



# A Healthy Start for Baby and Me

Ontario's easy-to-read book about pregnancy and birth

***best start***  
***meilleur départ***

by/par health **nexus** santé

## Important Phone Numbers

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My Health Care Provider

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

My Hospital

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Member

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Close Friend

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Doula / Labour support person: \_\_\_\_\_

Public Health Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency (Fire / Police / Ambulance): \_\_\_\_\_ **911**

Telehealth Ontario (24 hours a day, 7 days per week): \_\_\_\_\_ **1-866-797-0000**

## A Message to Pregnant Women

Pregnancy is a special time that can bring many questions. We hope that this book will help you learn about how to take care of yourself and your growing baby. We suggest that you read this book and talk with your health care provider about what you have learned.

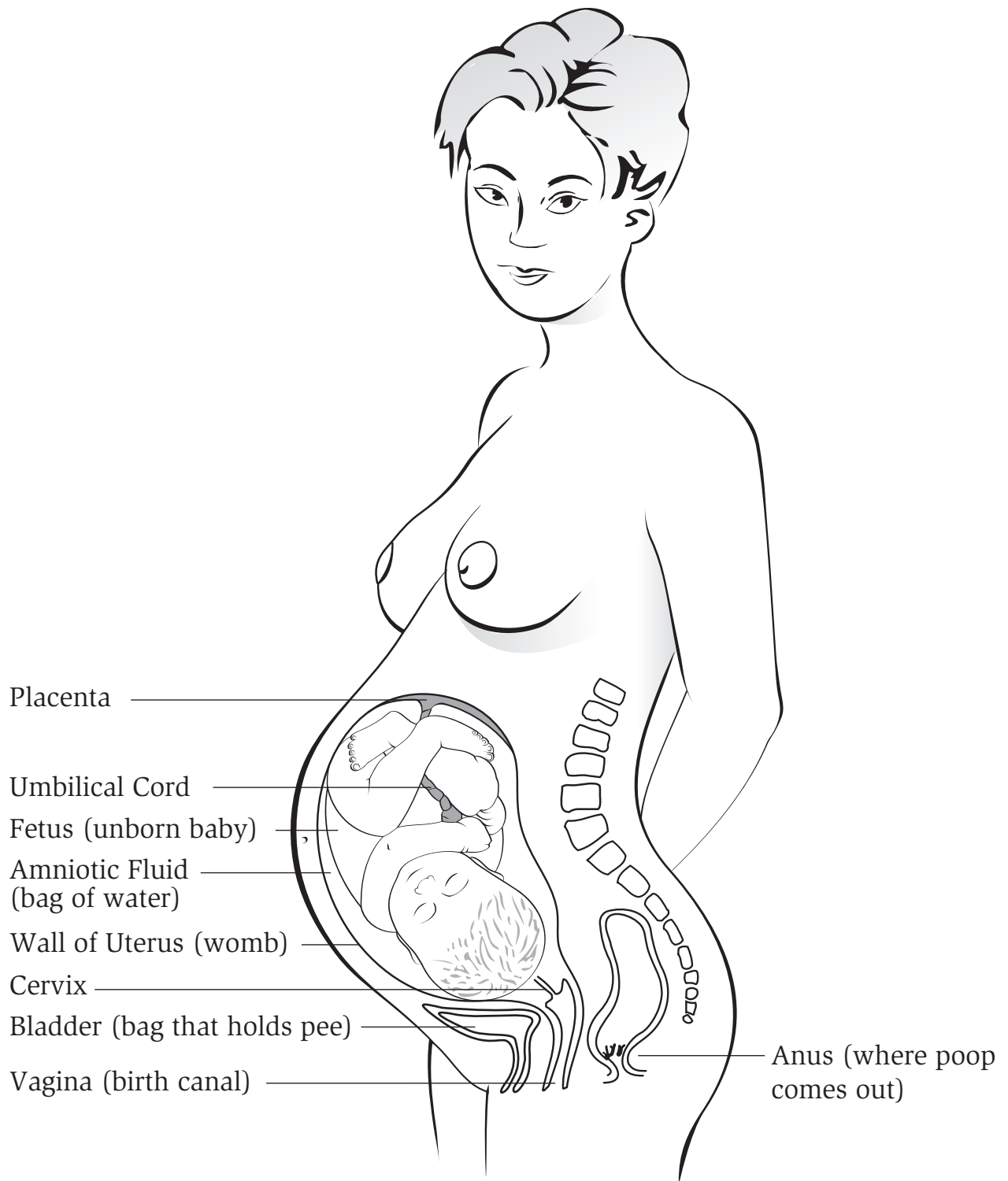


## Fathers and Partners

This book helps you learn how to be supportive during pregnancy. It tells you how to care for your new baby. You can do a lot to help.

**Note:** This book has information for healthy pregnancies. If you are pregnant with more than one baby, or have health problems, your health care provider may give you different health advice.

# You and Your Baby



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## Important Things to Know

