

# Health POINT

*Prenatal Care*



*Healthy* communities  
begin with healthy *Babies!*

# Congratulations!

We are happy you are here!

## Your first prenatal appointment is:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

## Things to *Know* for your first appointment:

- You are encouraged to bring a support person. Please be advised that we do not have dedicated staff to watch your children during your visit. So any little ones you bring to your appointment will need to stay with you in the exam room.
- Your provider will complete a pelvic exam and pap smear as well as discussing your anticipated prenatal care.
- A series of eight prenatal labs will be drawn.
- If you have visited the Emergency Room or Labor and Delivery for this pregnancy, you will need to request your medical records be sent to us before you come to your first appointment or bring your records in hand.
- If you are currently taking any prescription medications, please bring them with you to your appointment.
- If you need to reschedule your prenatal visits, please call at least one day prior.

## Community Resources:



There are a variety of community resources available to pregnant women and families in the Greater Brazos Valley. To learn more about those resources please scan the QR code in this section.

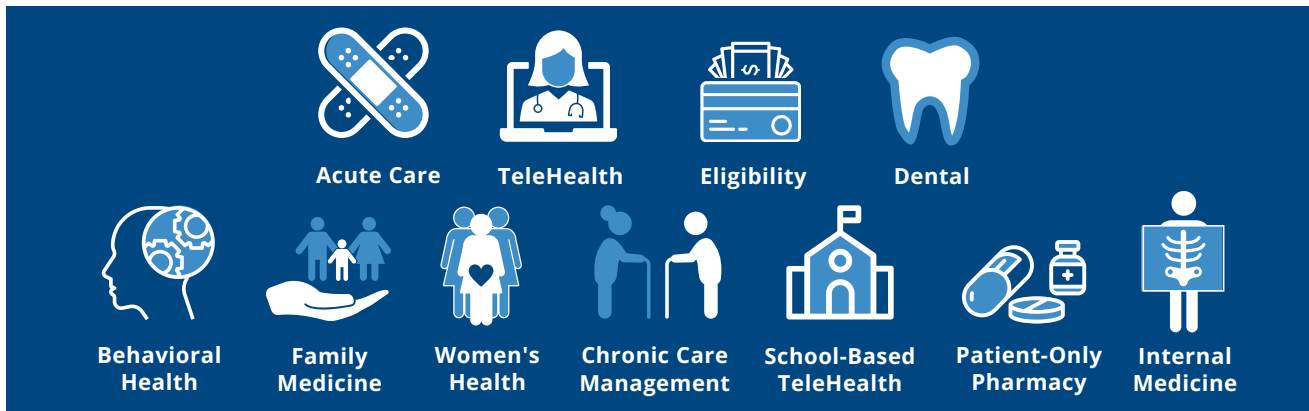
## Our Providers:



Visit us online to learn more about our services and the providers available in your area.

[www.HealthPoint-Tx.com](http://www.HealthPoint-Tx.com)

# Services at HealthPoint



## Why you should *Quit*

### Smoking

- Smoking cigarettes harms your health and can affect your baby's health.
- Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of low birth weight. Low birth weight babies are at a higher risk of health problems shortly after birth as well as an increased risk of health problems later in life.
- Women who smoke during pregnancy are more likely to have a miscarriage and to have a baby born with a birth defect such as a cleft lip or palate.
- Mothers who smoke during or after pregnancy put their babies at greater risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

### Alcohol

- Using alcohol and illegal drugs during pregnancy threatens the health of your unborn baby.
- Chemicals you ingest or breathe into your lungs cross the placenta into your baby.
- Substance abuse puts your baby at risk for problems such as stillbirth, low birth weight, birth defects, behavioral problems, and developmental delays.
- Pregnant women who drink any amount alcohol increase the chance of giving birth to a baby with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD).
- Babies born with FASD can have mild to severe effects. Severe forms of FASD include abnormal facial features, severe learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and other problems.
- It is not known how much alcohol it takes to cause harm to your baby!

### Illegal Drugs

- The use of illegal drugs during pregnancy is very dangerous.
- Babies born to women who use illegal drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamines are likely to be born addicted and must go through withdrawal.
- Mothers who inject drugs have a higher risk of getting HIV which can pass to unborn babies.
- Studies suggest that the effects of drug use during pregnancy might not be seen until later in childhood.

Learn More 

# Healthy weight in pregnancy

## **Before pregnancy:**

Women with a healthy weight are less likely to have problems becoming pregnant.

