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Mother & Baby

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ADITI SARANGDHAR
talks pregnancy, childcare and the adventure of a lifetime

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In the SPOTLIGHT

For Marathi film, television and theatre personality, **Aditi Sarangdhar**, life in the limelight got a lot more exciting after the birth of her baby boy, Arin

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HAIR & MAKEUP BY **SACHIN GATHE**

Hollywood superstar, Kate Winslet, once famously said, "Having children just puts the whole world into perspective. Everything else just disappears." Closer home, our very own green-eyed goddess, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, is noted to have said, "I don't know about changing my perspective because motherhood is such a glorious blessing and I am very thankful for that. It's such a beautiful experience. I so strongly recommend it. It's bliss, love, and fulfillment of another level." There's no doubt that the life you've come to know drastically changes when you bring a child into the equation, and for Aditi Sarangdhar, it was no different. "I have been part of the Marathi film industry, television and theatre scene for the past thirteen years. As an actress, it has been a great journey. But, nothing compares to the adventure life has been after Arin came into this world," she says.

The baby way
"My husband Suhas Revandekar and I fell in love and later married. We've been married for almost five years now. Ever since we thought of tying the knot, Suhas was keen on starting a family. But, we did want to spend some time together before we decided to make a baby. It was after four years of marriage that we both felt it was time, and the planning soon began."

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says Aditi. The couple were a little sceptical about their chances of conceiving since Aditi was now 35, and Suhas was 43, and were repeatedly told that they would encounter some difficulties while trying to get pregnant. Fortunately, life had a wonderful surprise and the couple were successful almost immediately.

"We were lucky that we didn't need to consult any fertility experts, and we conceived naturally. Before I realised that I might be pregnant, Suhas and I were vacationing in Australia. We're bit of adventure junkies so I was scuba diving, skydiving, bungee jumping, the works!" she recalls, excitedly. The couple always wanted to start a family, and their trip to Australia was indeed fruitful. Once back, though, the couple were back to the grind and went about their days as normal. "After we

returned home, we got back to our routine—I started my shows, shooting, meetings, events, getting up early in the morning, hitting the gym—it was work work, work as usual," she says. Then one day, it all changed. "I suddenly began feeling an intense wave of nausea and was throwing up continually. That's when I realised I had missed my period, and took a home pregnancy test to confirm my suspicions. When the test showed positive, I shared the news with Suhas and we were over the moon! This was perhaps one of the few times I've seen him this elated," she says, with a big smile on her face.

Pregnancy symptoms

While the couple couldn't be happier to share the news with their family and friends, as well as be pregnancy buddies with her younger sister,



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who was also expecting her first baby, Aditi did have a rough first trimester when it came to the symptoms. "Despite being a relatively smooth pregnancy, I experienced a surge in pregnancy hormones that manifested in nausea, irritation, mood swings and a whole lot of drama," she says. Quite befitting for an actress, we think! Unfortunately, this meant that Aditi frequently threw up, experienced a lot of food aversions and couldn't really eat what she wanted to. "I couldn't eat anything except for salads and fruits for days at a stretch," she says. This also meant that she couldn't really brush her teeth properly as the very action caused her to throw up, resulting in tooth decay. "But apart from the nausea and morning sickness, pregnancy was quite a joyful experience for me," says Aditi.

She spent a great deal of time reading books by P.L. Deshpande to P.G. Wodehouse, or anything that interested her in that moment. "However, I didn't specifically read up on pregnancy or parenthood. It was just whatever caught my fancy.

I even studied Spanish while I was expecting. Surprisingly, Arin loves listening to Spanish songs," she says.

"The rest of my pregnancy was honestly a breeze. I really did enjoy my rather traditional baby shower. According to Maharashtra tradition, I had a *Dohale Javan*. *Dohale* means 'pregnancy cravings' and at this ceremony, whatever an expectant mother craves, it's cooked and fed to her. She's pampered and showered with a whole lot of love. Fortunately for me, I got to enjoy this not once, but several times during my pregnancy. At the shower, though, I thoroughly enjoyed being dressed in floral ornaments and had my picture taken on the man-made moon," she says.

"After all the excitement and love I received, I realised just how much I would miss being pregnant, and somewhere, even hoped it would last just a little longer. But, Arin had other plans in store for his papa and mama, and on





the 15th of November, 2016, I went into labour," she says. However, after six hours of labour, the doctor took a call to do a C-section because Arin was breeched, and a normal delivery would be a lot harder, given her age. Finally, at 10.06 p.m. Arin was born. "I was semi-conscious when doctor told me it was a baby boy. All those nine months, weeks of nausea, worry and excitement culminated in a few hours of labour, but ultimately, in my greatest achievement. This was indeed a beautiful beginning to motherhood," says Aditi.

My baby & me

After bringing Arin home from the hospital, the couple realised just how much their life had changed. Everything was suddenly all about the baby. "Motherhood was nothing like I imagined it. It was a completely different phase—there was plenty of excitement, happiness, challenges and stress. I thought motherhood would be a cakewalk but reality set in with the lack of sleep, the inevitable worry and pressure of being responsible for another life dawned on me; it was a rollercoaster of emotions," admits Aditi.

For the actress, no amount of faking the smile could soothe her nerves. "The baby blues were just not relenting; sleepless nights turned into fear. The fact that I was alone and had no real help with the baby and managing our home, just became a nightmare for me. That's when I realised that this was more than just baby blues and I could possibly be suffering from post-partum depression. I decided I needed help, and consulted with M&B panelist, Effath Yasmin. The initial consultation made me realise that breastfeeding was quite the task because Arin didn't latch properly. He also experienced a discomfort in his neck because of tongue tie. Arin also also suffered from post-delivery trauma. Effath helped me come out of this difficult phase through craniosacral therapy and actually made me feel like I could do this! While I did have a rough start, today as my baby gets older, I can see just how beautiful my journey has been. I'm definitely emotionally independent, confident and so much more at ease," she explains.

Today, it's a whole different experience. Arin, fortunately, slept through the night from day one, and kept the new parents awake during the



day. "I was definitely thankful for small blessings like these," says Aditi. But according to her, the real fun began when he turned four months old. "Arin recognised my touch from the second month but the actual communication started from the fourth. Every first was special. His first touch, first feeding session, first cry, first twist, first outing, first vaccine, first poop, everything has been so special; we have it all on camera! And how time flies! He's already eight months and has started crawling. It's getting hard to keep up," she jokes.

"If that's not all," she continues, "he even has preferences. He understands what's good and what's not; what's tasty and what's not. I've come to realise that breastfeeding was much easier than weaning. But thankfully, he's not too fussy when it comes to food. Eats everything if given to him on time. But the cutest thing about him is that he loves to sleep. Sleep takes precedence over food, and if he's sleepy, nothing can get in the way of him and his bed!" she says with a laugh.

Though Arin loves to have people around, and is generally a rather friendly boy, Aditi believes he's a complete Daddy's boy. "While I do fuss over him, when it's papa's time with him, I see his face light up. And that's always amazing to watch," she says. "This does work well for me because Suhas can do everything I can, like feed him, bathe him, change diapers and even put him to bed, so that's a great help."

The future is bright

Aditi can only hope that Arin takes after his father and turns out to be a kind, compassionate and determined young man. "I believe that his future has to be his. He is independent, and this soul has chosen us to be his parents. He's preceptive and understands good and bad, right and wrong; all we can do is nurture him as best we can. We just hope that we teach him the right values, and enable him to make good, wise decisions. What more can we really ask for?" MB



