

## **Facts on Birth Spacing**

Birth Spacing refers to the time interval from one child's birth date until the next child's birth date. There are many factors to consider in determining what is an optimal time interval between pregnancies. However, researchers agree that 2 ½ years to 3 years between births is usually best for the well being of the mother and her children.

### **Why Space Births**

There may be very personal reasons why time is needed between pregnancies. Planning enough time between pregnancies increases the chance of a good outcome for the mother and each of her babies. If a parent has experienced a miscarriage or loss of a child, they may need time to grieve, evaluate their risks and work through their fears and anxieties before considering a future pregnancy. A couple or their child may have a medical condition which needs to be managed before they are able to begin or continue childrearing. Or, a woman may be in her later reproductive years and be feeling the need to have her pregnancies spaced closer together in order to achieve the family size she desires. A planned pregnancy is more likely to have a good outcome for the mother and baby.

### **Improvement in Health of Newborn**

When births are spaced 2 ½ years to 3 years apart there is less risk of infant and child death. There is also lower risk of the baby being underweight.

### **Improvement in Health of Mother**

Short intervals between births can also be bad for mother's health. There is a greater risk of bleeding in pregnancy, premature rupture of the bag of waters and increased risk of maternal death. A time interval of six months or more after finishing breastfeeding is also recommended before becoming pregnant again for the mother to be able to rebuild her nutritional stores.

### **When You are Ready to Plan Another Pregnancy**

When you are ready to have another baby, preparing beforehand will help you and your baby to have the healthiest start. It is recommended that you solve any health problems, review the safety of any medications you are taking, be up to date on your immunizations, be tested for any sexually transmitted diseases and find out if you have any medical conditions that could affect the pregnancy. If you have lifestyle issues such as violence or abuse, or high levels of stress, seek help to resolve those issues before you get pregnant. Following good habits such as eating healthy, exercising, taking a vitamin which contains folic acid, staying away from chemicals and hazardous materials and stopping smoking will help you to have a healthier pregnancy and newborn baby.