## **During pregnancy:**

- Have a miscarriage
- Have a baby born with birth defects, such as heart defects and neural tube defects. These are not as likely to be detected on ultrasound in an obese patient.
- Have problems controlling blood sugar (pregnancy-related diabetes)
- Have problems related to high blood pressure

## **During childbirth and delivery:**

- Have a baby pass away during the pregnancy (stillbirth)
- Have a baby be born early or admitted to the NICU
- Have a baby that is larger than normal or having the baby's shoulders stuck during delivery
- Have problems related to anesthesia
- Need a cesarean section

## **After delivery:**

- Be in pain
- Have a surgical wound become infected or open
- Lose blood or have a life-threatening blood clot

## **If I have never exercised, how should I begin during pregnancy?**

- Begin with as little as 5 minutes of exercise a day and add 5 minutes each week. Your goal is to stay active for 30 minutes a day.
- Walking is a good choice if you are new to exercise. Brisk walking gives a total body workout and is easy on the joint.
- Swimming is another good exercise for pregnant women.

## **If your BMI is greater than 30:**

- You will be screened at your first or second appointment for diabetes. This test involves drinking a sugary drink and drawing your blood one hour later. If your blood glucose level is abnormal, you will need additional testing. If it is normal, the test will be repeated later in your pregnancy.
- If you need additional help meeting your goals, ask your provider about meeting with Behavioral Health professional or ask for a referral to a dietician
- Even in obese women, pregnancy is not the time to actively try to lose weight.
- If you need additional help meeting your goals, ask your provider about meeting with a behavioral health consultant.

# Health POINT

Prenatal Care



1st TRIMESTER

## What to expect at each appointment

8 Weeks

- Ultrasound to confirm pregnancy
- Determine an estimated due date
- Physical Exam
- Prenatal blood panel taken for testing
  - Hemoglobin/blood count
  - Blood Type
  - State mandated screening for infections such as HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis, Chlamydia and Gonorrhea

12 Weeks

- Ultrasound (if not preformed at 8 weeks)
- Review prenatal lab work
- Talk to your provider about genetic testing and if it is right for you

16 Weeks

- Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) test for neural tube defects
- Perform first trimester genetic screening, if desired

20 Weeks

- Ultrasound for a detailed anatomy and gender scan
  - While this scan can assess for many fetal issues, not every disorder, anatomic or otherwise, can or will be detected.

*\*We suggest scheduling a hospital tour at this time.*

24 Weeks

- Routine monitoring of mother and baby
- Discuss glucose testing instructions for next visit

2nd TRIMESTER



# Health POINT

## Prenatal Care

3rd TRIMESTER

28 Weeks

- Perform glucose test
- Perform Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)
- Routine lab work and screen for gestational diabetes and infections
- If blood work determines you are Rh-negative, you will receive a Rhogam injection
- Tdap vaccination will be offered

*\*We recommend finding a pediatrician at this time.*

30 Weeks

- Review lab results
- Routine monitoring of mother and baby

32 Weeks

- Routine monitoring of mother and baby
- Certain high-risk conditions will begin antenatal screening and ultrasounds

36 Weeks

- Hospital preregistration
- Group B Strep Testing
- Weekly visits until your delivery

40+ Weeks

- If you have not delivered by your due date, you will begin weekly visits with ultrasound and fetal monitoring to check for fetal well-being.
- Discuss possible induction of labor.



## Newborn Screenings

Use the following chart to ensure your baby receives all their screenings:

1st blood screening	24-48 hours after birth
2nd blood screening	7-14 days old at the doctor's office
Hearing Screening	At the hospital
Congenital Heart Disease Screening (Pulse-Ox)	24-48 hours after birth

We hope you had a *Happy & Healthy* Pregnancy and Birth!





# Health POINT

Prenatal Dental Care

## Why

### Oral Health is Important

Oral health is an important part of your overall health! Pregnancy can increase your risk for oral health problems. Hormonal changes in your body while pregnant can make your gums sore, puffy, and red if you do not brush and floss daily. If not treated, this can lead to tooth loss.

Baby teeth are small, but they are important! After your baby is born, you can give them a healthy start by taking care of their gums and teeth. Once they get their first tooth, establish a daily brushing routine.

## Did You Know?

Pregnant women with Medicaid are eligible for regular dental cleanings and necessary oral healthcare throughout their pregnancy.

## Our Clinic Services

We offer preventative dental care, including dental check-ups, sealants, fluoride treatments, and teeth cleanings. We also provide restorative care, including fillings, crowns, and root canals. We also offer acute dental care for toothaches and dental emergencies, so you don't have to live with oral pain.

## Schedule an Appointment!

 (979) 846-2500

## Is the Dentist Safe While Pregnant?

- Oral health care is safe, important, and recommended during all trimesters and should not be postponed or avoided during pregnancy.
- Pregnant women should make a dental appointment early in pregnancy.
- Women should visit the dentist for cleanings, exams, and any treatment needed to maintain or improve their oral health during pregnancy.

## Brushing for Two!

Keeping your teeth healthy can help your baby's teeth stay healthy as well. After your baby is born, we care for their teeth and gums, too.

