

## Pregnancy and Heart Diseases

### Introduction:

The heart is a hollow muscular organ located in the center left side of the chest in the human body. It is the organ responsible for pumping blood through blood vessels to all parts of the body. During pregnancy, the blood-vascular system experiences some changes, most importantly:

- The amount of blood being pumped by the body per minute increases (20-50%) because of the progesterone hormone.
- The volume of blood increases.
- The heart rate increases.

Heart diseases is a term that covers a range of illnesses that affect the heart muscles or blood vessels. They are the number one cause of fatalities during pregnancies and births.

### Healthcare for pregnant women with heart disease

#### - Before pregnancy:

It is preferable to consult with an expert to make the right decision concerning your pregnancy.

#### - During pregnancy:

A regular follow-up schedule should be set up to maintain the mother's health and avoid complications.

#### - Childbirth:

Natural birth with a slow sedative is the ideal option as it relieves pressure on the heart muscle and can be used in the absence of warning signs.

#### - After childbirth:

Monitoring your condition is important during the first two weeks after childbirth to deal with any unexpected changes. You should continue to follow-up with your doctor for six months after childbirth.

**Instructions for women with heart diseases:**

- Make sure to consult your healthcare provider regularly during your pregnancy.
- Take your medication as instructed by your doctor.
- Make sure to rest and avoid any strenuous physical activity.
- Watch your weight to make sure it doesn't exceed the normal weight needed for the baby's growth.
- Avoid stress and anxiety.
- Avoid smoking and drinking alcohol.

**Warning signs:**

Consult your doctor as soon as possible if you experience any of the following:

- Difficulty breathing.
- Heart palpitations, fast heart rate, or irregular heart rate.
- Chest pain.
- Coughing at night or coughing blood

**Breastfeeding and heart disease:**

It is preferable that mothers with heart diseases consult their doctors regarding breastfeeding to explore what changes and options they may face.

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