Being pregnant brings many changes. Most of these changes are normal and some are not. You need to know the signs to report to your health care provider.

In this section you will learn:

- (1) The signs in pregnancy that are not normal.
- (2) The signs of preterm labour.
- (3) What to do if you have any of these signs.

# When to Get Help

Call your health care provider or go to the hospital if you notice any of these signs:

- Bleeding from your birth canal (vagina).

- Feeling dizzy or like you might faint.
- Loss of consciousness.

- Sharp pain in your tummy.



- High fever (temperature).
- Chills or rash after you have had a fever.



- Vomiting or throwing up a lot.

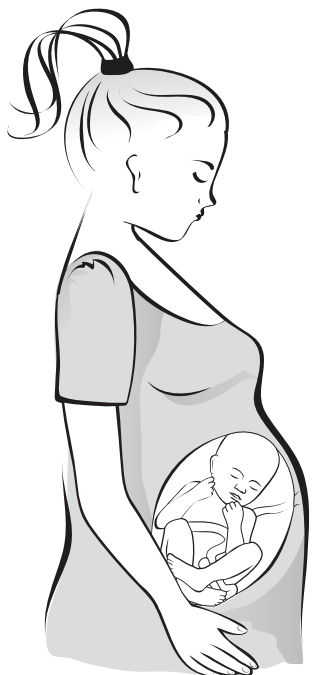


- Feeling more sad, worried, or angry than usual.
- Crying a lot.





- The baby stops moving or moves less often.

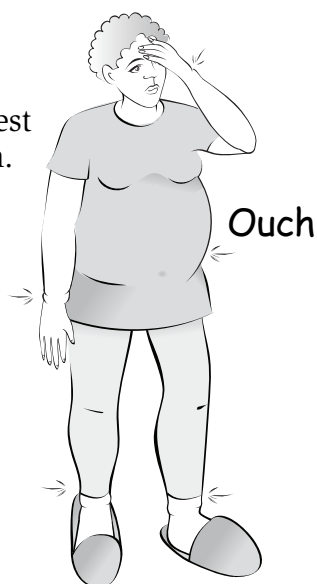


- Smelly fluid comes from your birth canal (vagina) and makes you feel itchy.

- It hurts or burns when you pee (pass urine).
- Your urine becomes red or dark in colour.



- Lots of swelling in your face, hands, legs, ankles (especially if it gets worse or changes).
- Bad headaches that last for a long time.
- Gaining weight quickly.
- Blurry vision or spots in front of your eyes.
- Pain in your chest or stomach area.



- Spots on your face and body that are not normally there.



# Preterm Labour

## What is it?

Normally, pregnancy lasts between 37 and 42 weeks. Preterm labour is labour that starts too early (before 37 weeks). It can cause your baby to be born too soon.

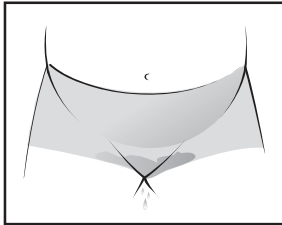
Babies who are born too soon may have health problems. They may need special care in the hospital.