**Healthy communities begin with healthy smiles!**

# Is it morning *Sickness*?

## What is morning sickness and what causes it?

Nausea and vomiting that happen during pregnancy, especially during the first part of pregnancy, often are called “morning sickness.” Despite its name, morning sickness can occur at any time of the day.

Although no one is certain what causes morning sickness, increasing levels of hormones during pregnancy may play a role.

## How long does it last and how will it impact my pregnancy?

In most women, symptoms of nausea and vomiting are mild and go away after the middle of pregnancy.

Most mild cases of nausea and vomiting do not harm your health or your baby’s health. Morning sickness does not mean your baby is sick.

## When is morning sickness considered severe?

Morning sickness is considered severe if you cannot keep any food or fluids down and begin to lose weight. This condition is called hyperemesis gravidarum and is treated by:

- Your healthcare provider will first find out whether your nausea and vomiting are due to morning sickness or if there is another medical cause.
- If other causes are ruled out, certain medications can be given. Vitamin B6 may be suggested first. Doxylamine, a medication found in over-the-counter sleep aids, may be added if vitamin B6 alone does not relieve symptoms.
- Drugs that combat nausea and vomiting may be prescribed. If you are dehydrated from loss of fluids, you may need to receive fluids through an intravenous (IV) line.

There is no cure for morning sickness. Some research suggests that women who are taking a multivitamin supplement regularly at the time they become pregnant are less likely to have severe cases of morning sickness.

If you experience morning sickness, there are several things you can do that might help you feel better. You may need to try more than one of these remedies:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Avoid smells that bother you.
- Eat five or six small meals each day instead of three large meals.
- Eat a few crackers before you get out of bed in the morning to help settle your stomach.
- Eat small high protein snacks (like milk or a cup of yogurt) throughout the day.
- Avoid spicy foods and fatty foods.

**Herbal supplements may help in some cases:** Ginger may be helpful for some women. Taking three 250-milligram capsules of ginger a day plus another capsule right before bed may help relieve nausea. Remember to talk with your health care provider before taking any herbal medication or supplement or trying any treatment. You also can try ginger ale or ginger tea made with real ginger.



## Or should I be *Worried?*

It is not unusual to feel anxious and nervous about your changing body during pregnancy. While most of the time changes are normal, sometimes problems do arise. If you are having a problem or have questions, feel free to call your clinic or health care provider. We want to be available to answer any questions you might have. The following are signs and symptoms that you always need to let us help you with:

- When did the bleeding start? Is it bright red, pink or brown? How much? Are you saturating a panty liner or pad, or do you just notice it when you wipe? Are you having pain with the bleeding? Are you passing clots and if you are how large are they? Have you had an accident or fall?
- Are you having frequency or urgency? Are you having any low abdominal pain? Are you running a fever or experiencing chills? Are you having any back pain? Are you having any nausea or vomiting?
- How much have you vomited today? When is the last time you were able to keep food or liquid down? Are you running a fever? Are you able to rest? Are you dizzy or lightheaded?
- When did the pain start? Where in your abdomen are you hurting? Are you running a fever? Are you having nausea and vomiting? Are you having any vaginal bleeding? Is the pain constant or does it come and go?

## Am I drinking enough *Water?*

During pregnancy you should drink 8 to 12 cups (64 to 96 ounces) of water every day. Water has many benefits. It aids digestion and helps form the amniotic fluid around the fetus. Water also helps nutrients circulate in the body and helps waste leave the body.

**If you have more questions about this topic or any pregnancy related issue, contact your Provider!**



# What is safe to take?

## A guide to over-the-counter medications

During pregnancy anything you take, your baby takes too. It is important to always check with your health care provider before starting a medication. The following medications are considered safe and are available to you without a prescription.

If you have this:	Try this:
Seasonal allergies	Diphenhydramine (Beadryl), Loratidine (Claritin), Cetirizine (Zyrtec), or Chlorpheniramine
Stuffy nose	Chlorpheniramine (Chlor-Trimeton), or Saline nasal spray
Cough	Guaifenesin and dextromethorphan syrup (Robitussin DM) Guaifenesin and dextromethorphan tablets (Mucinex DM)
Constipation	Psyllium (Metamucil), or Docusate sodium (Colace)
Diarrhea	Kaopectate, or Imodium
Headache or muscle aches	Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
Heartburn	Choose an antacid that has calcium (ex. Tums) or magnesium (ex. Maalox)
Nausea	Emetrol, or B6 Vitamin with Unisom
Rash	Hydrocortisone cream or ointment, Caladryl lotion or cream, Benadryl cream, or Benadryl
Yeast infection	Monistat cream, or Gyne-Lotrimin cream
Sleep aides	Tylenol PM or Unisom
Acid reflux	Pepcid, Zantac, or Tums
Gas	Gas X or Simethicone

## Medications to Avoid

Ibuprofen (Advil), Naproxen (Aleve), Aspirin, Pepto-Bismol, Alka-Seltzer, Senokot, Phenylephrine.

