

Your First Trimester

Congratulations, You're Pregnant!

We have confirmed that you're pregnant. You feel excited, perhaps a little anxious. Some common signs of pregnancy are:

- ◆ Mood swings
- ◆ Bloating
- ◆ Nausea
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Breast tenderness and swelling
- ◆ Frequent urination

Why You Need Prenatal Care

Prenatal care helps you have a healthy baby. We will assess the health of your pregnancy. A "due date" is figured. Our office will watch for any concerns and manage existing ones before problems occur. The progress of your pregnancy is checked. This includes your baby's growth, changes in your weight, and your overall health and comfort.

You're Part of a Team

When you're pregnant, you're part of a team that includes you, your baby, and our office. Your team may also include a partner or a main support person. He or she could be a loved one, such as a spouse, a family member, or a friend. As you work toward giving your baby a healthy start, rely on your team members for support.

Your Growing Baby

The first trimester is a time of rapid development for your baby. Because your baby is growing so quickly, it is important that you start a healthy lifestyle right away. By the end of the first trimester, your baby has formed all of its major body organs and weighs just over an ounce.

A Visit About Once a Month

During each visit, your weight is checked to make sure you are gaining a healthy amount. (You may not gain much until the second trimester.) Your blood pressure will be taken, and you will give a urine sample. If you have bleeding you may have a pelvic exam. We will talk with you about your lab results, and answer any questions you have. We will order labs and ultrasounds at different times during your pregnancy. These tests are important to your pregnancy.

Tips to Relieve Nausea

Although nausea can occur at any time of the day, it may be worse in the morning. To help prevent nausea:

- ◆ Eat small, light meals at frequent intervals.
- ◆ Get up slowly. Eat a few unsalted crackers before you get out of bed.
- ◆ Drink water with lemon slices.
- ◆ Eat a Popsicle in your favorite flavor.
- ◆ Drink flat sodas.
- ◆ Talk with us if you take vitamins that upset your stomach.

Things to Avoid

Some things might harm your growing baby:

- ◆ Alcohol
- ◆ Cigarettes
- ◆ Unpasteurized dairy foods and juices
- ◆ Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or hot dogs

Things to Limit

Talk to us about whether it's safe to include these items in your diet:

Caffeine (none in the 1st trimester, 1 cup/glass a day in the 2nd and 3rd trimester)

- ◆ Artificial sweeteners
- ◆ Organ meats
- ◆ You may work during your pregnancy
 - Attempt to only lift 20 pounds or less
- ◆ Over-the-counter medications that may be used during your pregnancy:
 - Sudafed
 - Senokot
 - Claritin
 - Metamucil
 - Plain Robitussin
 - Oragel
 - Tucks
 - Desitin
 - Nix
 - Benadryl
 - Tylenol
 - Pepcid AC
 - Tylenol Cold & Sinus
 - Tums
 - Cough Drops
 - Vitamin B6
 - GasX
 - Dandruff Shampoo
 - Anbesol
- ◆ Stop smoking, avoid alcohol and drugs.
- ◆ You may jog as long as you are comfortable and you may lift weights if they are light and in control.

Your Second Trimester

A Golden Time

For most women, this is called the "golden trimester." You're starting to show. And you're starting to glow. Dress for comfort since your body is changing quickly now. Stick with loose-fitting clothing and low-heeled, cushioned shoes. You might want to treat yourself to some new clothing. Use this time to have fun with your partner, your friends, and your family.

When to Call the Doctor

Call us right away if you have any of the following:

- ◆ Fever of 101 degrees or greater
- ◆ Blood or fluid leaking from the vagina
- ◆ Abdominal pain or contractions (4-6 in an hour after you have rested for one hour)
- ◆ Severe or constant headaches
- ◆ Sudden swelling of the face and hands
- ◆ Rapid weight gain
- ◆ Vision changes or dizziness
- ◆ Decrease in your baby's movement

Keeping Your Environment Safe

You can still clean house and use scented products. Just take some simple precautions:

- ◆ Wear gloves when using cleaning fluids
- ◆ Open windows to let in fresh air. Use a fan if you paint.
- ◆ Avoid secondhand smoke
- ◆ Don't breathe fumes from nail polish, hair spray, cleansers, or other chemicals

If you have any questions, check with your health care provider.