## What are the signs of Preterm Labour?

- Bleeding from your birth canal (vagina).

- Sudden increase in the amount of discharge from your birth canal (vagina).
- Sudden change in the type of discharge (mucousy, watery, bloody).

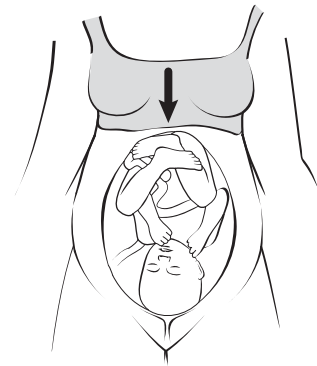
- Water leaking from your birth canal (vagina).



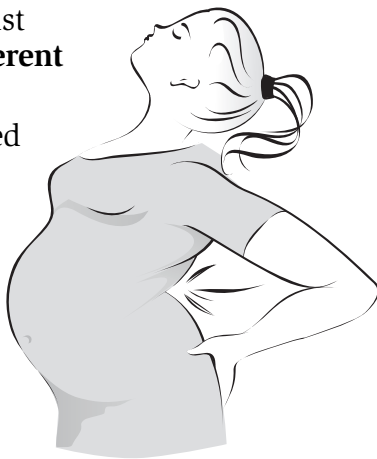
- Feeling that something is not right.

- Cramps like when you have your period.

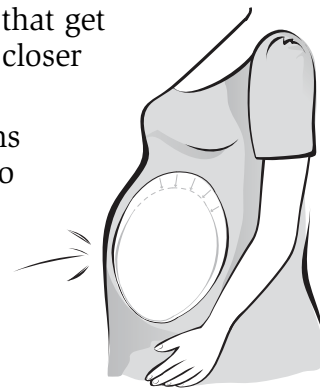
- Pressure that feels like the baby is pushing down.



- Low dull backache below the waist that feels **different than usual**.
- An urgent need to pee (pass urine), or the need to pee often.



- Contractions (tightening of the womb (uterus)) that come often and do not go away.
- Contractions that get stronger and closer together.
- Stomach pains that do not go away (with or without diarrhea).



## What should I do if I have any of these signs?

**Go to the hospital right away.**

There are things that your health care provider can do to help.

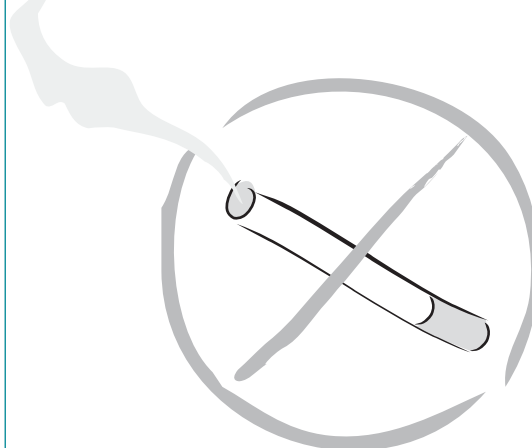
It is not possible to prevent all preterm births, but there are things you can do to reduce the chances of preterm labour.

## What you can do to help your baby be born at the right time

- Start seeing your health care provider as early as possible in your pregnancy.



- Try to stop smoking or smoke less often.
- Ask others not to smoke near you.
- See page 24 to learn more.



- Go to a group program for pregnant women early in your pregnancy (see page 11).



- Take time to rest every day.



- See your health care provider if smelly fluid comes from your birth canal (vagina) and makes you itchy.

- See your health care provider if it hurts when you pee (pass urine).



- Eat healthy foods (see page 13).



- Learn the signs of preterm labour and what to do if you have them. Tell your support person as well.
- Be aware of how your body changes with pregnancy. Talk to your health care provider about anything that does not feel right.
- Find ways to manage stress in your life (see page 21). Talk with your health care provider or public health nurse.



## Prenatal Care

It is important to see a health care provider to help you have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. Make an appointment as soon as you know you are pregnant.

