



The First Trimester

Weeks 1-12



The Pregnancy Experience

Keeping You Healthy



Expect changes in your body

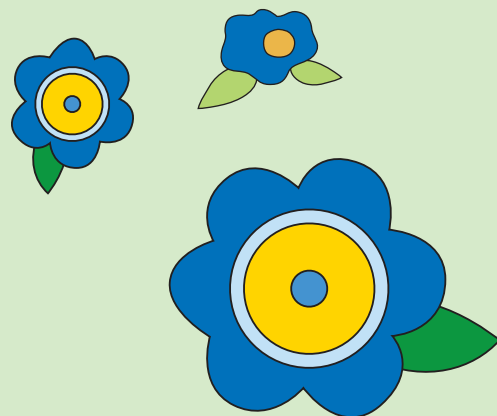
When you become pregnant, your body will naturally begin to focus on nurturing your baby. But as a result, your body might sometimes neglect its own needs. You may notice some of the following changes:

- You may feel more tired.
- You need to urinate more frequently.
- You have a heavy feeling in your pelvic area.
- Your breasts grow fuller and more tender, and your nipples may darken.
- Your appetite may change.
- You may experience mood swings as a result of hormonal changes.
- The appearance of your skin may change and wrinkles may become less apparent.
- Your hair may become less manageable.

Take care of yourself

Here are some things you can do to take care of yourself during your pregnancy.

- Get plenty of rest during the day by taking breaks or short naps.
- Avoid others who are ill or have a fever.
- Be sure to eat a well-balanced diet that contains all necessary nutrients.
- Drink plenty of water – at least 12 cups a day.



Discomforts and help

Constipation

Eat raw vegetables, whole fruit, grains and cereals.

Get plenty of exercise, such as walking.

Drink at least 12 eight-ounce glasses of water every day.

Drink a cup of warm water when you wake up.

Dizziness

Change your body positions slowly.

Eat regular meals.

Stay out of direct sunlight.

Fatigue

Be sure to lie down and rest at least once each day.

Exercise daily to build your strength and endurance.

Frequent urination

Stop drinking liquids one hour before bed or before you go out.

Headaches

Some women get headaches as a result of nasal congestion. To help ease the pain, place warm and cold wet towels (alternate every 15 to 20 minutes) over your eyes and forehead.

Dehydration can also cause headaches, so be sure to drink plenty of water.

Rest can help alleviate the pain of headaches, especially those caused by stress or anxiety.

Eyestrain can be another cause of headaches. Don't stare at computer monitors, for example, without taking periodic breaks. In addition, pregnancy is usually a bad time to get a new prescription for glasses or contact lenses.

Indigestion

Eat frequent, small meals.

Don't lie down after you eat.

Avoid greasy and spicy foods.

Leg Cramps

Elevate your legs at regular intervals throughout the day. Keep your toes pointing up and toward your nose.

Make sure you are getting enough calcium.

Lower back pain

Get plenty of rest.

Stand up straight.

When you are standing, try to place one foot on a support or riser so that it is two to three inches higher than the other foot.

Wear low-heeled shoes or flats.

When you lie down, place a pillow under your knees so that they are higher than your hips.

When you sit, use a footstool or ottoman to raise your feet.

Nausea

Snack on crackers, toast or cereal before you get up or when you begin to feel sick. The cultures in yogurt can help calm your stomach. So can ginger.

Eat frequent, small meals.

Drink lots of water between meals, but not with meals.

Avoid strong-smelling foods.

Avoid greasy or spicy foods.

Swelling of hands or feet

Lie on your left side three or four times a day.

Walk or swim regularly.

Eat three servings of food that contain protein each day.

Tender or leaking breasts

Wear a support bra during the day and to bed at night.

Place nursing pads or tissue inside your bra.

Tender gums

Massage tender gums with a soft toothbrush.

See your dentist so that he or she can examine your gums and note any changes that have occurred.

Vaginal discharge

Frequently bathe the outer vaginal area with a perfume-free soap.

Do not use vaginal sprays, powders or feminine hygiene products.

Avoid using toilet paper that is perfumed or color dyed.

Wear cotton underpants and avoid wearing pantyhose or tight pants.



Your Pregnancy in the First Trimester

Weeks 1 to 4

After the father's sperm fertilizes the mother's ovum, the fertilized egg divides itself again and again as it travels toward the uterus. Within seven to 10 days, the cluster of cells attaches itself to the wall of the uterus and cell division accelerates. By the end of the first month, major organs begin to form and the fetus is about three-sixteenths of an inch long.

At the same time, you may begin to experience morning sickness and crave foods you normally dislike or dislike foods you normally enjoy. This is because your body's chemistry is changing. You may also begin to need to urinate more frequently because your uterus is growing larger and pressing against your bladder.