# What is safe to take?

## A guide to vaccines during pregnancy

### Tdap

#### What is pertussis?

Pertussis (also called whooping cough) is a highly contagious disease that causes severe coughing. People with pertussis may make a “whooping” sound when they try to breathe. In newborns, pertussis can be a life-threatening illness. It can be prevented with a vaccine called the tetanus toxoid, reduced diphtheria toxoid and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine.

#### I am pregnant. Should I get a Tdap shot?

Yes, if you have never received a Tdap vaccine before, you should receive it late in your second trimester (ie, after 20 weeks of gestation) or third trimester of pregnancy. The Tdap vaccine is an effective and safe way to protect you and your baby from serious illness and complications of pertussis.

#### During which trimester is it safe to have a Tdap shot?

Experts recommend that the Tdap vaccine be administered to pregnant women late in the second trimester (ie, after 20 weeks of gestation) or third trimester of pregnancy.

#### I am breastfeeding my baby. Is it safe to get vaccinated with Tdap?

Yes. A Tdap shot can safely be given to breastfeeding mothers if they did not get the vaccine while they were pregnant.

#### I did not receive my Tdap shot during pregnancy. Do I still need to be vaccinated?

Yes, if you needed the vaccine and you were not vaccinated with Tdap during pregnancy, you should receive your Tdap shot immediately after your baby is born.

### The Flu

#### I am pregnant. Should I get the influenza vaccine (flu shot)?

Getting a flu shot is the best way to protect you and your baby from serious illness from the flu. Pregnant women and their babies have a higher risk of serious complications from the flu. The flu shot given during pregnancy protects women and their newborns. You need a flu shot each year because the flu viruses targeted by the vaccine can change from year to year.

#### Why is it important for pregnant women to get the flu shot?

The flu is a mild-to-severe illness that can cause fever, body aches, sore throat, cough, and fatigue. Pregnant women who get the flu can become much sicker than women who get the flu when they are not pregnant. Pregnant women who get the flu often need more medical visits and frequently need to be admitted to the hospital for observation and treatment.

#### During which trimester is it safe to get a flu shot?

The flu shot can be safely given during any trimester. Pregnant women should get the shot as soon as possible when it becomes available.

#### Can I get the Tdap and flu shots at the same time?

You can get the tetanus toxoid, reduced diphtheria toxoid, and acellular pertussis (Tdap) shot and the flu shot in the same visit. Receiving these shots at the same time is safe and effective.

#### Will the flu shot give me the flu?

You cannot get the flu from the flu shot.

# COVID-19 Vaccine

## Why do I need the COVID 19 Vaccine?

Although the overall risks are low, if you are pregnant or were recently pregnant, you are:

- More likely to get very sick from COVID-19 compared to people who are not pregnant. People who get very sick from COVID-19 may require hospitalization, admission to an intensive care unit (ICU), or use of a ventilator or special equipment to breathe. Severe COVID-19 illness can also lead to death.
- At increased risk of complications that can affect your pregnancy and developing baby. For example, COVID-19 during pregnancy increases the risk of delivering a preterm or stillborn infant.

## Safety and Effectiveness of COVID-19 Vaccination during Pregnancy

Evidence continues to build showing that COVID-19 vaccination before and during pregnancy is safe, effective, and beneficial to both the pregnant person and the baby. The benefits of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine outweigh any potential risks of vaccination during pregnancy. Below is a brief summary of the growing evidence:

- COVID-19 vaccines do not cause COVID-19. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain live virus.
- Data from vaccine safety monitoring systems have not found any safety concerns for people who received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine late in pregnancy or for their babies.
- Scientists have not found an increased risk for miscarriage among pregnant people who received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine just before or during early pregnancy (before 20 weeks of pregnancy).

## I heard COVID 19 vaccines cause infertility...

At this point, many people have gotten pregnant after receiving COVID-19 vaccines. Studies show that vaccinated women are able to get pregnant at the same rates as women who are unvaccinated. There is no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems in women or men.

## How safe is it for my breastfeeding child?

No evidence suggests that the COVID-19 vaccines are harmful to either breastfeeding mothers or babies who consume their breast milk. The science behind this is summarized by LactMed, a database of scientific information on breastfeeding.

## How does this impact my baby's chances of getting COVID 19?

The vaccines you get during pregnancy or while breastfeeding may help protect your baby. That's because vaccination produces antibodies that can be passed to a fetus or breastfeeding baby.

Research shows that coronavirus antibodies from vaccinated moms can remain in some infants' bodies for at least 6 months, potentially helping them fight off infection and hospitalization from COVID-19. Reports also show that vaccinated moms have antibodies in their breast milk, which could help protect their breastfeeding babies.