In this section you will learn about:

- (1) The choices you have when looking for a health care provider.
- (2) What happens during prenatal visits.
- (3) Group programs for pregnant women.

# Choosing A Health Care Provider

A health care provider is someone who provides health services. In your community, you may find these kinds of health care providers for pregnant women:

## **(1) *Obstetricians***

- Doctors who offer care to pregnant women and deliver babies.
- They do not look after babies.

## **(2) *Family Doctors***

- They provide care to pregnant women, babies, and families.
- Some deliver babies.

## **(3) *Midwives***

- They provide care for women with normal (low risk) pregnancies and births.
- You may choose to give birth at home or at the hospital.
- They provide care to mothers and their babies for the first few weeks after birth.



## **(4) *Nurse Practitioners***

- They provide care for women with normal (low risk) pregnancies, babies, and families.
- They usually do not deliver babies.

When choosing a health care provider you may want to ask yourself these questions:

- Is the person easy to talk to and understand?
- Do they listen to you and answer your questions?
- Can you get to their office easily?
- Can you call them by phone?
- Will they deliver your baby?
- Where will the baby be born (at home, in a birthing centre, at a hospital)?
- Will they provide care for your baby?
- Do you prefer a male or female health care provider?
- What do other mothers say about their health care providers?





# Prenatal Visits

When you see your health care provider during your pregnancy, this is called a prenatal visit. During these visits, your health care provider will:

- Ask you about your health before you got pregnant.
- Ask you about your health during your pregnancy.
- Give you a physical examination.
- Check your weight.
- Order tests of your pee (urine) and blood to learn more about your blood sugar levels and protein levels.
- Check your blood pressure.
- Listen to your baby's heart rate.
- Measure the growth of your womb (uterus).
- Discuss what you can do to have a healthy baby.
- Answer your questions.
- Offer blood tests and ultrasound tests to see if you and your baby are healthy. You will decide if you want to have these tests.
- Talk to you about where you will give birth.
- Give you information on group programs for pregnant women and on hospital tours.

Before each visit, we suggest you write down your questions and concerns. Then, talk to your health care provider about them during your prenatal visits.

## Having Someone To Talk With

Being pregnant brings many changes to your life. It is important to have someone to talk with about your feelings. This person can help you make healthy changes.

Try to think of someone in your life that you feel comfortable with and can trust. It could be your partner, the father of your baby, a neighbour, a close friend, or a family member. You may also get the support you need at a group program for pregnant women.





# Group Programs For Pregnant Women

In your community, there may be free group programs for pregnant women. They may offer information, food, and a chance to talk to other pregnant women. To find out about programs in your town or city, call your local public health department, or 1-800-267-8097, or visit [www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phu\\_mn.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phu_mn.html).

## Prenatal Classes

Your local public health unit, hospital, or health centre may offer classes for pregnant women. Ask about the costs and what will be taught in the classes. Some classes are free. Others are not. The classes may provide information about a healthy pregnancy, birth, and becoming a parent.

## Pregnancy Support Programs

There are many different types of drop-in programs for new parents, and for pregnant women. All offer information and time to talk with other pregnant women or new parents. Some provide food. In most cases, they are free. The Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) offers support programs for pregnant women in many communities. See page 78.

## Support at Home

Some programs provide help in your home. Usually this is free. Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) helps all children have a healthy start. It offers information to pregnant women and new parents. A nurse or lay home visitor may go to your home if you need extra help (see page 79).



For details about specific programs, go to the end of this book.

# Fathers and Partners

If you are going to be a father, or if your partner is pregnant, there is a lot you can do during her pregnancy:

- Ask her how you can help.
- Go to the health care provider with her.
- Go to prenatal classes with her.
- Learn about pregnancy and birth.
- Talk about how you would like to parent your child.
- Talk about breast feeding. Breast milk is the healthiest food for your new baby.
- Help her to quit smoking. Your baby will be healthier if you quit too.
- Help her to stop drinking alcohol.
- Encourage her to be active. Go for a walk with her every day.
- Understand that she may feel moody at times.
- Help her rest when she is tired.
- Change the cat litter box (see page 27).
- Carry things that are too heavy for her.
- Understand that her interest in sex may change during pregnancy. Talk to her about ways to feel close.
- Learn how to take care of your new baby.
- Think about the things the baby will need. Get your home ready for the baby.
- Find out about classes or groups for new parents in your community.



