

Lesson Eight – Pregnancy Myths and Facts

Lesson Overview

Teenagers often base their beliefs on hearsay or inaccurate information from friends or family members. Through identification and analysis of various myths and misconceptions, in this lesson participants can better understand pregnancy and know what aspects make up a healthy pregnancy and overall wellness for the mother and baby.

It is important to point out that unless the information has scientific backing or proof, chances are it may be a coincidence or chance happening. Sometimes what seems to be a myth may be true in the end.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Analyze myths and misinformation about pregnancy to successfully discern fact from fiction

Lesson at a Glance

Activity	Materials	Preparation	Approximate class time
FOCUS	<i>Pregnancy Myths and Facts</i> slide presentation <i>What Is a Myth?</i> worksheet	- Prepare the Pregnancy Myths and Facts slide presentation for viewing. - Print/photocopy <i>What Is a Myth?</i> (one per participant).	10 minutes
LEARN	<i>Pregnancy Myths or Facts</i> worksheet	- Print/photocopy <i>Pregnancy Myths or Facts</i> (one per participant). - Invite a resource speaker to come to class.	15-45 minutes
REVIEW	Completed “Additional Myths and Misconceptions” participant project	None.	30 minutes

Lesson Eight – Pregnancy Myths or Facts

FOCUS: What Is a Myth?

10 minutes

Purpose:

Participants will learn the definition of the word “myth” and brainstorm various myths they have heard regarding pregnancy and fertility.

Materials:

- *Pregnancy Myths and Facts* slide presentation
- *What Is a Myth?* worksheet

Facilitation Steps:

1. Ask participants if they know what a myth is. Get several definitions from the group.
2. Show slide two of the presentation. According to this definition, a myth is a story with a purpose. It tries to explain the way the world is.

Many myths surrounding pregnancy and fertility have come about because people were trying to come up with an explanation for various things. Generations before us didn't have the science we have to explain things so this was their way of making sense of their world.
3. Ask participants to raise their hand if they believe the following myths are true:
 - If you have heartburn during pregnancy, your baby will be born with a full head of hair
 - If you swim while you're pregnant, you could drown the baby
 - If the weather is stormy or the moon is full, you are more likely to go into labor
4. Tell participants that all of those were false.
5. Ask participants if they have heard anything regarding pregnancy or childbearing that they consider to be a myth. Tell them they will explore more myths and truths about pregnancy.
6. Distribute *What Is a Myth?* for study purposes.

What Is a Myth?



A myth is a story with a purpose. It tries to explain the way the world is. Myths also try to explain the relationship between gods and humans. Even though the events in a myth are usually impossible, they try to send a message that has an important social or religious meaning.

People have always tried to figure out common questions like who made the universe or questions like what causes a storm. Religion, gods, and myths were created when people tried to make sense out of these questions.

For early people, myths were like science because they explained how things work. They also explained other questions that are now answered through modern science.

Source: <http://library.thinkquest.org/J002356F/myth.htm>

Lesson Eight – Pregnancy Myths or Facts

LEARN: How To Discern Truth From Fiction

15-45 minutes

Purpose:

The purpose of this activity is to identify factual information to help participants understand the myths and misinformation sometimes associated with pregnancy.

Materials:

- *Pregnancy Myths or Facts* worksheet

Facilitation Steps:

1. Have participants fill out the *Pregnancy Myths or Facts* worksheet. When they finish, ask them which statements they had heard of before. Are there others that were not listed that they have heard of?
2. All the statements are false. Have the class analyze why people might believe some of these myths. Which ones have some portion of truth or possibility of being valid?
3. Discuss the physical and emotional aspects of pregnancy. Emphasize that an obstetrician, certified nurse, or nurse/midwife would be the most reliable sources of information. Internet sources of information need to be carefully screened for reliability.
4. As a homework project, have participants find additional pregnancy myths and misconceptions. Participants can interview or survey family, friends, and staff to determine if they are aware of any myths or “old wives’ tales” about pregnancy.

Some of the myths will be humorous and will need to be discussed as to why they are false. Others may seem true but are not backed up with scientific proof.

Analyze why these myths persist and have been passed down over the years. Is there any truth to these stories?

Participants could also access the Internet for other myths. Searching the term “pregnancy myths” yields many good results. Some sites also provide explanations as to why it’s a myth and why it might have some believable truth to it.
5. Additional Activity: Resource Speaker
Invite a local doctor, OB nurse, or certified nurse-midwife to speak to the class about the value of good care during pregnancy. Have them discuss or refute the myths and misconceptions from the *Pregnancy Myths or Facts* worksheet.

