there is more statistical evidence than most areas of CAM. One of the larger studies carried out by the American Medical Association supports Mandaraki’s point about acupuncture assisting with situations where the baby is breached. The study of 130 pregnant women with breech presentations found that an aspect of acupuncture called moxabustion significantly increased the number of head-first births. Moxabustion employs long sticks of the herb moxa to produce a gentle, smoldering heat and a smoke that are held close to an acupuncture point in the little toe. The treatment, most effective at 32 to 36 weeks, should only be used in healthy pregnancies. Another study, conducted in Australia, found that acupuncture is particularly effective in relieving morning sickness or the potentially more dangerous hyperemesis gravidarum (severe vomiting during pregnancy). The Australian study published in the journal Birth discovered that of 593 women less than 14 weeks pregnant who participated, participants who received traditional acupuncture had less frequent and shorter periods of nausea than the women who received no acupuncture. These improvements were felt immediately and lasted throughout the study’s four-week duration. In the first trimester, acupuncture can also relieve fatigue, migraines and bleeding, the study’s authors found.

MATERNITY: ACUPUNCTURE

Mandaraki says that all over the world acupuncture has been added as part of the medical treatment during the pregnancy for pregnant related conditions and other illness not related to the pregnancy,” she says. “Pregnant women can use acupuncture during the whole pregnancy as well as before in order to help the women to get pregnant and post delivery conditions.”

However, as a practice that bases at least certain elements of its practices on theory, rather than large-scale studies, there is always a risk that you may come across an acupuncturist that does not know what they are doing. You need to be extremely diligent in your research, argues Mandaraki, or you may end up realizing little or no benefit at all. “There is special way to do acupuncture for the pregnant women therefore choosing a well-qualified Acupuncturist is essential and important,” she says.

Typically, acupuncturists believe they can assist the pregnancy process in a number of ways - but one of the most increasingly popular uses of the discipline is to help with the conception itself. “Acupuncture not only helps women to get pregnant but also increases the chance of successful IVF in many women,” claims Mandaraki. During pregnancy, she adds, acupuncture can be very useful a means of controlling and offsetting the symptoms of morning sickness, fatigue, insomnia, headaches, pain and can also help to enhance the body’s immune system. “It is also possible to help with high blood pressure and high blood sugar,” she says.

For many women, though, it is at the final stages of the process where acupuncture can make the biggest difference (see study in pull

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We balance the energy flow in the body with the method of inserting only very thin stainless steel needles into the energy points of the body without any medicine on it.”
That is, of course, as long as you don’t have a fear of needles.

“Before the delivery, acupuncture is often also very well used in co-operation with the midwife to prepare the women for the smooth delivery,” explains Mandarakis. “This includes changing the position of the fetus.”

But it doesn’t stop there. After the delivery, the human body is a hormonal mess – and understandably so. Where acupuncture excels, claims Mandarakis, is in the post-pregnancy period in helping the body - and mind - to rebalance and rejuvenate.

“Acupuncture is also a good toxin free treatment for all the conditions since this method is to do with general balancing of the body,” she says. “Depression has been helped a lot with Acupuncture, as well as the body’s recovery from the pregnancy. Also it is a good method to prepare the body and the soul for the next pregnancy.

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Al Sh. no. 27
Block B, 4th floor
Tel: 04 362 4740
Diet is a crucial part of achieving a healthy pregnancy - do you know the rights and wrongs?

Eating for two is an important business. Perhaps more than any lifestyle factor, what we eat plays a massive part in our health, mood and general sense of wellbeing. Now times that by two. Because when you become pregnant - and for a significant length of time after that - you have the sole responsibility for ensuring that your child (whether it has been born yet or not) receives the correct levels of nutrition and is protected from anything that is potentially damaging.

It is easier said than done. It is unthinkable that any expectant mother would willfully put her child at risk, but unfortunately it is all too easy for mothers to inadvertently eat a foodstuff that holds a degree of inherent risk, or to act on poor advice when it comes to what is good for both of you. The important thing, explains Caroline Kanaan from the Advanced Nutrition Center here at Dubai Healthcare City, as with many aspects of the pregnancy process, is to plan ahead.

