



# Guidelines for a Healthy Pregnancy

Medical care during pregnancy can help both mother and child stay healthy. Even if you've had other children, you need prenatal care during each pregnancy. These guidelines\* are recommended for a healthy pregnancy. Depending on your personal health care needs or risk factors, your doctor may give you different advice.

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## Doctor Visits

As soon as you think you're pregnant, see your doctor to make sure that you and your baby are healthy. Talk with your doctor about special care you may need and ask any questions you may have about your pregnancy. Your doctor may develop a different plan of care for you depending on your personal needs.

After the first visit see your doctor:

- Every 4 to 5 weeks until you are 28 weeks pregnant
- Every 2 to 3 weeks from 28 weeks until you are 36 weeks pregnant
- Every week after you are 36 weeks pregnant

At each visit, your doctor will check:

- Your height, weight, blood pressure
- Your urine for glucose and protein
- Your baby's heart rate (after 12 weeks) and baby's growth
- Signs of depression
- Signs of bleeding, leakage and other problems

## Education

During your pregnancy, your doctor may talk to you about any of these topics:

- Childbirth classes
- Newborn car seat
- Signs & symptoms to report
- Physical and sexual activity
- Domestic violence
- Depression
- Selecting a pediatrician
- Options for care during labor
- Anesthesia during childbirth
- Environmental/work hazards
- Breast- and bottle-feeding
- Tobacco, drug & alcohol use
- Scope of care provided in the office
- Expected course of the pregnancy

- Use of over-the-counter drugs and herbal products
- Preventing HIV infection
- Plans to treat pain and discomfort when giving birth
- Nutrition & normal weight gain
- Vaginal birth after cesarean section (C-section)
- Continuing of asthma medication if you have asthma
- Preventing toxoplasmosis, a disease that is caused by a small organism which can be dangerous for pregnant women
- Labor signs
- Circumcision
- Folic acid
- Healthy lifestyle
- Travel
- Schedule of visits
- Lab tests

\* Guidelines are adapted from a variety of sources including: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Guidelines for Perinatal Care, 7th Edition.* (2012); American Academy of Pediatrics; American Diabetes Association, and United States Preventive Services Task Force.



### 0–13 Weeks

During the first 3 months of pregnancy, your first trimester, you need to visit your doctor to find out if you are at high risk for any condition. This visit should include:

- Family and social history
- Medical and pregnancy history
- Substance abuse and mental health history, including depression
- Lab work (including hemoglobin, hematocrit, urinalysis, Pap test)
- Iron deficiency anemia in women with no symptoms
- Diabetes screening if you are at risk for type 2 diabetes
- Physical exam
- Genetic risk assessment and birth defect counseling
- Hepatitis B surface antigen, blood type and Rh factor antibody
- Rubella, syphilis and HIV screening
- Screening for anything wrong with the baby

Your doctor might perform special tests if you are at high risk for any of these conditions: hepatitis A, B and C; sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); tuberculosis (TB) exposure; sickle cell anemia; diabetes; or cystic fibrosis.

Your doctor may advise a flu shot during flu season.

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While you're pregnant, it's a good idea to choose a doctor for your baby (pediatrician).

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### 14–26 Weeks

Your doctor will check for some high-risk conditions. Some of the tests your doctor might do include:

- Alpha-fetoprotein screening (15–18 weeks)
- Blood sugar screening for diabetes (about 24–28 weeks)

Your doctor may advise a flu shot during flu season.

### 27–42 Weeks

During your third trimester, your doctor might do the following:

- Group B strep screen (35–37 weeks)
- Blood test (including hemoglobin and hematocrit)
- Test for STDs (28–36 weeks)
- Rh factor for antibody screening (about 28–29 weeks)

Your doctor may advise a flu shot during flu season.

### 4–6 Weeks After Delivery

You should see your doctor 4–6 weeks after you give birth. If you have a C-section or difficult pregnancy, ask your doctor if you need to see him or her 7–14 days after the birth. You can expect your doctor to do the following:

- Physical exam, including weight and blood pressure
- Screen for depression
- Nutritional counseling, including breast-feeding
- Review methods of birth control
- Counseling about having more children, when to have them and plans for good health

Women with gestational diabetes should be screened for diabetes 6–12 weeks after giving birth. They should have a follow-up screening for diabetes or pre-diabetes.



*The educational information provided is not a substitute for medical care and does not serve as medical advice. If you have a medical issue or questions about your health or the health of your baby, you should speak with your doctor.*

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