## Do I really need a booster?

Studies found that receiving a booster dose with an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy significantly increased the levels of antibodies found in umbilical cord blood. This means that getting a COVID-19 booster during pregnancy can help further protect babies against COVID-19.

# Healthy Relationships

**A healthy relationship means that both you and your partner are:**

## **Communicative**

You talk openly about problems and listen to one another. You respect each other's opinions.

## **Respectful**

You value each other's opinions, feelings, and needs, and give each other the freedom to be yourself and be loved for who you are.

## **Trusting**

You believe what your partner has to say and don't feel the need to "prove" each other's trustworthiness.

## **Honest**

You're honest with each other but can still keep some things private.

## **Equal**

You make decisions together and hold each other to the same standards. You and your partner have equal say with regard to major decisions within the relationship. All partners have access to the resources they need.

## **Setting boundaries**

You enjoy spending time apart, alone, or with others. You respect each other's need for time and space apart. You communicate with each other about what you are and aren't comfortable with.

## **Practicing consent**

You talk openly about sexual and reproductive choices together. All partners always willingly consent to sexual activity and can safely discuss what you are and aren't comfortable with.

## **Parenting supportively**

All partners are able to parent in a way that they feel comfortable with. You communicate together about the needs of the child(ren), as well as the needs of the parents.

**ASK YOUR PROVIDER ABOUT OUR NURSE FAMILY** *Partnership*

Nurse-Family Partnership works by having specially educated nurses regularly visit young, first-time moms-to-be, starting early in the pregnancy and continuing through the child's second birthday

# UnHealthy Relationships

**You may be in an unhealthy or abusive relationship if your partner is:**

## **Non-Communicative or communicates harmfully**

When problems arise, you fight or you don't discuss them at all. Your partner communicates or in a way that is hurtful, threatening, insulting, or demeaning.

## **Disrespectful or mistreats the other**

You or your partner behave inconsiderately toward the other. Your partner doesn't respect your thoughts, feelings, decisions, opinions, or physical safety.

## **Not trusting or makes untrue accusations**

You or your partner refuse to believe the other or feel entitled to invade their privacy. Your partner accuses you of cheating or breaking the boundaries of your relationship. Your partner may escalate by creating situations where you need to "prove" your trustworthiness, like handing over your social media passwords.

## **Manipulates children**

Your partner uses your children to gain power and control over you, including telling them lies or baseless criticisms about you.

## **Taking control or fully controls the other**

You or your partner takes steps to suggest that one's desires and choices are more important than another's. There's no equality in your relationship. One partner makes decisions without the other's input, or makes all of the decisions in certain parts of the relationship, like finances.

## **Isolating**

Your partner restricts your contact with other people, either in person or online. Your partner controls where you travel, who you talk to, or how you spend your time. This often includes physical or emotional isolation from your family and friends.

## **Pressured into sexual activity or forces sexual activity**

One partner uses pressure or guilt against another to coerce them into sexual acts or reproductive choices. Your partner forces or pressures you to engage in sexual activity you don't want to. Your partner controls your reproductive choices by sabotaging birth control, or by pressuring you to have or not have children.

## **Ignoring boundaries**

It's assumed or implied that only one partner is responsible for making informed decisions.

## **Unequal economically or controls finances**

Finances aren't discussed. Financial decisions are made unilaterally or it's assumed that only one partner is in charge of finances. Your partner controls the money and access to resources, including preventing you from earning an income or accessing their own income. Having an open, respectful dialogue about finances is not an option.



# Seatbelts during pregnancy

## Should I wear a seatbelt during pregnancy?

YES—doctors recommend it. Buckling up through all stages of your pregnancy is the single most effective action you can take to protect yourself and your baby in a crash. NEVER Drive or ride in a car without buckling up.

## What is the right way to wear a seatbelt while pregnant?

SHOULDER BELT away from your neck (but not off your shoulder) across your chest (between your breasts) be sure to remove any slack from your seat belt. LAP BELT secured below your belly so that it fits snugly across your hips and pelvic bone.

## Should I adjust my seat?

Yes adjust it to a comfortable, upright position keep as much distance as possible between your belly and the steering wheel comfortably reach the steering wheel and pedals. If you need additional room, consider adjusting the steering wheel or having someone else drive, if possible. If you're a passenger, move your seat back as far as possible. To minimize the gap between your shoulder and the seat belt, avoid reclining your seat more than necessary. Avoid letting your belly touch the steering wheel.

## What if my car or truck has airbags?

You still need to wear your seat belt properly. Air bags are designed to work with seat belts, not replace them. Without a seat belt, you could crash into the vehicle interior, other passengers, or be ejected from the vehicle.