Indeed, she argues that it makes sense to start thinking about what it is you’re putting in your body even before you know that you have successfully conceived. “If you are planning a pregnancy, start thinking of your diet before you start trying for the baby,” she says. Kanaan, who herself has recently been blessed with a child, says that anyone who is serious about wanting a child needs to think seriously about their lifestyle. Even if it won’t help with the conception process it will help you get in the right frame of mind. “You should already be following a healthy diet but try taking multi-vitamins including folic acid and also iron if you have iron deficiency anaemia,” she suggests.

Moreover, as with any time in your life, when you are preparing for a baby you need to consider your general health - especially when it comes to obesity. “At a healthy weight your BMI (body mass index) should be between 20 – 24,” says Kanaan. “To achieve this, you need to be exercising regularly - so at least 30 min of robust exercise every day.”

When trying for a baby, Kanaan recommends reducing your fish intake - or at least being selective about it - as it potentially has an effect on the potential to conceive, or the health of the baby after that. “Although fish is very important because it contains essential fatty acids, it also contains mercury,” reasons Kanaan. “Stick to small fish like hammour or sardines. Avoid big fish like tuna.” Likewise, it is good practice to give up sweeteners and artificial additives before pregnancy, while it doesn’t hurt to cut out smoking and drinking alcohol.

And yet, for those who may be trying for a baby at the moment, this might sound like madness. If it is crucial that you live a healthy pregnancy, while it doesn’t hurt to cut out smoking and drinking alcohol.

To maintain a healthy diet throughout pregnancy, expectants mothers need only to look at the plethora of healthy, balanced diets that are out there. But there comes a time when you just need a little more - after all, adding an extra person to a dinner party means that the bill is going to be bigger. Having another person inside of you means that you are going have to up your calorie levels. Here Kanaan suggests how you may want to upscale your dietary requirements through the process:

**Calorie requirements:**
1st trimester: no additional calories needed
2nd trimester: 300 kcal additional
3rd trimester: 300 kcal additional

“*If you are planning a pregnancy, start thinking of your diet before you start trying for the baby*”
life of abstinence once you are pregnant, why give up all your vices when the only person they’re doing any damage is you? It’s a valid point, admits Kanaan, but those who persevere will see the real benefit when they actually become pregnant. “I am always asked why should I make these changes before I become pregnant and it is because it makes it much less difficult when you are actually required to make these changes for the health of the baby,” she says. “Also there are some real practical benefits – it helps to decrease the risk of gestational diabetes, you will gain less weight during the pregnancy and it will make it easier for you to avoid weight gain in the immediate aftermath of the pregnancy, which can be a cause for obesity in the future.”

Once you’re actually pregnant, though, few people find it difficult to motivate themselves to stay on the straight and narrow when it comes to diet – frankly, most are terrified at the prospect of eating or drinking anything that could potentially be harmful for their child. Kanaan says she always makes a point of asking people to make a checklist so they ensure that they know what they can and can’t have – and what care they should take when preparing food. While most of this is common sense – such as making sure you always wash fruits and vegetables well before eating, only ever eat dairy and egg products that have been pasteurized, and stay on the safe side when it comes to how long you should cook poultry, fish and meat – there are some hard and fast rules.

First off, it is important to eliminate – or at least reduce – caffeine from your daily routine wherever possible. This might sound like a nightmare to coffee addicts, but it will make a significant difference to the pregnancy process, says Kanaan. Once again, mercury is a no-no, although omega 3 fatty acids are a bonus – so choose your fish carefully. And while she is clear that a healthy diet is of benefit to people at any stage, it is important that once a person becomes pregnant, they make the most of the advice given to them by their pediatrician and gynecologist. After all, it’s not just you you’ve got to worry about any more.

Example of a healthy diet:

Being told to eat healthily, and eating healthily is a great thing. For many people, eating junk food or produce that may have a negative impact on their health is not so much a conscious choice, but a reflection of their lack of confidence around food. Eating healthily – but many people will want to know exactly what that looks like. To help with the shopping, Kanaan has a few suggestions for a regular day:

**Breakfast:**
- 1-2 slice whole grain bread + 45 g cheese + 1 banana
- **Snack:** 1 apple + 25 g almonds

**Lunch:**
- 1 cup lentils and rice (moujadara) + 1 ½ cup fattoush or mixed salad
- **Snack:** 1 fresh fruit yogurt

**Dinner:**
- 120 g chicken in stirfry with vegetables + 1 cup noodles or 1 potato
- **Snack:** 1-2 fruit

“I am always asked why should I make these changes before I become pregnant and it is because it makes it much less difficult when you are actually required to make these changes for the health of the baby.”

