**Content for the Family Health Journey Material -Stage One**

1. **Preparing for Your Pregnancy**

Pregnancy is a life changing moment for many people. It comes with many responsibilities and mixed emotions, and each pregnancy is different. Therefore, it is important to prepare for every pregnancy:

**1.Talk to your partner about the plan to have a baby.**

Discuss if both of you are:

* Mentally ready
* Financially ready
* Know each other’s HIV status

**2. Start to take good care of yourself to prepare your body for the baby:**

* Eat more varieties of natural and healthy foods including fruits and vegetables.
* Minimize stress and try to have enough rest
* Stop or reduce your alcohol intake
* If possible, talk to a health worker about your intentions to get pregnant. Ask them about any supplements you can take to prepare your body for the pregnancy such as folic acid and iron.
* Test for HIV together with your partner.
* Treat any infections
* Sleep under a treated mosquito net every night to prevent malaria which is one of the leading causes of complications during pregnancy.

1. **Finding out if you are pregnant:**

If you have had unprotected sex and you experience the following:

* Miss your periods
* Feel weak
* Have nausea
* Tender breasts
* Mood swings

You could be pregnant but remember these are just signs and symptoms.

Go to the health center for a confirmatory test.

1. **Now we are pregnant**

If the test confirms that you are pregnant, talk to a health worker about starting antenatal care immediately.

**What should you expect from the antenatal care package?**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Service** | **Benefit** | **Have you received?** | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| 1 | Test for infections | Protects your baby from UTIs, STIs, HIV, malaria and other infections that can harm your baby. |  |  |
| 2 | Supplements (iron and folic acid) | Protects your baby from abnormalities that affect the spine and brain. |  |  |
| 3 | Nutrition education | You learn about how to eat healthy for:   * The proper growth and brain development of your baby. * Prevention of excess or underweight that can harm you and your baby * Breastfeed your baby |  |  |
| 4 | Scan | * Checks if your baby is growing in the right position to prevent complications that come with wrong positioning of the baby. * Detects abnormalities early enough |  |  |
| 5 | Malaria prevention | Receive a mosquito net and anti-malaria medicine to protect your baby from malaria which is a leading cause of complications during pregnancy such as miscarriages. |  |  |
| 6 | Danger signs education | Teaches you when must seek immediate medical attention to prevent complications early enough. |  |  |
| 7 | Birth preparedness education | Teaches you about:   * The important things you need to plan for to have a safe delivery and a good welcome for your baby. * Signs of labor |  |  |
| 8 | Child spacing | * You learn about what you can do to prevent another pregnancy too soon. * When to get a family planning method and the available options you can use. * Challenges of having a child too soon. |  |  |
| 9 | Partner support education | Male partners are taught about how to support their pregnant female partners to have a healthy and happy pregnancy. |  |  |
| 10 | Pregnancy stages and development milestones of your baby | * Teaches you about when to have the next antenatal visit and what to expect. * Gives ideas on how to monitor if your baby is growing well. * Teaches about selfcare six weeks within delivery |  |  |

Note: Please talk to your health worker if you have not received one of the items in the package.

1. **Dealing with the changes that occur during pregnancy**

Pregnancy comes with many changes that maybe challenging for most people such as:

* Mood swings
* Stigma especially if you are young or are not married
* Lack of support from your partner
* Depression
* Loss of appetite
* Dislike of certain scents, foods, and other things
* Loss of sex drive

These challenges are normal and can happen to anyone. Therefore, if you experience any of them, talk to a trusted person for support.

1. **Coping with the emotional challenges during pregnancy:**

* Talk to a trusted person for guidance on how to manage your fears
* Stop blaming yourself if pregnancy is unplanned and try and accept it.
* Discuss with your partner about the support you need.
* Try to get enough sleep and rest (ask for help to reduce on your workload)
* Try and eat a variety of fresh foods to keep strong. If you do not have appetite, eat and drink small amounts of foods but frequently at least every two hours.
* Connect with other pregnant women and share experiences and how to manage stressful moments.
* Engage in relaxing activities such as talking evening walks and visiting friends
* Stay away from situations that cause you fear and anxiety or depression
* Take all medicines and supplements as advised by the health worker as these will improve your overall health.

**Pregnancy Counselling Checklist for the Health Worker:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Item** | **Key Messages/Actions** | **Is service provided?** | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| 1 | Vulnerability assessment | * Ask about how mother feels about her pregnancy * Probe about relationship with male partner * Ask about self-care practices (rest, exercise, diet history) |  |  |
| 2 | Diet and nutrition | Eat a variety of local fresh foods (body building, energy giving and protective) in every meal every day for proper development of your baby and for you to stay strong throughout your pregnancy.  Examples of:   * *Body building foods (plant sources-beans, groundnuts, and animal sources-mukene, eggs, meat)* * *Energy giving foods (staple/starchy foods- posho, matooke, millet)* * *Protective foods (fruits and vegetables) such as avocado, bananas, doodo, nakati*   Take iron and folic acid supplements to ensure that your baby is protected from abnormalities and for you to keep strong throughout the pregnancy. |  |  |
| 3 | Counselling on HIV testing | * Discuss importance of HIV testing, prevention, and treatment in pregnancy. * Start on ART immediately if positive |  |  |
| 4 | Male partner/ family support | * Talk about importance of emotional support for health of mother and child. * Point out some roles of the male partner such as reducing workload, providing a variety of food, and ensuring that there is peace at home. |  |  |
| 5 | Malaria prevention | * Talk about the dangers of malaria and prevention during pregnancy. * Talk about anaemia * Give mosquito net and antimalaria medicine if due. * Give deworming tablets to reduce risks of anaemia |  |  |
| 6 | Birth preparedness | * Talk about plans of delivery (emergency preparedness-a number to call for help and money for transport and related costs, place of delivery, requirements for delivery including warm clothes for baby) * Discuss signs of labor |  |  |
| 7 | Family planning | * Discuss benefits of child spacing * Discuss options, side effects and benefits of each method |  |  |
| 8 | Newborn care | * Talk about benefits of breastfeeding within the first hour (*first immunization, lets down breastmilk, creates bond with baby)* * Talk about good breast attachment and positioning * Good cord care practices * Skin to skin contact * Danger signs among newborns such as yellowing of skin |  |  |
| 9 | Post-partum care | * Discuss about danger signs after birth such as bleeding, high blood pressure. * Remind client of importance of choosing FP method within the first 6 weeks of birth * Emphasize importance of return to the health facility for check up * Discuss schedule for return to the health facility. |  |  |