

# *Pregnancy*



Care Guide

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### First Things First

Important phone numbers	cover
OB education and maternity tours	4
Other services and resources	5
Medical history	6
Record of prenatal visits	7
Medications and tests	8
Map of your journey	9

### Pregnancy Health

Getting the prenatal care you need	
Health insurance, Prenatal appointments	12
Prenatal visits	13
Common tests and what they tell you	14
TB screen, Pap smear, Pelvic exam, Culture of cervix, Urine test, Blood tests, Blood pressure, Diabetes, Ultrasound, Maternal blood (serum), First trimester screen, Cystic fibrosis, GBS HIV (AIDS) testing	16
How to feel your best – physical changes	17
Healthy eating	19
Eating tips, Eating out, Weight gain	
Healthy exercise and fitness	22
Healthy DOs and DON'Ts	27
Travel	29
How mother and baby grow, Month-by-month	29
Knowing when something's wrong	36
Warning signals, Premature labor Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), Drugs and alcohol	
Domestic violence and abuse	39
Healthy relationships and support	41
Sex during pregnancy	42

### Decisions Before You Deliver Your Baby

Choosing a pediatric provider for baby	44
Pain relief during labor	44
Deciding how to feed your baby	47
Breastmilk or formula	
Circumcision decision for baby boys	48
Planning checklist	49
Planning for hospital visitors, Photos and videotaping	50
Shopping lists for you and baby	51
What to bring to the hospital	52



PHYSICAL CHANGE	WHEN YOU MIGHT HAVE IT	HOW YOU MAY FEEL	WHAT YOU CAN DO TO FEEL BETTER
Vaginal discharge	Throughout	White discharge that can be quite thick	Loose-fitting clothes are more comfortable; so is underwear with cotton panels; DON'T use tampons or douche when pregnant; if discharge changes color or begins to itch, burn, or smell bad, tell your health care provider.
Hemorrhoids (swollen veins in the rectum)	During or after pregnancy	Pain when you have a bowel movement; burning, itching, or pain around rectum	See constipation notes; apply witch hazel pads; take your time during bowel movements; don't strain.
Nosebleeds and nasal congestion	From month four on	Stuffy or runny nose; it may bleed or you may see blood when you blow your nose	Very common; saline nose drops may relieve stuffiness; blow your nose gently; if bleeding is heavy, apply pressure and call your health care provider. A humidifier helps some women.
Bleeding gums	From month four on	You may see blood when you brush your teeth	Brush and floss every day; see your dentist early in pregnancy; try a softer toothbrush.
Swelling ankles, feet, and legs	Usually lasts four months; can be worse during summer	Your ankles, feet, and legs swell, your shoes may feel tight	Keep your feet propped up or raised as much as you can; pillows are good for this; sleep on your side; don't wear clothes that bind your legs; exercise. Talk to your care provider if your hands or face swell.
Breathing problems	Last months	Because the baby is growing, you may feel short of breath	Have good posture, slow your pace, and prop yourself with pillows to rest. Contact your provider at once if you have an asthma attack.
Leg cramps	Last three months	Pain, ache in leg, or charley horse	Don't point your toes; stretch your legs before going to bed.
Skin changes	Later months	Blotches and color changes in your face; a dark line on your abdomen; stretch marks	Protect yourself from the sun. These changes are normal and will go away or fade after you have the baby.
Trouble sleeping	Last weeks	You can't get comfortable enough to sleep	Take a warm bath or drink warm milk before bed. Try relaxation; sleep on side with pillow under your belly and another between your legs. Limit daytime naps.

## Some Eating Tips

Eating good food will help you and your baby stay healthy. Some tips:

- Drink lots of liquids, especially water. Try to have 6 to 8 glasses daily.
- Cut down on fried foods, candy bars, soft drinks, doughnuts, pastries, and other foods high in sugar or fat.
- Try to snack on healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, cereal, yogurt, or cheese.

## Eating Out

When you go to a restaurant, you can still eat well. Eating right does not cost more, and it tastes great.

- Order plain burgers and cheeseburgers, topped with ketchup or mustard only.
- Avoid extra sauces and toppings like mayonnaise, tartar sauce, and bacon.
- Choose baked, broiled, or grilled foods, instead of fried foods.
- Skip the french fries. Instead, get a plain baked potato.
- Salads that have small amounts of meat or seafood and cheese are great meals. Side salads help you get the vegetables you and your baby need.
- Ask for low-calorie salad dressings.
- Stay away from fatty meats – bacon, sausage, hot dogs, pepperoni, and salami.
- Stick with meatless pizzas that have cheese and vegetable toppings only.
- Turkey, chicken, and roast beef submarines, loaded with vegetables, are good.
- Choose milk or water rather than soda.