Contact:
Advanced Nutrition Center
Bldg. no. 39, 1st floor
Tel: 04 362 2982

Maternity: Diet

“You should already be following a healthy diet but try taking multi-vitamins including folic acid and also iron if you have iron deficiency anemia”
“It is a very convenient non-invasive method that shows clients what is happening with their nervous system when they get anxious, stressful or angry.”

Sporting success is a mystery to many people. When it comes to athletic ability, there are thousands of us that, with the appropriate training, could perform to a similar physical standard as a professional. But at every level of sport, there are individuals that stand head and shoulders above the rest. And if you believe Dr Martin Kramer, from Dubai Healthcare City’s GNP clinic, it is the head that is the most important part of the equation.

A trained sports psychologist, Kramer lived and trained in the US for 11 years. “The last two years I worked in Europe and I cooperated with many professional clubs including soccer teams, golf teams, hockey teams, tennis academies,” he explains. “Among them were Czech Football Association, MSK Zilina, Sparta Prague, Sigma Olomouc, Slovak Golf Association, HC Slovan Bratislava and so on.”

As a specialist in ‘biofeedback’, Kramer uses techniques that investigate a client’s “autonomic balance, stress resistance, mental endurance and vitality”. The idea being that if you can understand how the body reacts under pressure, you can understand how the sports star can maximize how they will perform. “It is a very convenient non-invasive method that shows clients what is happening with their nervous system when they get anxious, stressful or angry,” he explains. “Through this method and proper breathing I teach how to improve their overall health and stress endurance – in other words how to stay young and vital without taking any medication. Similarly, I teach athletes how to gain their self-confidence, mental toughness, and inner strength in order to overcome many obstacles in training as well as before during and after competitions.”

And Kramer has the evidence to back this up. During his time at Arizona University, he conducted an experimental study concerning sport psychology that involved 56 Virginia Wesleyan College soccer players. In this research, Kramer investigated the effects of mental interventions on competitive anxiety, stress resistance, cardiovascular activity and sport performance of college athletes.

As useful as these tools are for athletes, they clearly have a wider application – and it is not only with the sporting community that Kramer hopes to make a difference. Besides athletes, Kramer says his clients are normally individuals who would like to improve their stress management abilities and treat various forms of anxiety, stress disorders and depression. He says his methods are also applicable for individuals with various post-traumatic disorders or cardiovascular problems who would like to improve their quality of life from psychological perspective. Quite fitting, considering how many stressed out executives pass through Dubai.

But as a sports fanatic, Kramer knows he has a lot to offer on the field of play. “Dubai has great potential with many excellent professional clubs or academies,” he says. “But mental power and mental endurance is crucial in sport preparation for athletes in any variety of sports. Therefore, it is important to establish and apply the sport psychology educational programs to Dubai’s academies that would like to be successful in the future and, thus, keep abreast with the rest of the world.”

Contact:
German Center for Neurology & Psychiatry
Bldg. no. 64, Block A
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www.gnp-dubai.com
Childbirth can take its toll on the body but mothers do have options

For 38-year-old CL and her husband, three was definitely the magic number. With children aged seven, four and two, the time for growing their family was over – and while the pair were thrilled to have three healthy children, the process had taken its toll on CL and it was having an impact on her self-esteem. “My life has been dedicated to them but at the same time I couldn’t help feeling slightly down about my own body,” she admits. “I am sure it was the physical stress of the pregnancies, the breast feeding, the lack of time to look after myself and finding myself approaching the big 4-0.”

CL was unhappy with her appearance after six years of almost constant breast feeding and she also found that she had accumulated fat in areas such as her outer thighs, which made her conscious about her appearance. “As a result, I buy clothes that hide these extra bits making me look dowdy and older for my age.”

Having confided with close friends and family about her unhappiness, CL started to investigate a path she never thought she would have considered. “When I was younger, I never thought I would be someone to consider surgery, and it is true that until you are faced with the situation yourself you cannot judge why women make these choices,” she insists. “I decided to take the plunge and do a consultation with a surgeon that I had been referred to by girlfriends. My husband came for moral support, and of course, rumours of ‘dodgy’ surgeons had crossed our minds so he wanted to make sure that the surgeon was reputable.”