The health professionals can provide insights and information about what is necessary for a healthy pregnancy. Ultrasound and amniocentesis tests done during pregnancy should also be discussed as to the procedures, timing, and accuracy of these tests.

Pregnancy Myths or Facts

Directions: For each of the following statements, place a check by the ones you believe to be true. Leave the statements blank if you think they are myths or false. Read carefully!

- _____ If the baby's heart rate is low, you're carrying a boy. If the heart rate is high, it's a girl.
- _____ If a pregnant woman raises her hands above her head, she'll choke her baby because the umbilical cord will wrap around the baby's neck.
- _____ If a pregnant woman sees something ugly or horrible, her baby will be ugly.
- _____ If a pregnant woman's face breaks out, she is carrying a girl who will steal all of her mother's beauty.
- _____ A baby born with light brown birthmarks (known as café au lait spots), the mother drank too much coffee or had unfulfilled cravings during her pregnancy.
- _____ Mothers should not begin any exercises that they have not already done prior to pregnancy.
- _____ Eating spicy food will bring on labor.
- _____ If a mother has a lot of indigestion, the baby will have a lot of hair.
- _____ A woman should always lie on her left side during pregnancy.
- _____ A pregnant woman shouldn't take baths.
- _____ If the mother is carrying the baby high, it's a girl. If she's carrying low, it's a boy.
- _____ It's dangerous to have sex during pregnancy.
- _____ If a mother eats red foods, the child will have a reddish (port wine) birthmark.
- _____ You lose a tooth for every baby.

Can you think of other statements that you have heard about pregnancy? Please list below.

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REVIEW: Additional Myths and Misconceptions

30 minutes

Purpose:

The purpose of this activity is to review common misconceptions about pregnancy with participants.

Materials:

- Completed “Additional Myths and Misconceptions” participant project

Facilitation Steps:

1. Have participants share information that they gathered for their “Additional Myths and Misconceptions” project.
2. Discuss where participants can go for accurate information, such as doctors, nurses, nurse-midwives, and other reputable health professionals.

Lesson Nine – Leopold’s Maneuvers

Lesson Overview

Knowing the position and attributes of the fetus are important, especially when monitoring for growth, readiness to birth, fetal size, and amniotic fluid amount. Leopold’s maneuvers offer a systematic approach for determining attributes of the fetus’s position in utero and allows for a deeper connection between the mother and caregiver and between the mother and her baby.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Explain the various attributes of a baby’s position in utero and their usefulness
- Identify key maternal and fetal anatomy for performing Leopold’s maneuvers
- Perform the four Leopold’s maneuvers
- Define more Latin roots

Lesson at a Glance

Activity	Materials	Preparation	Approximate class time
FOCUS	• <i>Leopold’s Maneuvers</i> slide presentation • Leopold’s Maneuvers poster	1. Prepare the <i>Leopold’s Maneuvers</i> slide presentation for viewing. 2. Optional: Print <i>Leopold’s Maneuvers</i> slide presentation for participants as a note-taking aid. 3. Hang the poster up for reference.	45 minutes
LEARN	• <i>Latin Roots IV</i> worksheet • <i>Latin Roots IV</i> – Answer Key • Whiteboard and dry erase markers • <i>Mother and Baby Anatomy</i> worksheet • Colored pencils • <i>Mother and Baby Anatomy</i> – Answer Key • <i>Leopold’s Maneuvers</i> slide presentation • Leopold’s Maneuvers poster • <i>Steps to Perform Leopold’s Maneuvers</i> • Pregnancy Profile Simulator 2.0 • Leopold’s Maneuvers Video	1. Print/photocopy <i>Latin Roots IV</i>, <i>Mother and Baby Anatomy</i>, and <i>Steps to Perform Leopold’s Maneuvers</i> (one of each per participant). 2. Gather colored pencils and dry erase markers. 3. Prepare simulator for class. 4. Prepare slide presentation and video for viewing.	Part 1 30 minutes Part 2 30 minutes Part 3 60 minutes
REVIEW	• <i>Lesson Nine Assessment</i> • <i>Lesson Nine Assessment</i> – Answer Key	1. Print/photocopy <i>Lesson Nine Assessment</i> (one per participant).	15 minutes