For more information for fathers, go to [www.cfii.ca](http://www.cfii.ca). Find out how you can be involved, and how important this is to your baby.



## Healthy Eating





When you are pregnant, the food you eat is very important. Eating healthy foods helps you feel better and also helps your baby grow and develop.

In this section you will learn:

- (1) Why it is important to eat healthy foods during pregnancy.
- (2) What to eat during pregnancy.

# Nutrients You Need

Nutrients are good things found in the foods we eat. When you are pregnant, it is important to eat healthy foods. They provide the nutrients you and your baby need. Here is a list of some of the important nutrients that pregnant women need.

Name of nutrient	Foods that contain this nutrient	Why this nutrient is important
Folate (Folic Acid)		Helps baby grow a healthy brain and spine. Makes healthy blood for you and your baby. Take a multivitamin with folic acid in it, every day. Some women need more folic acid. Talk to your health care provider.
Calcium		Makes healthy bones and teeth for you and your baby.
Iron		Makes healthy blood for you and your baby. Eating these foods along with foods high in vitamin C will help your body use iron. Foods high in vitamin C include tomatoes, oranges, broccoli, cabbage, cantaloupe, kiwi, and peppers.
Protein		Helps your womb (uterus) and placenta become strong. Helps your baby grow.

# Healthy Eating for You and Your Baby

This picture shows the 4 food groups and the amount of food women should eat each day. In the second and third trimesters, pregnant women need 2 to 3 more servings of food each day. This is in addition to the amounts shown below. Choose foods from at least 3 food groups at every meal, and plan healthy snacks. Some pregnant women may need to eat differently. For example, if you are aged 12 to 18, or have more than one unborn baby (fetus), follow the advice of your health care provider.

## What is a serving of food?

Examples include: a cup of milk, 1/2 cup of meat, a slice of bread, one apple or 1/2 cup of vegetables.

### Vegetables and Fruit

7 or 8 servings per day

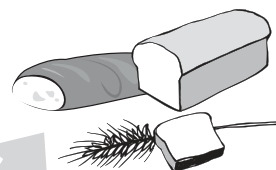
Fruit (fresh or canned), vegetables (especially green, yellow, orange)



### Grain Products

6 or 7 servings per day

Bread, rolls, crackers, cereal, rice, pasta



### Milk and Alternatives

2 servings per day

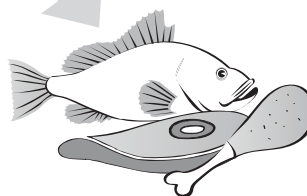
Milk (chocolate or white), cheese, yogurt, enriched soy drinks



### Meat and Alternatives

2 servings per day

Meat, chicken, fish, eggs, peanut butter, beans, lentils, tofu, nuts, seeds



If you want to learn more, talk to your health care provider or go to [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index_e.html)

If you can't afford the healthy food that you need, talk to your health care provider.

# Food Safety

Take extra care with food when you are pregnant.

- Wash your hands before, during, and after you handle food.
- Wash the skin of all raw vegetables and fruit well.
- Cook meat, poultry, seafood, fish, and eggs well. Hot dogs and deli meats should be heated until steaming hot.
- Check “best before” dates on food packages. Do **not** eat the food after that date has passed.