**Caution:** The FDA advises pregnant or breastfeeding women and young children to avoid fish with high levels of mercury like shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tilefish. Eat up to 12 oz. a week (2 average meals) of fish with low mercury levels like shrimp, pollock, salmon, catfish and light tuna packed in water, not oil (not albacore “white” tuna).



## DECIDING HOW TO FEED YOUR BABY

How you will feed your baby is an important decision. Your care provider, as well as other mothers, can give you information.

### About Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding has many advantages, but one is most important: human milk is the best possible food for any infant. Formulas can only approximate the nutrients found in mother's milk, and they cannot give the antibodies (protection against disease) and other valuable ingredients breast milk has. Breast milk is low cost, needs no preparation, and is available at any time. Breastfeeding helps the mother, too, by causing the uterus to tighten and return more quickly to its normal size.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- “Exclusive breastfeeding” for about the first six months.
- Starting some solid foods at four to six months.
- Continuing breastfeeding and solids for baby's first year or as long as you and your baby wish.

Your body is preparing for breastfeeding throughout your pregnancy. Breasts and nipples vary in size and shape. If you have flat or inverted nipples, contact your care provider or the hospital lactation consultant before 36 weeks for some simple steps to help you prepare for breastfeeding.



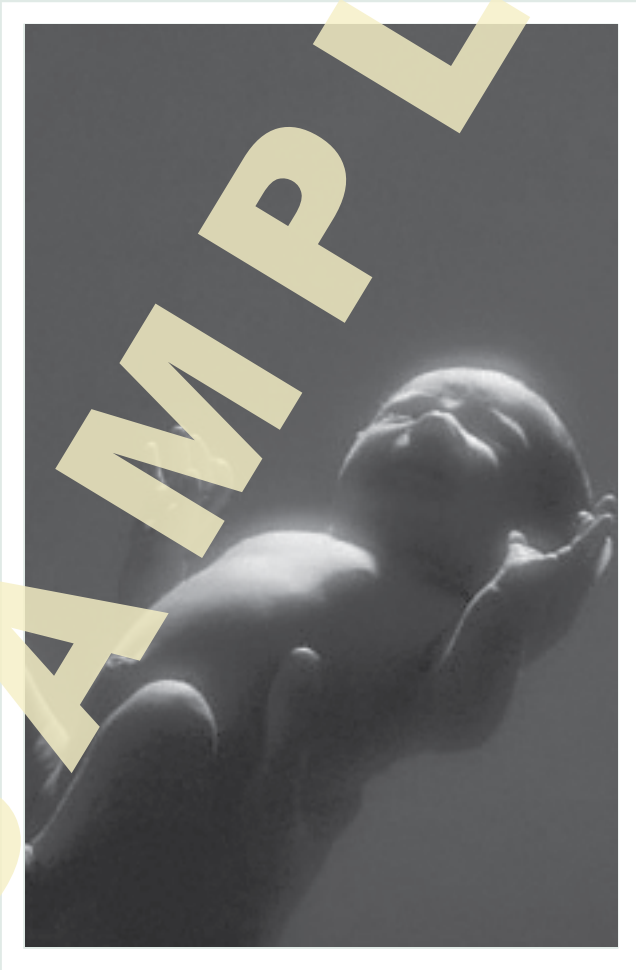
If you return to work, you can still continue to nurse by “expressing” (pressing or pumping out) your milk to be fed to your baby through a bottle.

While breastfeeding, you need to eat a healthy diet (see page 19) and only take medicine with your care provider's approval. Remember that any medicine you take will pass through your milk to the baby.

Some say mothers should not breastfeed if they • have certain infections like HIV or active TB • use illegal drugs • abuse alcohol (more than two drinks a day), or • are receiving radiation or chemotherapy.

Breastfed babies have fewer allergies, illnesses, hospital stays, earaches, weight problems, diarrhea or constipation, and tooth decay. The skin-to-skin contact of nursing is soothing for your baby and pleasant for you.

*Labor and  
Baby's Birth*



### Signs That Labor Is Near

Your due date is just a best guess of when your baby will be born. You may feel everything listed below, some of it, or none of it. Each labor is different.

