

Advance Praise

I congratulate Dr Sujata Bhat for her vision in writing this outstanding, easy-to-read Pocket Planner for Pregnancy. It is a boon to all prospective parents. This attractively laid-out book equips women with the essential knowledge to experience a safe pregnancy. It educates fathers about the equally important care before, during and after pregnancy. Together, a must-have guide for couples.

—**Professor Pratap Kumar**

Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology,
Kasturba Medical College, Manipal (Karnataka)

Dr Sujata Bhat's planner is a treasure-trove of valuable knowledge on pregnancy. It is a ready-reckoner that will enable every parent to navigate this joyful and complex phase with confidence and ease. Her vast skills and experience as a seasoned Obstetrician and Gynecologist accompany this planner.

—**Vanita Nayak Mukherjee**

Activist, Researcher, Former Program Officer, Ford Foundation

Dr Sujata Bhat's Pocket Planner for Pregnancy is an absolute must for all those planning a family. This lucidly written book encompasses the most pertinent topics from pre-pregnancy counselling, diet and exercise, dos and don'ts to providing valuable home remedy tips to deal with common problems during pregnancy, delivery, post delivery and the currently advised vaccinations for the newborn.

—**Prof Krishnendu Gupta**

Professor and Unit Head,
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Your Pocket Planner *for* Pregnancy

DR SUJATA BHAT

We dedicate this book to our Mother, Smt Kanaka Durgamba and Father, Ex Captain Bulusu Jagdishwar Gandhi to whom we owe our lives.

Sujata (Author) and Jyothsna (Editor)

Contents

Acknowledgements ix

Introduction xi

Pre-Pregnancy Counselling	1
Congratulations! You are Pregnant	15
Unveiling the Mysteries Within	25
Nurturing with Nutrition	35
Challenges to a Beautiful Pregnancy	51
Working while Pregnant	61
Mild to Moderate Workouts, not Burnouts	75
Restorative Treat Thyself Formulas	91
Preoccupations that Pep You Up	105
Bringing Baby Home: Notes for the Family	113
The Awakening: A New Chapter Begins!	129
Newborn Care: Basic Principles	141
Postnatal Guidance and Advice	155
<i>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)</i>	<i>161</i>

References 178

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book is a loving tribute to our parents. My deepest gratitude to my late mother, Smt Bulusu Kanaka Durgamba and my late father, Captain Bulusu Jagdishwar Gandhi, due to whose hopes and constant support I am able to help other families today.

—Dr Sujata Bhat

Introduction

TODAY, WE LIVE in complex environments, particularly in urban areas, where small families, multiple daily tasks and long commutes are commonplace. Does this sound familiar to you? As a couple considering parenthood, you are sometimes left feeling that reliable advice is not easy to come by, as one is pressed for time to do one's own research, trusted sources such as older members of immediate family live far away, or simply that questions about pregnancy are too delicate to ask. At other times, some self-reliant couples may prefer to plan parenthood independently even when their families are easily accessible. Others may seek better information after a difficult prior experience. For all these reasons, a handy book with sufficient information to induce confidence may be just the friend you are in search of.

And then there are reasons from my perspective as an obstetrician and gynaecologist. Over several decades of my practice, I have answered many anxious questions and observed unfortunate situations that repeat themselves in one form or another. Even today, when reproductive medical theory and practice has advanced in so many ways, young couples report for their first consultation only after the third month of pregnancy, often as advised by elders at home. By this time it is too late to access much of the valuable information, so vital to shed light on the health of both the baby and pregnancy. Then there are working women who reluctantly give up their jobs believing that bed rest is necessary, now that they are pregnant. Similarly, some couples, fearful of the consequences, skip ultrasound procedures only to regret their folly when a problem is detected later, often too late to treat. As you can understand, the examples described above are all very distressing to a caring doctor who knows that all the stress and tension may not have been necessary "if only they knew". I believe that educating consumers enough to give them a chance to avoid such mistakes is a worthwhile contribution to society and to the patients I serve. After all, pregnancy should be a happy, positive experience.