Drink Lots of Water

Drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of fluids daily. Your baby needs fluids. You do too. Fluids decrease constipation, flush out toxins and waste, limit swelling, and reduce your risk of a bladder infection. Water is best. Try it with a slice of lemon.

Exercising and Being Active

Exercise tones and strengthens your muscles. It improves the oxygen supply to you and your baby. It may relieve minor aches. Exercise may even lighten your mood. But check with us before you start a new exercise program.

Tips to Add Activity

Now is not a good time to start an intense exercise program (especially if you have not been active). Still, everyone can get a little more active. Find ways to move instead of sit. Adding just minutes of activity a few times a day can help you be healthy. Try these tips:

- ◆ Park the car farther from a store and walk.
- ◆ If you can, do errands on foot instead of driving a few blocks.
- ◆ Walk across the office to talk to someone in person instead of calling.
- ◆ While waiting for appointments, go up and down stairs or around the block.
- ◆ Water aerobics classes are a good idea.

Tips to Stay Active

If exercise is already a normal part of your life, keep it up. These guidelines can help you plan your workouts during pregnancy:

- ◆ Maintain your routine. But exercise less intensely if you feel tired.
- ◆ Base your workout on how you feel, not your heart rate. Heart rates aren't a good way to measure effort during pregnancy.
- ◆ Swimming and walking are good choices. Avoid exercises where you might lose your balance, such as skiing and skating.
- ◆ Special prenatal exercise classes can be a good choice.
- ◆ Avoid exercising on your back after week 16.
- ◆ Be sure to warm up, cool down, and drink plenty of fluids.

Tips to Ease Discomforts

As your body adjusts to the pregnancy, some minor discomforts may arise. Here are a few common complaints and tips for relieving them:

Headaches

Headaches most often result from changes in hormones (chemical signals), fatigue, tension, hunger, or stress.

- ◆ Get fresh air and exercise.
- ◆ Relax and get enough rest.
- ◆ Check with us before taking any pain medications. You may take Tylenol.
- ◆ Don't skip meals.
- ◆ Get a head and neck massage.

Constipation

You may be constipated because the muscles of your bowels are more relaxed. Also, as the uterus grows, it puts pressure on the bowels.

- ◆ Eat foods high in fiber (whole-grain foods, fresh fruits and vegetables), i.e., one bowl of All Bran cereal daily.
- ◆ Drink plenty of water.
- ◆ Get regular exercise.

Mood Swings

Expect sudden mood swings. They may be caused by changes in your hormone levels and the new feelings pregnancy can bring.

- ◆ Talk about your feelings with others, including other mothers.
- ◆ Limit sugar, chocolate, and caffeine.
- ◆ Eat a healthy diet. Don't skip meals.
- ◆ Get plenty of rest and exercise.

Fatigue

It is normal to be tired at this time. Your body is working hard to build the baby's placenta. Expect to have more energy in the second trimester.

- ◆ Take catnaps when you can.
- ◆ Get regular exercise.
- ◆ Accept help from others.

Work Concerns

Discuss your work with your employer by the end of your first trimester. We will be able to guide with you advice on limits you should maintain during your pregnancy. Expect to work until 38 weeks. We can not take you off from work if you are not sick.

Advice for Travel

Always speak with us prior to traveling. Do not travel after 36 weeks or if you have preterm labor. If you travel in a car or in a plane over two hours, please allow yourself 10 minutes every two hours to walk. Fasten the lap belt below your belly, low over your hips. Also be sure to wear the shoulder harness.

Intimacy

Unless we instruct you not to have sex, you may have sex throughout your entire pregnancy. You may have spotting after sex and you may also have contractions. Your discharge will increase throughout the pregnancy. This is normal.

Note for Your Partner

Here are a few ways that you can help ease a future mom's adjustment to pregnancy.

- ◆ Adopt the same healthy lifestyle she has. Eat right. Drink plenty of fluids. Get fresh air and exercise.
- ◆ Help around the house and with errands and cleaning. The less she has to do, the more she can rest.
- ◆ Accept that her spirits may be up and down sometimes. Be patient. Offer your shoulder when she needs it.

If you partner has nausea, here are a few ways that you can help her:

- ◆ Cook for her. The sight and smell of certain foods may make her feel sick.
- ◆ If a food makes her ill, don't eat it in front of her.
- ◆ Keep the house stocked with light, healthy foods she can eat throughout the day. She may not feel like keeping up with the grocery shopping right now.