- **Lightening.** The baby drops or settles into the pelvis during the last few weeks before labor begins. It can be a few weeks for first-time moms or a few hours for later births. This may cause an increase in pelvic pressure and a frequent need to urinate.
- **Nesting.** You may feel an increase in energy and want to do more to prepare for the baby.
- **Bloody show.** You may notice a mucus-like discharge from the vagina with streaks of blood. It can happen after a vaginal exam or in the last days before birth.
- **Low backache.** May come and go, or pressure may be constant.
- **Bowel movement change.** Either diarrhea or constipation.
- **Effacement** (thinning of the cervix). This is noticed on exam by your care provider. Your cervix may also begin to open. Some thinning and opening of the cervix is common in the last weeks of pregnancy.
- **Bag of waters breaks** (membranes rupture). The water may come as a slow trickle of fluid from your vagina, or you may have a sudden gush. It may happen before or after contractions begin. If this happens, don't take a bath. Call your care provider.
- **Contractions.** During labor your uterus gets tight and then relaxes. Contractions may feel like cramps. They help the baby move through the birth canal.

## The FIRST STAGE of Labor – Active Phase

### PHYSICAL CHANGE

By now you should be in the hospital (or at least on your way). Your contractions become stronger and faster (last about 1 minute and are 3 minutes apart for first babies, 5 minutes apart for second babies). Your cervix will thin even more and open wider, to 7 or 8 centimeters. The active and transition phases last an average of four to eight hours.

### WHAT TO EXPECT

You may:

- Bleed a little and your water may break
- Have a backache as the baby moves lower in the birth canal.
- Feel tired and may be thirsty because you're breathing hard.
- Use pain management techniques you learned in class. Ask for pain relief if you want it.

### WHAT YOUR SUPPORT PERSON CAN DO

- Offer words of encouragement
- Focus on labor as one contraction at a time. Each one is making the birth closer.
- Try to make you more comfortable with:
  - Cool washcloths on lips, forehead, or back of neck
  - Back or body massage
  - Warm cloths or ice packs to lower back
  - Position change
  - Lip moisturizer
- Your mood will become more serious, and you will focus more on yourself and what's happening to your body. You will also depend more on your support person.

---

## ANEMIA (IRON DEFICIENCY)

### The Importance of Iron

Red blood cells carry oxygen from your lungs to all parts of your body and to your baby. You need iron to produce red blood cells. But during pregnancy your body may not absorb iron well. Plus you need extra iron to support your developing baby.

A simple test will tell your care provider if you are *anemic*, or lacking the iron you need. Your care provider may prescribe special iron tablets for you to take.

You can help prevent anemia during pregnancy by eating iron-rich foods such as:

- Liver
- Red meat
- Egg yolks
- Shellfish
- Green leafy vegetables such as spinach
- Peas and beans
- Dried prunes or prune juice
- Raisins
- Apricots
- Whole-grain and enriched bread and cereal

You should also eat foods rich in vitamin C, because vitamin C helps your body absorb iron. Good vitamin C foods are:

- Citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, grapefruit)
- Strawberries
- Broccoli
- Tomatoes

## BREECH PRESENTATION

Babies that are born feet and/or buttocks first are born breech. This occurs in about 6% of all deliveries. The typical breech presentations are shown below.



Frank breech



Complete breech



Footling breech

*Illustrations from American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: Planning for Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond, Second Edition. Washington, DC, ACOG, © 1995. Used with permission.*

Some care providers may attempt to turn the baby before labor starts. This is called an *external version*. Today, most women with breech babies are delivered by cesarean for the baby's safety.

---

## PATERNITY

*Paternity* is another word for father of the baby. If two people are married, the husband is automatically the legal father of any children born during the marriage. But if a child's parents are not married, it is important to take steps to make sure the child has a legal father. This is called *establishing paternity*.

### Why Establish Paternity

Having a legal father is important to children for many reasons. All children have the right to know who both their parents are. They should know about any special medical conditions in their family. And they have a right to be supported financially by both their parents.

With a legal father, sometimes a child can get medical insurance through the father's job, union, or military service. Also, if a child's legal father dies, the child can qualify for benefits including Social Security, pensions, inheritance rights, veterans benefits, and life insurance. Legal paternity is necessary for a child to claim these benefits or to get monthly child support. Ask about signing the *Affidavit of Parentage* form.

The hospital social work department is available to assist you if you have any concerns related to paternity.

## ADOPTION

Perhaps you are not ready to be a parent and cannot take care of your child once he is born. Adoption may be the right route for you. With adoption, your baby legally gets new parents. If you would like more information about adoption, contact the hospital social work department.

# *Durante el Embarazo*



Guía de Atención