## If my car has a disabling switch for the airbag, should I turn it off?

NO. Doctors recommend that pregnant women wear seat belts and leave air bags turned on. Seat belts and air bags work together to provide the best protection for you and your unborn child.

## What should I do if I am involved in a crash?

Seek immediate medical attention, even if you think you are not injured, regardless of whether you were the driver or a passenger.

# Cats during pregnancy

## Do I have to give up my cat during pregnancy?

No. You should follow these helpful tips to reduce your risk of exposure to Toxoplasma:

- Avoid changing cat litter if possible. If no one else can change it, wear disposable gloves and wash your hands with soap and water afterwards.
- Change the cat litter box daily and do not get a new cat while pregnant.
- Feed your cat commercial dry or canned food, not raw or undercooked meats.
- Keep cats indoors and avoid stray cats, especially kittens.
- Wear gloves when gardening as soil or sand might be contaminated with cat feces that contain Toxoplasma.



# Exercise During Pregnancy

## Benefits of Exercise During Pregnancy:

- Reduces back pain
- Eases constipation
- May decrease your risk of gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, and cesarean birth
- Promotes healthy weight gain during pregnancy
- Improves your overall general fitness and strengthens your heart and blood vessels
- Helps you to lose the baby weight after your baby is born

If you have never exercised before, pregnancy is a great time to begin. Regular physical activity during pregnancy can start you on a path toward a healthier lifestyle for the rest of your life. You also will set a good example for your family.

## Before You Start Exercising:

If you are healthy and your pregnancy is normal, continuing or starting regular physical activity is safe. Physical activity does not increase your chances of miscarriage, low birth weight, or early delivery. Discussing exercise with your provider during your prenatal visits is important. If you have the following conditions or pregnancy complications, you should not exercise during pregnancy:

- Certain types of heart and lung disease
- Cervical insufficiency or cerclage, pregnant with multiples, risk factors for preterm labor
- Placenta previa after 26 weeks of pregnancy
- Preterm labor during this pregnancy or ruptured membranes (your water has broken)
- Preeclampsia or pregnancy-induced high blood pressure
- Severe anemia

## Guidelines for Physical Activity During Pregnancy:

Ideally, you should get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week. Aerobic activities move the large muscles of the body (like those in the legs and arms) in a rhythmic way. Moderate-intensity means you move enough to raise your heart rate and start sweating, and you can talk normally, but you cannot sing.

Learn More 

## Count your baby's kicks

- Counting your unborn baby's movements are a way to assure that your baby is healthy.
- Most women will start to feel fetal movement between 18 and 22 weeks in their pregnancy. If you feel that your baby is moving less than normal or you have a high risk pregnancy, you may be advised to do daily fetal movement kick counts starting at about 28 weeks in your pregnancy (3 months before your due date).

Learn More 

# Am I in *Labor*?

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## **What do labor pains feel like?**

- When they first start, contractions usually feel like cramps during your period.
- Sometimes you feel pain in your back. Most often, contractions feel like muscles pulling painfully in your lower belly.
- At first, the contractions will probably be 15 to 20 minutes apart. They will not feel too painful. As labor goes on, the contractions get stronger, closer together, and more painful.

## **How do I time the contractions?**

Time your contractions by counting the number of minutes from the start of one contraction to the start of the next contraction.

## **What should I do when the contractions start?**

If it is night and you can sleep, sleep. If it happens during the day, here are some things you can do to take care of yourself at home:

- Walk. If the pains you are having are real labor, walking will make the contractions come faster and harder. If the contractions are not going to continue and be real labor, walking will make the contractions slow down.
- Take a shower or bath. This will help you relax.
- Eat. Labor is a big event. It takes a lot of energy.
- Drink water. Not drinking enough water can cause false labor (contractions that hurt but do not open your cervix). If this is true labor, drinking water will help you have strength to get through your labor.
- Take a nap. Get all the rest you can.
- Get a massage. If your labor is in your back, a strong massage on your lower back may feel very good. Getting a foot massage is always good.
- Don't panic. You can do this. Your body was made for this. You are strong!

## **When should I go to the hospital or call my provider?**

- Your contractions have been 5 minutes apart or less for at least 1 hour.
- If your contractions are so painful you cannot walk or talk during one.
- Your bag of water breaks. (You may have a big gush of water or just water that runs down your legs when you walk.)

## **Are there other reasons to call my health care provider?**

- Yes, you should call your provider at HealthPoint or go to the hospital if you start to bleed like you are having a period—blood that soaks your underwear or runs down your legs, if you have sudden severe pain, if your baby has not moved for several hours, or if you are leaking green fluid.
- The rule is as follows: If you are very concerned about something, call.

