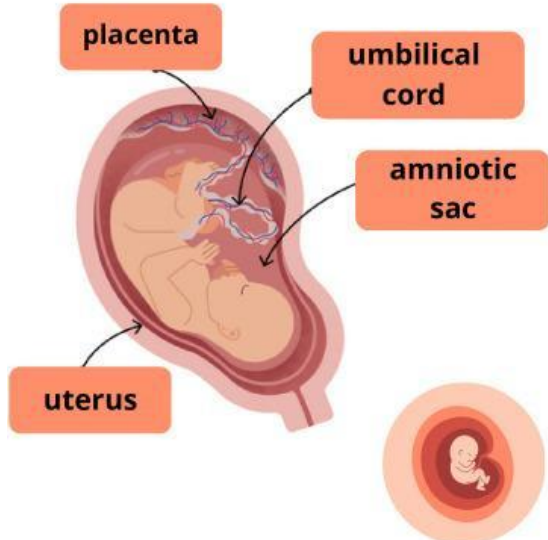


Pregnancy

Pregnancy is the period of time between fertilisation and birth. It lasts nine months. During this time, a baby grows inside its mother's expanding uterus.



Placenta

The placenta is the organ that supplies oxygen and nutrients from the mother to the embryo. It grows into the wall of the uterus and is joined to the embryo by the **umbilical cord**.

Amniotic sac

The **amniotic sac** is a membrane that forms around the embryo. It is filled with **amniotic fluid**. Both protect the embryo.



Fetal Development

At **three months**, the embryo is called a **foetus**. It begins to look more like a baby. Its arms and fingers can now be seen, and the organs can be identified.

At **nine months**, it is about 50 cm long, it weighs about 3 kg and it is ready to be born.

Labour and birth

Labour is the physical process when the baby and placenta are pushed out of a woman's body through the vagina. Labour is divided into 3 stages:

1.-Dilation The neck of the uterus dilates and the wall of the uterus contracts to push the foetus into the vagina.

The uterus and the mother's muscles of the abdomen make the baby come out. The baby starts to breathe for itself. The umbilical cord is cut.

2.-Birth

3.-Afterbirth After the baby is born, the placenta is expelled from the uterus, along with the remains of the umbilical cord.



Lactation and breastfeeding

Lactation is the process of making human milk. It occurs naturally after giving birth. Feeding babies directly from the mother's breasts is called **breastfeeding**. Breast milk contains the nutrients a baby needs. It also contains substances that protect the baby against many diseases. Babies can also be fed with formula milk.

Human milk or formula milk is the only food babies need in the first months of their life.