# Having a healthy pregnancy and baby

Planning is important during and after pregnancy. We're here to help. Here's what you can do to help make sure you have a healthy pregnancy, birth and post-birth experience.

1. Tell your healthcare provider about your pregnancy.
2. Go to your prenatal and post-delivery visits. If you have to miss a visit, call the doctor's office and schedule a new visit.

## Having a prenatal visit within the first three months of your pregnancy matters.

You should see your doctor:

- Between weeks 6 and 8 (around day 42): for a prenatal visit
- Between weeks 8 and 28: once a month
- Between weeks 28 and 36: every two weeks
- Between week 36 and the birth of your baby: every week
- Between 7 and 84 days after delivery

Your doctor may want to see you more often for testing. They can also watch you and your baby for any issues.

3. Tell your healthcare provider about any concerns you have.
4. Take the prenatal vitamins your doctor prescribes. Prenatal vitamins have extra nutrients to help your baby grow and be healthy.
5. Don't take drugs (like herbal medicine, over-the-counter vitamins, cold and flu medicine, or heartburn pills) unless prescribed by your doctor.
6. Eat healthy food and balanced meals.
7. Don't try to diet, because if you're eating right, gaining between 24 and 35 pounds is normal.
8. Drink between six and eight glasses of water a day. Keeping enough water in your body matters for you and your baby.
9. Don't drink caffeine, soda, or alcohol (even beer and wine).
10. Reduce stress and talk to your doctor if you feel too much stress.
11. Try to be on your feet for no more than 5 hours at a time.
12. Do light exercise like yoga or walking.
13. Talk to your healthcare provider before starting any exercise program or activity.
14. Don't smoke. Stay away from people who are smoking.
15. Spend time with helpful, positive people.
16. Read, go to classes, and find out as much as you can about the work your body is doing to grow your healthy baby.

## Common pregnancy conditions

**Hyperemesis**

Signs of hyperemesis include:

- Feeling faint or weak
- Infrequent urination
- Inability to keep food or liquids down for more than 24 hours

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- Severe nausea
- Stomach pain or a fever
- Very dark yellow urine
- Weight loss from throwing up

If you think you have any of these issues, tell your doctor. You may need treatment.

## Premature labor

If you've previously given birth to a baby before 37 weeks, you may need weekly shots of 17P. It's a progesterone (hormone) medicine. It can help prevent a preterm birth for some women. And it can help protect your baby.

Talk to your doctor about 17P shots. They may suggest you start getting the shots between weeks 16 and 20 of your pregnancy. You may continue getting shots through week 26.

## Common aches and pains

Aches and pains are a normal part of pregnancy. As your baby grows, your aches and pains may increase. Talk to your doctor about any pain you have, especially if the pain comes on fast.

Common aches and pains during pregnancy include:

- Abdominal pain: sharp pain in the stomach because your growing baby causes stretching
- Low back pain: caused because you are carrying more weight
  - To stay comfortable:
    - Keep your back straight
    - Hold your head up when you walk
    - Wear supportive shoes
- Shortness of breath: breathing space gets smaller as baby grows
  - If you become short of breath during an activity:
    - Take your time
    - Breathe slowly
- Heartburn: common late in pregnancy because:
  - Your baby presses against your stomach
  - Food is harder to digest

To prevent heartburn, eat small, frequent meals and avoid spicy food

- Constipation: common late in pregnancy
  - To help prevent constipation:
    - Drink lots of water
    - Eat fruits, veggies and whole-grains
    - Ask your doctor if there is medicine you can take
- Hemorrhoids: swollen tissue and veins in the anal area may:
  - Be triggered by constipation
  - Result from your growing baby putting pressure on that area
  - Be avoided by having soft bowel movements and/or by eating fiber
- Stretch marks: appear on most pregnant women, usually in the later months of pregnancy, and:
  - Are caused by extra weight stretching your skin
  - Usually appear on the lower part of your stomach
  - Can appear on your breasts, thighs, and arms

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