

# Compendium: Prenatal Care

Prenatal care includes visits to your doctor and tests that should be done throughout the pregnancy process to make sure that you and your baby are healthy. At each visit, your OB/GYN will be able to prevent and discover potential health problems early. If your pregnancy is high-risk due to a health condition, if you are older than 35, or if you are close to your labor due date, your doctor's visits will be more frequent. Here is a summary of what you can expect in each of the pregnancy trimesters:



## ***First Trimester: (Weeks 1 to 12)***

- Your baby's heart, spine, and other organs are beginning to form.
- While all of this is happening, you may have nausea, vomiting, pelvic pain, tiredness, or gastrointestinal problems.
- You must maintain a balanced diet, including fruits, vegetables and reducing the consumption of fats, salts, and sugars. Following your doctor's recommendations, take your prenatal vitamins and folic acid. This helps your baby develop properly.

## ***Second Trimester: (Weeks 13 to 28)***

- Dizziness and nausea are expected to end. The growth of the belly is more evident, and the breasts are preparing for the breastfeeding process.
- You will be able to know the sex of the baby and feel his/her movements. The cerebral cortex begins to develop, teeth and nails are formed, and the baby will begin to hear.

## ***Third Trimester: (Weeks 29 to 40)***

- Aches and pains due to weight gain and practice contractions are common in this period.
- Hormonal changes can cause changes in mood. Stress or anxiety may also appear due to expectations about childbirth, the arrival of a new member to the family, among other reasons.
- The baby's eyes and ears become increasingly sensitive to external stimulation. Beneath the baby's skin, begins to store fat to maintain the body temperature once is born.
- As you get closer to your due date, your cervix becomes softer and thinner. This is a normal and natural process that facilitates the birth process.

## ***Prenatal tests:***

Prenatal exams are done during all three trimesters to identify diseases or complications that could affect the development of the baby and the health of both. Urine and blood tests will be performed to check the level of sugar and identify if there is any sexually transmitted disease, among others. Ultrasounds will also be performed and, if necessary, some specialized tests such as amniocentesis. At your monthly prenatal visit, your weight will be checked, your

blood pressure, your urine, and your belly will be measured to monitor your baby's growth.



### ***Labor and delivery:***

You can discuss with your OB/GYN what

to expect during labor and what your wishes are for that moment. You can prepare a birth plan that includes the following:

- How you want to manage pain during labor, including whether you want to have an epidural block.
- If you want an episiotomy.
- What would happen if a C-section were required.
- Your feelings about a forceps-assisted or vacuum-assisted delivery.
- Who you want to be with you during labor.

As your due date approaches, you will notice certain changes. Your doctor will tell you when it's time to visit for a checkup or go to the hospital. In advance, you should have a suitcase ready with personal hygiene items, clothes for you and your baby, sanitary pads, diapers, and anything else you will need for your hospital stay.

### ***Postpartum Care:***

Both you and your baby will need care in the first few weeks after delivery; You must identify someone to assist you in the process. If you delivered your baby vaginally, recovery is

usually quicker. If you had a C-section, you may have a hospital stay of 2 or 3 days. In both cases, if there were any complications, the hospital stay may be extended. Once you are home, you will need assistance with food preparation, cleaning, and transportation.

One of the practices that help the postpartum recovery process, both for you and your baby, is breastfeeding. Learning the skills to breastfeed can take 2-3 weeks. Over time, the baby will learn to adjust to the more comfortable position and will teach you his/her feeding rhythm. You can also begin the process of pumping and storing breast milk.

### **Social and Emotional Aspect**

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can deal with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after your pregnancy process, please visit your doctor or contact the following telephone lines:

#### **Medical Advice Line**

1-844-347-7801

**TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804**

#### **References:**

Prenatal care. Medline Plus. Retrieved from: <https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/prenatalcare.html>  
Care during pregnancy. Medline Plus. Retrieved from: <https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007214.htm>, 2022/01/12

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