Weeks 5 to 8

Though the fetus is still very small – about seven-eighths of an inch long and one-thirteenth of an ounce in weight – its brain and spinal cord are already becoming well formed. At this stage of its development, the head is the largest part of the fetus and there are small folds of skin at the side of the head that will develop into ears. Teeth are beginning to form inside the gums, and tiny buds that should grow into arms and legs are present on the body. If your baby is a boy, its penis is beginning to appear. On your body, your breasts may still be sore and your nipples may be darkening. You may also feel tired and need to rest more often.

Exercise During Pregnancy

Getting enough exercise is important during pregnancy because it can help keep you healthy and feeling your best through all the changes your body will go through. In addition, regular exercise will help give you the tone and conditioning that will help your body during labor and delivery. Here are some easy ways you can work exercise into your day:

- Focus on good posture, and adjust it as your center of gravity changes.
- Do range of motion exercises at the beginning and end of your day.

- These exercises involve moving every part of your body in many directions.
 - Sit cross-legged on the floor while you are watching TV to stretch your thighs and pelvic muscles.
 - Stretch when you're visiting with people, talking on the telephone or sitting at your desk.
 - Park your car farther away from your destination so that you can walk a bit more each day.

Exercise, but Exercise Right

Be sure to talk to your physician before you start on any exercise program. And, doing what's best for your body means taking a few precautions:

- Allow five minutes to warm up before exercise and cool down afterward.
- Workouts should generally be 30 minutes to an hour. If your time is limited, try taking three 10-minute walks a day.
- Be careful when you exercise and try to avoid activities that require sudden movement or a good sense of balance. (Your center of gravity is changing every day with increased blood and fluids for your baby.)
- You may want to compensate for the calories you burn, by consuming 100 – 200 more calories for every half hour of strenuous exercise.
- Drink one full glass of liquid for every half-hour of strenuous exercise in order to replenish what you've lost through perspiration.



Weeks 8 to 12

The fetus is developing rapidly at this stage of pregnancy. Teeth are forming in jawbones and the ears are developing. Arms, legs, hands, feet, fingers and toes have formed and nails are beginning to grow. Even the heart has started to beat. At this stage, the fetus is usually about three inches long and weighs about an ounce. You may continue to feel tired and may be experiencing morning sickness.

Make Sure You Relax

Don't let yourself get overly anxious or stressed while you're pregnant. Everything you do affects your baby, too. Here are a few things you can do to reduce stress and help yourself relax:

- Talk about what's bothering you.
- Make a change in the situation that's causing you stress.
- Take regular naps to help you regenerate.
- Eat a regular and nutritious diet.
- Take a warm bath.
- Find a diversion, such as watching a movie or reading a book.
- Eliminate the source of stress from your life.

- Don't work out on an empty stomach. If you haven't eaten for a while, have a snack 15 – 30 minutes before you begin.
- Dress appropriately in loose or stretchy clothes that breathe.
- Do everything in moderation. Make sure to take your time and don't strain. You should be able to carry on a conversation while you exercise.
- Don't let yourself get too hot. Avoid exercising in hot weather or in warm, stuffy rooms.
- After your fourth month of pregnancy, don't do exercises that require you to lie on your back. The weight of your enlarging uterus can restrict circulation for you and your baby.
- Take it easy during your last trimester. It's probably wise to refrain from exerting yourself during this time.

Work Stretching into Your Day

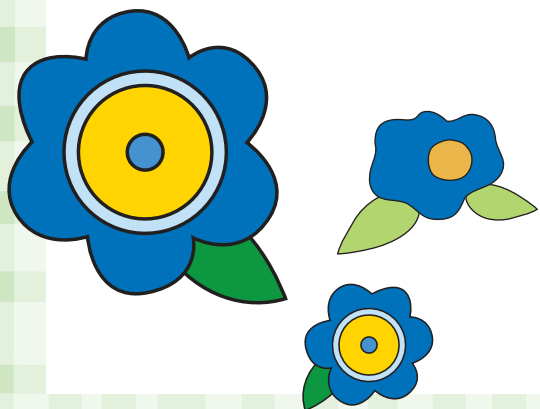
Sitting for an extended period of time may be unwise when you're pregnant and can lead to several problems, such as swollen feet. Here are some things you can do to avoid such problems:

- Get up and move around for five minutes every hour.
- Take a few deep breaths.
- Extend your lower legs, and flex your feet without pointing your toes.
- Wiggle your toes.
- Contract the muscles in your abdomen and buttocks.
- Stretch your arms above your head, and open and close your fists.
- Rotate your hands.
- Gently roll your head around.