Your Third Trimester

Easing Common Discomforts

Although common during pregnancy, some discomforts may seem worse in the final weeks. Simple lifestyle changes can help. Take care of yourself. And ask your partner to help out with small tasks.

Limiting Leg Problems

- ◆ Wear support hose all day. We can prescribe them for you.
- ◆ Avoid snug shoes and clothes that bind, such as tight pants and socks with elastic tops.
- ◆ Sit with your feet and legs raised often.

Stopping Heartburn

- ◆ Avoid spicy or acidic foods.
- ◆ Eat small amounts more often. Eat slowly.
- ◆ Wait 2 hours after eating before lying down.
- ◆ Sleep with your upper body raised 6 inches.

Caring For Your Breasts

- ◆ Wash with plain water. Avoid using harsh soaps or rubbing alcohol. They may cause dryness.
- ◆ Wear a nursing bra for extra support. It can also hide any leaks from your nipples.

Managing Mood Swings

- ◆ Know that mood changes are normal.
- ◆ Address any concerns and limit stress. Talk to your partner or other women.
- ◆ Exercise often, but get plenty of rest.

Controlling Hemorrhoids

- ◆ Eat foods that are high in fiber. Also, exercise and drink enough fluids. This will reduce constipation and hemorrhoids.
- ◆ Sleep and nap on your side. This limits pressure on the veins of the rectum.
- ◆ Try not to stand or sit for long periods.

Dealing with Urinary Frequency

- ◆ Drink plenty of water all day. If you drink a lot in the evening, though, you may have to get up more in the night.
- ◆ Limit coffee, black tea, and cola.

Tips To Help You Rest

Good rest and sleep will help you feel better. Here are some ideas:

- ◆ Ask your partner to massage your shoulders, neck, or back.
- ◆ Limit the errands you do each day.
- ◆ Lie down in the afternoon or after work for a few minutes.
- ◆ Take a warm bath before you go to sleep.
- ◆ Drink warm milk or teas without caffeine.
- ◆ Avoid coffee, black tea, and cola.

Contractions

It is normal for the uterus to contract occasionally. If you feel contractions (tightening of your uterus) more than 4 to 5 times in one hour, you may be in labor. As an example, place your hand on your calf muscle in your leg. As you hold your hand there, first point your toes and feel the looseness of that muscle. Keep your hand on the muscle and slowly pull your toe towards your knee. Feel the tightness of the muscle as you do so. It doesn't hurt to do this. Labor contractions may start the same way; they feel tight but may not hurt.

Preterm Labor

If you think you are in labor, don't panic. Lie down on your left side and drink 2-3 glasses of water. If you are 34 weeks or less and have 5 or more contractions in an hour, or if the above signs are not gone in an hour, you need to go to the Hospital. Let them know what you have been feeling and they will advise you. If you are leaking fluid from the vagina and are not sure if it is the membranes (bag of water), call us immediately for advice or go to Special Delivery.

Labor (after 37 weeks)

Labor is a series of uterine contractions that dilate (open) your cervix for birth. You are in early labor when you have contractions that don't go away. It can take hours to dilate from 0 to 4cm. Be patient. You may spend the first part of your labor at home. If there are concerns about your health, you may be asked to go to the hospital sooner.

When It's Really Labor

Labor often starts slowly, with cramping or discomfort in your lower abdomen that doesn't stop when you change position. The contractions that cause your cervix to dilate are intense and you will need to breath through the contractions. When you are walking you will need to stop because of the intensity. Labor can also begin quickly. Your amniotic sac ("water") may break or begin to leak and at that time you will need to come to the hospital. Over time, contractions will become stronger and more regular. As the uterus contracts and pulls up, the cervix slowly thins (effaces) and dilates. This allows the baby to pass through the vagina or birth canal.

Active Labor

With active labor, your contractions will be stronger and more rhythmic. They may occur 2 to 5 minutes apart and last about 45 seconds. This stage is often shorter than early labor. When you reach active labor, you'll have a vaginal exam to see how your cervix is changing.

We look forward to spending this special time with you and your family. Birthing classes are a great re-source and the book [What to Expect When You're Expecting](#) has many suggestions to make this time easier. When you have questions please ask at your routine visits.