

Normal Pregnancy and Your Care



The 1st visit with the doctor or clinic is often a thorough one.

The best thing you can do for your baby while you are pregnant is to take good care of you. When you are pregnant, your body will change more than at any other time in your life.

As soon as you know you are pregnant, make an appointment to see your doctor and begin regular care.

- The doctor will tell you what is good and bad for you and your baby.
- Your doctor will tell you how to make your body a safe and healthy place for your baby to grow.
- An average pregnancy lasts 280 days or 40 weeks from the 1st day of your last menstrual period. An easy way to find out your due date is to add 9 months and 7 days to the 1st day of your last menstrual period. For example:

1st day of last period	=	February 3
Add 7 days	=	February 10
Add 9 months	=	November 10

- If you are not sure when your last period started, your doctor can get an idea of when your baby is due when he examines you at your 1st visit.
- Your doctor may want you to have an ultrasound test.
 - This test uses sound waves to show pictures of your baby on a video screen.
 - Your doctor can see and measure the baby to get an idea of your due date
 - The 1st time your baby's heartbeat is heard and the 1st time you feel the baby move, helps in figuring the due date.
- Most babies are not born on their due date.
- A normal delivery can take place any time from 38 weeks to 42 weeks.
- A baby born after 37 weeks is considered full term.

Good Care during Your Pregnancy

You must take good care of yourself during pregnancy. This is very important for the health of you and your baby.

- The 1st visit with the doctor or clinic is a thorough one.
- You will be asked many questions about your past health and the health of your family.
- You will be asked about your sexual history.
- You will be asked about your lifestyle and your job.
- You will be asked about allergies to food, drugs, or products.
- You will be asked about any medicines you are currently taking.
- The doctor will examine your body. The exam may include:
 - A test to show you are pregnant
 - Check of your heart, lungs, eyes, breasts, and thyroid
 - Weight
 - Height
 - Blood pressure
 - Pelvic exam
 - Pap smear and culture of the cervix
 - Blood test
 - Urine test
- Your doctor or nurse will talk to you about diet, exercise, medicine, sexual relations, and any recommended lifestyle changes.
- Be sure to ask them any questions you may have.
- If you think of questions at home, make a list.
- Take your list with you to your next visit.
- Your doctor visits will be every 4 weeks until the 28th week.
- From 28 weeks to 36 weeks, you will see your doctor every 2 weeks.
- After 36 weeks, you will see your doctor every week until your baby is born.

Write down a list of questions and take to your next office visit.

- If you have health issues or special needs, you may have more visits.
- You *must* keep ALL of your scheduled visits.
- The best way to have a healthy baby is to find and treat problems early.

After your 1st visit, later visits take less time and may include:

- Baby's heartbeat
- Measuring the size of your uterus
- Weight
- Blood pressure
- Urine test
- How the baby is moving

Call your doctor or clinic if you have any of these warning signs:

- Contractions (4 or more within 1 hour) if you are less than 37 weeks.
- Cramping feeling like your period.
- Feeling like the baby is crunching up in a ball.
- Change in vaginal discharge.
- Vaginal bleeding.

Your doctor will ask you:

- If the color of the blood is bright red or brownish-red.
- How much bleeding is there?
- Is the blood spot the size of a quarter or does it soak a full pad?
- Did the bleeding start after sex?

- Stomach cramps that do not stop.
- Abdominal pain.

Your doctor will ask you:

- Is the pain in your pelvis, under your ribs?
- Is it on your left side or your right side?
- When did it start, and how long has it lasted?
- What does it feel like? Is it sharp, dull, constant, or does it come and go?

- Vaginal or pelvic pushing feeling.
- Pain or burning when you urinate.
- A feeling of fullness in your bladder after you urinate.
- A feeling of fullness in your bladder and you cannot urinate.
- A change in the amount of urine.
- You notice your urine is dark or cloudy.
- Vomiting that does not stop.
- Diarrhea or constipation that does not stop.
- Chills or a fever 100.4°F or higher.
- Soreness or redness in 1 or both of your legs.

- Swelling or puffiness of the feet, hands, or face.
- Sudden weight gain.
- Bad headache that does not stop.
- You have blurred vision, spots before the eyes, or flashes of light.
- You feel dizzy or mixed up.
- You notice a big change in how your baby moves.
- *Something just does not feel right.*