

Special Delivery

Third Trimester Maternity Care Newsletter from BlueChoice® HealthPlan



Your Third Trimester

Don't skip the doctor

Ongoing prenatal care continues to be vital for your health and your baby's health. You will continue to see your doctor at least twice a month until around 36 weeks. After that, you will go in every week until delivery.

These doctor visits will be fairly routine. You can expect to have your weight and blood pressure checked, as well as your baby's heartbeat and movement. If your blood type is Rh negative and you haven't had your Rhogam injection yet, you may receive one during the doctor visit between your 28th and 30th week of pregnancy. The Tdap vaccine is also recommended beginning at 27 weeks to protect you and your baby from whooping cough, tetanus and diphtheria. Don't forget to get a flu shot if it is flu season.

You may also have a simple test to check for bacteria called Group B strep, which can be treated before delivery if needed. The Group B Strep test checks for a common bacterium that is harmless, and is often found in your intestines or lower genital tract. Most babies born to women with Group B Strep are healthy, but a few who are infected during labor can become critically ill. Group B Strep can be treated early or during labor with antibiotics if needed. Your provider may also do a pelvic exam to check your cervix.

– Continued next page

Kicks Count

Research shows that counting your baby's kicks beginning at the 28th week of pregnancy may help reduce the risk of stillbirth.

Here's how:

- Try to do the count at the same time each day.
- Choose the time of day when your baby seems to be most active. For many women, this is right after eating a meal.
- Get into a comfortable position. You can lie down or sit in a chair with your feet up.
- Use a chart to write down the time you start counting. Each movement counts. That could include a kick, twist or a roll.
- Count until you reach 10 movements. Write down the amount of time it took to count to 10 kicks. For most moms, this takes less than 30 minutes, but it can take as long as two hours.

Call your doctor immediately. Don't wait until the next day to call if:

- You do not feel 10 movements within two hours.
- You notice a drastic change in the number of kicks or type of movements your baby is making.
- You have not felt your baby move all day.

– Continued from page 1

The need for additional tests will depend on any risk factors you have. Extra tests may be ordered if:

- You have high blood pressure.
- You have diabetes.
- You have kidney or heart disease.
- You are pregnant with more than one baby and there are complications.
- Your pregnancy has gone past your due date.
- Your baby has growth problems.
- You have too much or too little amniotic fluid.

You will probably have lots of questions as your due date approaches. Write them down and make sure to discuss them with your doctor and your maternity care nurse. If you have specific wishes for labor, be sure to discuss them with your provider before delivery.

Breastfeed for the Best Start

Although you can't guarantee your birth experience will be exactly the way you want it, planning ahead and letting your caregivers, family and friends know your wants and needs can make the event more enjoyable and breastfeeding more successful. If you plan to breastfeed, it's important to get started right away. For the first two hours after delivery, most babies are more alert and willing to nurse. The sooner you start breastfeeding, the greater the chance of success.

Here are a few more tips:

- **Limit visitors.** This way, you will cut down on distractions and allow plenty of time for you and your baby to get acquainted. Too many visitors may overwhelm you and your baby during this special time of getting to know each other.
- **Room in.** Keep your baby in the same room with you at all times. This will help you learn your baby's hunger cues. Feeding your baby at the first signs of hunger will calm him or her and make it easier to latch on.

- **Avoid bottles and pacifiers.** Giving your baby bottles or pacifiers may affect your milk supply. They can also cause nipple confusion.
- **See the lactation consultant.** Even if you think nursing is going well, you should still ask to see the lactation consultant. He or she can check to see how the baby is positioned, how well he or she is nursing and can even check for tongue or lip ties. The right position and a good latch can prevent soreness and other problems.
- **Plan to breastfeed exclusively.** Exclusive breastfeeding means your baby will get only your breast milk and nothing else. It is important to breastfeed for the first four to six weeks, so you can establish a good milk supply.

In most cases, breast milk is ideal for babies. Sometimes, however, a new mom may be unable to breastfeed. There are a number of infant formulas that can provide the nutrition your baby needs. Talk to your doctor if you need help choosing the formula that's best for your baby.



You're Almost There

Your due date is quickly approaching! The past few months have probably been filled with all sorts of emotions, from joy to fear, excitement to anxiety. Now, you're almost to the finish line. You may be making last-minute arrangements and preparations for your new baby's arrival.

Here are a few things to make sure you have on hand for your baby's debut:

- **Car seat.** Guarantee your bundle of joy a safe and legal ride home by buying a rear-facing infant car seat. An infant under 2 years old and less than 20 pounds must be in a rear-facing car seat in the back seat of your vehicle. Check your local fire department or police station for car seat inspection events.
- **Baby bathtub.** A tub specially designed to hold your baby is a great way to get him or her clean after all those diaper changes. Never leave your baby unattended during bath time, even briefly.
- **Stroller.** Unlike a bassinet or backpack, a stroller is essential parenting gear. But with dozens of styles to choose from, selecting the right wheels for your baby can be challenging. In general, sturdy ones with locking wheels and safety harnesses will keep your baby safe while lightening your load.
- **Diaper supplies.** You'll be going through 10 – 12 diapers a day during the first few weeks. You'll also need wipes, diaper cream or petroleum jelly for preventing diaper rash, and a diaper disposal pail. These are good items to request for a baby shower.
- **Baby keepsake book.** Preserve memories of your new baby. Don't forget to take some pictures of you before the baby is born.

If you haven't already done so, now is a good time to find a pediatrician for your baby. Some doctors will even allow you to visit the office to get acquainted with the practice and its services. **Don't forget to add your baby to your insurance policy after delivery; you'll need to complete this step for your baby's medical claims to be paid. Within 60 days of birth, you can add your newborn by visiting: https://www.blueoptionsc.com/sites/default/files/user_files/documents/qualifying_life_events.pdf.**

Blue OptionSM

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The Last Few Weeks

Improve your chance of having a healthy baby by making some important lifestyle changes today. The last few weeks of pregnancy can be a challenge. Let's face it: You're uncomfortable when you sit, walk or sleep. If you have a choice, it's best to stay pregnant until 39 – 40 weeks, unless delivery is medically indicated earlier.

Why the last few weeks are important:

- Your baby's brain and lungs are still growing. And babies born at 39 weeks are less likely to require specialized care in the hospital.
- Your baby is gaining weight. Babies born at a healthy weight have an easier time staying warm than babies born too small.
- Sometimes, babies born too early can't suck, swallow and/or stay awake long enough to eat.
- Your due date may not be exactly right. If your date is off by a week or two, your baby may be born too early.

To learn more about pregnancy and for a list of questions to ask your doctor about scheduling your birth, visit www.marchofdimes.com.

