Pregnancy - Common Symptoms and Care Tips
Article

Prenatal and Antenatal Care

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Medical prenatal care such as checkups and screening tests help you and your baby stay healthy.

PRENATAL CARE AND TESTS



- Medical checkups and screening tests **help you and your baby stay healthy.** This is referred to **as prenatal care.**[1]
- It also includes education and counseling on **how to deal with various aspects of your pregnancy.**[1]
- Your doctor may address a variety of topics with you during your visits, **including a healthy diet and physical activity, screening tests,** and what to expect during labor and delivery.[1]





Prenatal checkups[1]



- Regular checks are critical during pregnancy. This constant care can help you and your baby stay healthy, **recognize concerns early, and avoid complications during birth. Routine checkups usually include the following:**
  - For weeks four through 28, **do it once a month.**
  - Fr weeks 28 through 36, **do it twice a month.**
  - For weeks 36 to birth, **do it weekly.**
  - Women who are pregnant with a high-risk pregnancy **should see their doctors more frequently.**
- Your doctor will perform a full physical exam, take blood for lab testing, and **calculate your due date during your first visit.**
- A breast exam, a pelvic exam to examine your uterus (womb), and **a cervical exam may also be performed by your doctor.**
- During this first visit, your doctor will ask you a lot of questions about your lifestyle, relationships, and health habits at this first visit. **It's critical to be open and honest with your doctor.**
- Most prenatal appointments will cover the following items after the initial visit:
  - Checking your **blood pressure and weight**
  - Keeping **an eye on the baby's heart rate**
  - Checking the growth of your baby by **measuring your abdomen**
- Throughout your pregnancy, you will undergo some standard tests, such as **anemia tests, testing to determine your risk of gestational diabetes,** and screenings to detect hazardous infections.
- To manage your care, work with your doctor as a team. Keep all of your appointments — **they're all crucial! To learn more about this wonderful period, ask questions and read.**

Monitor your baby's activity[1]



- Keep track of your baby's movement **after 28 weeks.** This will help you detect if your baby is moving less than usual, **which could indicate that he or she is in discomfort and need medical attention.**
- The **"count-to-10"** method is a simple technique to accomplish this.
- Count your baby's movements in the evening, when **the fetus is usually the most active.** If you're having problems feeling your baby move, lie down. Within 20 minutes, most women can count up to 10 motions.
- When the baby is active, however, it is uncommon for a woman to count fewer than **10 movements in two hours.**
- Every day, **count your baby's movements** to see what is normal for you.
- If your baby moves less than 10 times in two hours or if you notice your baby is moving less than usual, call your doctor. **Call your doctor straight away if your baby isn't moving at all.**

Prenatal tests

What tests are done early in pregnancy?[2]

- **Several routine lab tests are done early** in pregnancy, including
  - complete blood count (CBC)
  - blood type and Rh factor
  - urinalysis
  - urine culture



What does a complete blood count test for?[2]

- A CBC determines the number of different cells in your blood. The number of red blood cells in your blood **can show whether you have a specific type of anemia.**
  - The number of white blood cells in your blood **can show how many disease-fighting cells are present.**
  - The number of platelets in your blood **can show whether you have a clotting disorder.**



What is the Rh factor?[2]

- A protein found on the surface of red blood cells is known as **the Rh factor.** You are Rh positive if this protein is found in your blood cells. **You are Rh negative if your blood cells lack this protein.**

Why is it important to know your Rh status?[2]

- When a woman is Rh negative and her Fetus is Rh positive, **her body can produce antibodies against the Rh factor.** These antibodies have the potential to harm the fetus's red blood cells. In a first pregnancy, when the body produces a small number of antibodies, this usually does not pose a problem. However, **it can cause complications in a later pregnancy.**



What is a urinalysis?[2]

- A urinalysis is a urine test that looks for certain substances in your urine.
  - red blood cells to determine if **you have a urinary tract disease.**
  - white blood cells to determine whether **you have a urinary tract infection .**
  - glucose, because high blood sugar levels can be **a sign of diabetes mellitus.**
- This test also determines the level of protein in your blood, **which can be compared to levels later in pregnancy.** High protein levels may indicate preeclampsia, a potentially fatal complication that **can occur later in pregnancy.**

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Prenatal care, Checkups and tests

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- It also includes education and counseling on how to deal with various aspects of your pregnancy.[1]
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