# Blues after your baby is born

During your baby's first few days of life, it's normal to feel emotional highs and lows. These are commonly known as the "baby blues." With the baby blues, you might feel happy one minute and tearful or overwhelmed the next. You might feel angry, sad, irritable, or discouraged for no reason. Feeling this way doesn't mean that you're a "bad" mom or that you don't love your baby. 80% of new moms experience these feelings. Thankfully, most women report they go away in about 2 weeks.

## What are the most common baby blues symptoms?

The baby blues look a different for everyone, but in general, you may feel on edge, exhausted, and tearful for no reason. You may even feel guilty that you're feeling this way during what's supposed to be a joyful time.

Other symptoms may include:

- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Mood swings
- Irritability
- Restlessness

## What causes the baby blues?

Researchers don't know for sure what causes the baby blues, but they think it's a mix of physical changes and emotional factors that happen after giving birth.

## How long do the baby blues last?

The baby blues usually set in around two to three days after giving birth and go away for most women in about two weeks. However, 10 - 20% of moms will develop a more serious condition known as postpartum depression (PPD). If feelings of sadness, irritability, or extreme worry persist for more than two weeks, talk to your provider.

## How to cope with the baby blues?

There's no specific cure for the baby blues, but there are ways you can care for your needs and feel better during this challenging time. They include:

- Ask for help
- Rest when you can
- Move your body
- Connect with your community
- Fuel your body with healthy foods

## When should you call your provider about the baby blues?

Symptoms of the baby blues that persist beyond two weeks could be a sign of a more serious condition, like postpartum depression. Symptoms include:

- Appetite changes
- Not sleeping or sleeping too much
- Obsessing about baby's safety
- Moment of rage
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Loss of interest in things you love
- Thoughts of wanting to escape
- Difficulty concentrating
- Suicidal thoughts

## Things to remember:

The Baby Blues or postpartum depression are not a character flaw or a weaknesses. Sometimes they are a complication of giving birth.

# After you give birth

You prepare for the birth of your baby for many months during pregnancy and then the first months at home after your baby is born can be a quiet, gentle time of getting to know this new person who has come to live in your home. For most women it is not all quiet or sweet and for some it is a very hard time.

## **New mothers and their families face challenges in the first few months:**

- Your body and your hormones have to get back to normal.
- You and the baby will be learning to breastfeed.
- Babies only sleep a few hours at a time. The whole family will have a hard time getting enough sleep.
- You and your family need to learn how to parent this new family member.
- If you have a partner, you have to figure out how to stay together and start to have sex again.
- You may have to figure out how to keep from getting pregnant again right away.
- You may need to return to work and find day care.

## **How long will it take for my body to get back to normal?**

- Some changes occur quickly. Others will not happen so quickly.
- Your uterus, cervix and vagina will all shrink to their normal, nonpregnant size in about 2 weeks. Your vagina may be tender and dry for a few months — especially if you are breastfeeding.
- If you had stitches or hemorrhoids, your “bottom” will be sore for 2 weeks or more.

## **How long will it take for my body to get back to normal, continued...**

- For some women who have problems urinating, it can take several months for you to be able to hold your urine when you cough or sneeze or suddenly pick up something heavy.
- Your breast milk will “come in” 2 to 3 days after the birth of your baby. It will take 6 to 8 weeks for you and the baby to get the hang of breastfeeding and find a pattern.
- During these first weeks, you can have engorged breasts at times and often leak milk.
- Your stomach and intestines all have to fall back into place. You may have a lot of gas for a few weeks.
- You may be constipated—especially if you are breastfeeding.
- Your stretched stomach muscles can recover in a few weeks, but for some women it takes longer (6 months to 1 year) to recover.
- If you had a cesarean delivery, you may have pain or numbness around the incision for 6 months or more.
- Losing the weight you gained during pregnancy will probably take 6 months to a year. Patience! It took 40 weeks to get here. Give yourself 40 weeks to get back.

# After you give birth

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## What can I expect when my hormones change?

- About 75% of all women will get the “blues.” This usually starts about 3 days after the birth of your baby. You may cry easily and feel very, very tired. A few women become very depressed.
- If you had a cesarean delivery or your new baby was sick, you are at higher risk for depression. Call your provider right away if you cannot care for yourself or your baby, if you feel very nervous or worried, if you cannot stop crying, or if you are having thoughts of hurting yourself or your baby.

## What is circumcision?

At birth, baby boys have loose skin that covers the head of the penis. This is called the “foreskin.” When all or part of the foreskin of the penis is removed, it is called “circumcision.”

## Why is circumcision done?

Circumcision is done for religious, cultural, appearance, or health reasons. Some religious groups believe their boys should be circumcised. Some parents choose circumcision so that their son will have a penis that looks like his father’s. Other people choose circumcision because they believe it is cleaner or will protect the boy or man from infection or cancer.