CL and her husband visited Dr Maurizio Viel, an Indian surgeon, based in Dubai Healthcare City at the London Center for Aesthetic Surgery, and the couple says that knowing “he had been based in London for 20 years prior to moving here, and that his twin brother, also a plastic surgeon continues to operate their clinic on Harley Street in London” was a big factor in their decision. Dr Viel and his team proceeded to outline all the options facing CL and “at the end he made various suggestions as well as explaining the advantages and disadvantages of each option.” For CL, Dr Viel recommended options such as breast augmentation and the application of VASER liposuction, which uses ultrasound technology. “In the end, I decide to do my surgery with Dr Viel and go for the liposuction and breast augmentation using implants,” says CL. “On the day of the surgery, I am nervous, and my husband drops me off and stays with me until I enter in theatre.” At this stage, the anesthetist prepared CL for sedation and within moments she is asleep on the operating table. “Before I know it I am awake and my husband is there to greet me,” she says. “Apparently, I have been asleep for about four hours, and according to the nurses I was talking straight after the surgery but I barely recall.”

After three days of rest, CL was back to doing a diluted version of her ‘mummy routine’ with the kids and now, just a month after the operations, she is thrilled with the results. “I notice a huge difference in my thighs…” she says. “I am able to wear more fitting clothes without being embarrassed. My confidence has accelerated, and in turn I feel that I want to continue looking after my family but I have an extra spring in my step. Suddenly turning 40 isn’t too daunting anymore, and the great thing is everyone just says how good I look but no one suspects that I have had any surgery.”

Born again

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You want to drop the post-pregnancy pounds you have to be disciplined in what you eat

New mothers have plenty to think about - but getting back their ideal weight is often something that gets neglected. But it can be hard when under the strain of new parenthood to know what to eat. So why not get this delicious and extremely healthy salmon dish - and if you want to make it even more healthy, add a salad or a simple side dish of steamed vegetables.

### Ingredients:
- 1 cup uncooked brown rice
- 1/2 cup low-fat plain yogurt (not fat-free)
- 1 cup uncooked brown rice
- 1 tsp lemon juice

### Method:
1. Make brown rice according to package. Place in a large pan to just cover the salmon. Bring to a boil and then add
2. Make a small cut in the middle of  the
3. When the

### Calories:
375

### Source:
www.thefunkystork.com

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### Allergy & Immunology

- Basem Haas Mohisheb
  - Dr Sulaiman Al Habib Medical Center, Bldg. no. 55, Tel: 04 435 9999, www.sulaimanahabib.com

### Anatomical and Clinical Pathology

- Sh同年 IIchisun
  - St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, 3100 N.，“www.sjoh.com"

### Cardiology (Interventional)

- Fahd Fakih
  - Dr Sulaiman Al Habib Medical Center, Bldg. no. 55, Tel: 04 435 9999, www.sulaimanahabib.com

### Cardiovascular Disease

- Song-Chul Lee
  - Samsung Medical Center, Bldg. no. 27, Block C, 1st floor, Tel: 04 449 9149, www.samsungamerica.com

### Critical Care Medicine

- Alaa Al Sabah
  - The City Hospital, Bldg. no. 37, Tel: 04 435 9999, www.thecityhospital.com

### Dermatology

- Anam Al Hammod
  - Dr Sulaiman Al Habib Medical Center, Bldg. no. 55, Tel: 04 435 9999, www.sulaimanahabib.com

### Diagnostic Radiology

- Umm-E-Abdullah Al Hammadi
  - Dr Sulaiman Al Habib Medical Center, Bldg. no. 55, Tel: 04 435 9999, www.sulaimanahabib.com

### Emergency Medicine

- Isabella Barker
  - The City Hospital, Bldg. no. 37, Tel: 04 435 9999, www.thecityhospital.com

### Endocrinology

- Gharib Al-Dubai
  - Dr Sulaiman Al Habib Medical Center, Bldg. no. 55, Tel: 04 435 9999, www.sulaimanahabib.com

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- Hannal Al Hameed
  - Dr Sulaiman Al Habib Medical Center, Bldg. no. 55, Tel: 04 435 9999, www.sulaimanahabib.com

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**HEALTH DIRECTORY**

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**All practitioners listed are located at Dubai Healthcare City**
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