Relaxation Techniques

There are many techniques you can use to relax, from meditation to Yoga. Here's a technique you can use throughout the day or when anxiety strikes:

- 1** Sit with your eyes closed.
- 2** Breathe through your nose. Concentrate on relaxing the muscles in your body one by one, starting at your toes and working up to your eyebrows.
- 3** When you're done, slowly open your eyes and take on the world!



Tests during pregnancy

Your physician may order a number of tests – often called antepartum or perinatal testing – throughout your pregnancy to help ensure that both you and your baby remain healthy.

Urine tests

If you think you are pregnant, your physician can order a simple urine test to help you find out. The test checks your urine for the presence of human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG) and can determine if you are pregnant as soon as two weeks after conception.

Throughout your pregnancy, your physician may order a series of urine tests to monitor your glucose levels. Glucose is an essential nutrient for your baby's development but pregnant women sometimes develop gestational diabetes, or a temporary breakdown in your body's ability to convert glucose to energy. Gestational diabetes is a fairly common condition for expectant mothers and can usually be easily and successfully treated.

Your doctor may also order a urinalysis to screen for protein levels, white blood cells, blood and bacteria in your system.

Internal examinations

Four to six weeks into your pregnancy, your physician may perform internal tests to check on specific aspects to establish a baseline for future comparison. Your physician may examine your vagina, cervix and pelvic organs, and do a Pap smear to check for cervical cancer.

Blood tests

Blood tests can also be used to check for the presence of HCG in your body and can confirm pregnancy about two weeks after conception.

Your doctor may also order a complete blood count (CBC) to determine if you are anemic, which is common among pregnant women and it can usually be remedied by taking supplementary iron.

In addition, your doctor will check your blood type (A,B, AB or O) and RH factor (positive or negative) to determine if there are any incompatibilities that may cause problems later in your pregnancy. If your blood type has a negative RH factor, the doctor may inject you with immune hemoglobin later in your pregnancy to prevent your body from producing antibodies that could harm your baby.

You may also have a rubella immunity test to see if your body has antibodies that will protect you from contracting the disease during your pregnancy.

Your glucose levels may also be monitored periodically through blood sugar tests, which will check for gestational diabetes.

STD tests

It is common for physicians to test expectant mothers for a number of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) because such diseases can be serious for newborns with immature immune systems.

Genetic tests

Your physician may order an amniocentesis or chronic villus sampling to rule out chromosomal problems or genetic disorders. Amniocenteses are more commonly used with older mothers or those who have a family history of genetic problems, such as sickle-cell anemia or Tay-Sachs disease.

Fetal heart rate monitoring

To check for problems and to evaluate your baby's ability to cope with the stress of contractions at birth, your physician will periodically monitor your baby's heart rate by placing monitoring belts around your abdomen for 20 to 40 minutes.

Ultrasound (Sonogram)

An ultrasound exam focuses high-frequency sound waves on your uterus. The waves bounce off the fetus and surrounding organs to form an image. This can help your physician ensure that your pregnancy is progressing smoothly, detect any possible problems and even help determine the sex of your baby.

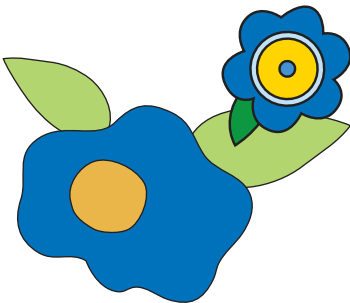
Ultrasounds can also help your physician get a more accurate estimate of the age of the fetus.

Blood pressure checks

High blood pressure can be a sign of toxemia, the spread of bacteria throughout your body, and low blood pressure can increase your risk of fainting. Your physician may periodically monitor your blood pressure to ensure it remains in an acceptable range.

Weight checks

Your baby will gain weight slowly in the beginning of your pregnancy and rapidly at the end. If you gain weight too rapidly, you may experience some swelling (edema) in your ankles, feet, hands and face.



Your weight – accounting for pounds

Most women gain between 25 and 30 pounds during pregnancy. Here's how that weight gain is likely to be distributed.

Baby	7 – 8 pounds
Placenta	1 pound
Mother's nutritional reserves	4 – 6 pounds
Larger volume of blood	4 pounds
More body fluids	3 pounds
Amniotic fluid	2 pounds
Breast enlargement	2 pounds
Uterus growth	1 pound
Total weight gain	24 – 27 pounds

Prenatal visits with your physician

Maintaining a regular schedule of prenatal visits with your physician is important to both your health and your baby's health. Regular prenatal visits will help your physician discover and treat any problems that might occur before they become serious.

Important phone numbers

OB/GYN _____

Pediatrician _____

Pharmacy _____

My prenatal appointments

Date _____ Time (am/pm) _____

My weight (pounds) _____ Fetal heart rate _____

Questions and answers _____

Date _____ Time (am/pm) _____

My weight (pounds) _____ Fetal heart rate _____

Questions and answers _____

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