## Is circumcision cleaner? Does it protect from infection or cancer?

Regular washing with soap and water will keep any penis clean. Circumcision does not make the penis cleaner. Uncircumcised boys do need to be taught to clean beneath their foreskin, just like they need to be taught to wash their hands or brush their teeth. Circumcision does seem to protect against some types of infection or cancer. Cancer of the penis is one type of cancer that circumcision may prevent. However, cancer of the penis is very rare. Three hundred thousand circumcisions would need to be done to prevent one case.

## What happens during a circumcision?

- Your health care provider will typically perform the circumcision in the hospital before you go home.
- Religious circumcisions are most often done at home or in a synagogue.
- Before the procedure, some providers inject a small amount of anesthesia at the base of the penis to block the pain.
- There are different ways to do a circumcision. Ask your provider about the one they plan to perform.
- After the circumcision, petroleum jelly and sometimes gauze may be put over the wound. This protects the end of the penis while it heals.



# Breastfeeding *Benefits*

## For Mom:

- Breastfeeding may make it easier to lose the weight you gained during pregnancy.
- Women who breastfeed longer have lower rates of type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.
- Women who breastfeed have lower rates of breast cancer and ovarian cancer.
- Breastfeeding triggers the release of oxytocin that causes the uterus to contract and may decrease the amount of bleeding you have after giving birth.

## For Baby:

- Breast milk has the right amount of fat, sugar, water, protein, and minerals needed for a baby's growth and development.
- Breast milk is easier to digest than formula, and breastfed babies have less gas, fewer feeding problems, and less constipation.
- Breast milk contains antibodies that protect infants from certain illnesses, such as ear infections, diarrhea, respiratory illnesses, and allergies.
- Breastfed infants have a lower risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- If your baby is born preterm, breast milk can help reduce the risk of many of the short-term and long-term health problems.

# Exercise after *Pregnancy*

## Exercise has benefits for postpartum women.

- It helps strengthen and tone abdominal muscles.
- It boosts energy.
- It may help prevent postpartum depression.
- It promotes better sleep.
- It relieves stress.
- It can help you lose the extra weight that you may have gained during pregnancy.

## When can I start exercising after pregnancy?

If you had a healthy pregnancy and a normal vaginal delivery, you should be able to start exercising again soon after the baby is born. Usually, it is safe to begin exercising a few days after giving birth — or as soon as you feel ready. If you had a cesarean birth or complications, ask your provider when it is safe to begin exercising again.

## How much should I exercise after I have a baby?

After having a baby, you should get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week. You can divide the 150 minutes into 30-minute workouts on 5 days of the week or into smaller 10-minute sessions throughout each day. For example, you could go for three 10-minute walks each day.

*Learn More* →



# Packing for the big day!

## Hospital Bag Packing List Essentials (and a few non-essentials) for Mom

- **Nursing bra** - This supports swollen, tender breasts, and keeps breast pads in place.
- **Sports bra** - Many women find these extremely useful during a water birth or when using the birth pool; they are also good for suppressing lactation if you are not planning on breastfeeding.
- **Breast pads** - You will need these whether or not you are breastfeeding because they stop leaks by absorbing milk.
- **Nursing pillows** - These can be used if you are breastfeeding or bottle feeding; either way they reduce the strain on your arms, neck, and back when feeding your baby.
- **Nightgown and robe** - Make sure they open in the front if you are planning on breastfeeding.
- **Slippers** - During early labor it is always recommended to walk around. These will also come in handy as you make trips to the nursery to check on your new baby.
- **Socks** - Many women complain of their feet being cold during the delivery, so have a couple of pairs in case one pair becomes soiled.
- **Going-home outfit** - Choose one that fit when you were around 6 months pregnant.
- **Toiletries** - To be more comfortable, take a toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, lip balm, makeup, hairbrush, shampoo, soap, lotion, hairdryer, etc.
- **Sanitary pads** - The hospital can provide you with these, but many women feel more comfortable when they bring their favorite brand with them. Remember, you are going to need a pad designed for a heavier flow.
- **Hair clip or band if you have long hair** - Women with long hair like to have it pulled out of their faces during labor and delivery.
- **Pillow from home** - This makes you more comfortable; make sure you have a different colored pillowcase on it to distinguish it from hospital pillows.
- **Extra washcloths** - These also need to be colored to distinguish them from the hospital's washcloths.
- **Magazines** - You will not have a lot of downtime, but there could be a few minutes here and there when you could read.
- **Mints or breath strips** - Many women experience nausea/vomiting during labor and delivery; these will help freshen your mouth or the mouths of your support people.
- **Lollipops or other hard candies** - These can alleviate dry mouth.
- **Glasses** and contact case
- **Breastfeeding book** - Take along any reference books that would be helpful.
- **Baby book** - The nursery will take your baby book and put your baby's footprints in it.
- **Large envelope /file folder** - This may be used to store any loose paperwork.

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