

# Special Delivery

Welcome to Maternity Care Newsletter from BlueChoice® HealthPlan



## First Things First!

For many expectant moms, this is a happy, exciting time — but it can also be overwhelming. There's a lot to learn, but you don't have to know everything right away. You can choose to read as much as possible about your pregnancy now, or you can learn about each stage as you go along. The great thing is that your maternity coach/nurse will be with you every step of the way!

Early and regular prenatal care is essential to help keep you and your baby healthy and decrease your chances of premature delivery. You should see your health care provider once a month for the first 28 weeks of pregnancy. As you move further along in your pregnancy, you will visit the doctor more frequently. Expect weekly doctor visits for the last four weeks of your pregnancy.

It's important that you go to every prenatal visit. These visits may seem simple and routine, but they are very important. The sooner an issue is identified, the better your chances of getting it under control. Throughout your pregnancy, your provider will perform a variety of tests to keep a close eye on your and your baby's health. You also get to experience the exciting moment when you hear your baby's heartbeat and see your baby for the first time with an ultrasound.

It's equally important to schedule a postpartum visit four to six weeks after your baby is born. The postpartum appointment allows your doctor to check how you're recovering, both physically and emotionally, from childbirth.

## Add Your Baby To Your Policy

Add your newborn to your insurance as soon as possible after birth. Please confirm the requirements for adding your newborn to your policy by contacting the employer (or human resources division) of the person in your family who will add the baby to his or her policy within 30 days of the birth. Whether you choose to enroll your baby with us or with another insurer, the sooner you enroll your baby, the sooner your baby's bills will be paid!

## Genetic Screenings

Your doctor may recommend genetic screenings, including:

- First trimester screening
- Cell-Free Fetal DNA (noninvasive prenatal screening)
- Multi-Marker Screen (quad screen)

Please confirm with your insurance provider the benefit coverage for these tests and whether preauthorization is required.



# Healthy Habits To Last Two Lifetimes!

Now more than ever, it's important to make healthy lifestyle choices part of your daily routine. Get regular exercise, eat a healthy diet, drink lots of water, get plenty of rest and reduce or eliminate caffeine. You also need to avoid alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. These substances can create lifelong health problems for you and your baby.

## Get moving

Exercise during pregnancy is perfectly safe. In fact, it's recommended! Unless your provider cautions against it, you should exercise 30 minutes a day at least five days a week. Be sure to drink an extra eight-ounce serving of non-caffeinated beverages for every hour of activity you do. As with starting any new exercise regimen, talk to your provider about which exercises are best for you.

## Nutrition — you are what you eat ... and so is your baby!

Having a healthy diet is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and for your baby's long-term health. Pregnancy experts recommend you add only 300 calories a day to your diet when pregnant. You may need to add more calories if you are expecting multiples. Talk to your doctor about your specific nutritional needs. You should also drink at least eight to 10 eight-ounce servings (64 – 80 ounces total) of non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic beverages each day. Most experts say that consuming less than one 12-ounce cup of coffee (200 mg of caffeine) a day during pregnancy is safe. Avoiding dehydration can prevent many discomforts of pregnancy and reduce your risk of preterm labor.

## Weight gain — do the math!

Talk to your health care provider to find out the amount of weight you should gain during pregnancy. Here are some guidelines based on your pre-pregnancy weight:

- Average weight (BMI 18.5 to 24.9): Expect to gain about 25 to 35 pounds.
- Underweight (BMI <18.5): Expect to gain about 28 to 40 pounds.
- Overweight (BMI 25-29): Expect to gain about 15 to 25 pounds.
- Obese (BMI 30 or more): Expect to gain 11 to 20 pounds.

You can expect to gain more weight if you are carrying multiples.

## When to call your health care provider:

- Fever greater than 100.4 degrees for more than three days
- Vaginal discharge with foul odor or leaking of fluids
- Burning or pain with urination
- Contractions, with your abdomen tightening like a fist every 10 minutes or more often
- Cramping like a menstrual period
- Pelvic or rectal pressure
- Low, dull back pain despite position change
- Abdominal cramps with or without diarrhea

When in doubt, call your doctor!

## Nutritional supplements — read the label!

Getting the proper amount of nutrients is vital at every stage of life. It's especially important during pregnancy. Your health care provider may prescribe a prenatal vitamin to supplement your diet. You should make sure you are getting the recommended amounts of certain nutrients every day, either through food or vitamin supplements, especially if you are a vegetarian.

- Folic acid — 400 mcg (micrograms) additional supplement to help prevent birth defects in your child and possibly protect you from cancer or stroke.
- Iron — 27 mg (milligrams) for muscle development and to prevent anemia, preterm birth and low birth weight.
- Calcium — 1,000 mg (milligrams) for healthy teeth and bones, and nervous, muscular and circulatory systems. If you don't get enough calcium in your diet, your baby will take it from your teeth and bones.
- Vitamin D — 600 iu (international units) works with calcium to help the baby's bones and teeth develop. It also is essential for healthy skin and eyesight. All women, including those who are pregnant, need 600 international units of vitamin D a day. Good sources are milk fortified with vitamin D and fatty fish, such as salmon. Exposure to sunlight also converts a chemical in the skin to vitamin D.
- Omega-3 fatty acids (DHA) — 200 mg (milligrams) for your baby's developing brain and eyes.

\*Do not start any new supplement without first speaking with your doctor. Some supplements are not safe during pregnancy. Just because it is "natural" doesn't mean it is harmless.

\*SOURCE: [www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Nutrition-During-Pregnancy](http://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Nutrition-During-Pregnancy) .

## Text4baby ([text4baby.org](http://text4baby.org))

Text4baby is a free mobile information service designed to promote maternal and child health. An educational program of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB), text4baby provides pregnant women and new moms information to help them care for their health and give their babies the best possible start in life. HMHB is an independent company that provides health information on behalf of BlueChoice®.

Women who sign up for the service by texting BABY (or BEBE in Spanish) to 511411 will receive free text messages each week, timed to their due date or their baby's date of birth.

Visit [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org) for more information.



# Blue Option<sup>SM</sup>

BlueChoice HealthPlan of South Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

## Pregnancy and Dental Health

During pregnancy, your body undergoes hormonal changes that can affect your dental health. These changes can increase your risk of developing gum disease and affect the health of your baby.

Pregnant women tend to have more acidity in their mouths, which increases the risk of tooth decay. Vomiting can aggravate the problem by exposing the teeth to more gastric acid. The hormonal changes of pregnancy can also cause gum disease. Women who have gum disease are more likely to have a premature or low birth-weight baby. Signs of gum disease include: red or swollen gums, bad breath that won't go away, pain when chewing, tender or bleeding gums, loose or sensitive teeth, and receding gums.

The good news is, there are steps you can take to prevent gum disease. Brush your teeth at least twice a day, floss at least once a day and use a soft-bristled toothbrush.

### During your pregnancy

Also follow these steps for better dental health:

- If you are experiencing morning sickness or frequent vomiting, rinse your mouth with water or a mouth rinse. You can also rinse with a solution of one teaspoon of baking soda and one cup of water.
- Always tell your dentist you are pregnant so he or she can take steps to keep you and your baby safe.
- You should schedule a dental cleaning and examination if it has been more than six months since your last visit or you are having any dental problems.
- Conditions that require immediate treatment — such as extractions, cavity fillings (with local anesthesia) and dental X-rays (with proper shielding) — are safe and can be managed any time during pregnancy.
- Avoid frequently eating sugary snacks, because they increase your chance of developing tooth decay.
- If you develop any dental problems, see your dentist right away.

Focus on life. Focus on health. *Stay focused.*