## Do not eat these foods when you are pregnant:

- Raw fish and food made with raw fish (for example, sushi).
- Fish liver oil.
- Raw seafood such as oysters and clams.
- Undercooked meat, poultry, and seafood.
- Unheated hotdogs and deli meats.
- Patés, meat spreads, smoked seafood, and fish products that are not in a can.
- Foods made with raw eggs, or that contain eggs that are not fully cooked.
- Unpasteurized milk and foods made from unpasteurized milk.
- Soft cheeses made from unpasteurized milk such as brie, camembert, feta, goat cheese, queso blanco, and blue cheese.
- Juices that are not pasteurized, such as unpasteurized apple cider.
- Raw sprouts, especially alfalfa sprouts and bean sprouts.
- Fish that is high in mercury (visit [www.healthcanada.gc.ca](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca) and [www.ene.gov.on.ca](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca) or call 1-800-820-2716).
- Do **not** eat more than 1 serving (75g) of liver every 2 weeks.

If you have questions about healthy eating, talk to your health care provider.

Pasteurizing = when milk or juice is heated to kill bacteria

Raw = not cooked



# Gaining Weight

It is normal and healthy to gain weight when you are pregnant. Steady weight gain is a good sign, because it tells you:

- Your baby is growing.
- Your womb (uterus) and placenta are growing.
- Your breasts are growing and getting ready for breast feeding.
- You are making more blood to carry food and air to your baby.

## How much weight should I gain?

Most pregnant women gain between 11.5 and 16 kilograms (25 to 35 pounds). Your health care provider will let you know if you are gaining the right amount of weight.

## Where does the weight go?

### Energy stored as fat 2 to 3.5 kg (5 to 8 pounds)

Your body needs more muscle and fat to help you stay healthy during pregnancy.

### Breasts 1 to 1.5 kg (2 to 3 pounds)

Your breasts increase in size to prepare for feeding your baby.

### Baby 2.5 to 3.5 kg (6 to 8 pounds)

### Amniotic Fluid 1 kg (2 pounds)

This is the water that surrounds the baby. The baby floats and grows inside the bag of water (amniotic sac) which contains this fluid.

### Blood 2 kg (4 pounds) Extra fluids 1 to 1.5 kg (2 to 3 pounds)

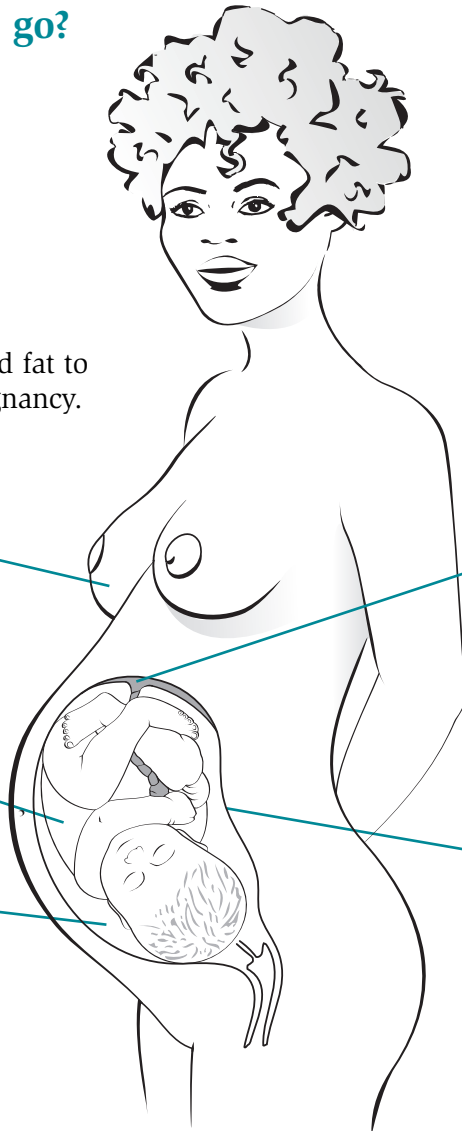
While you are pregnant your body makes more blood. This helps to bring food and air to your baby.

### Placenta 0.5 to 1 kg (1 to 2 pounds)

The placenta forms during pregnancy to help pass nutrients from you to your baby. Waste from the baby passes to you through the placenta.

### Uterus 1 to 1.5 kg (2 to 3 pounds)

Your womb (uterus) gets about 20 times bigger to hold your growing baby.



# Common Questions About Eating

## Is it okay to drink coffee, tea, or soda pop?

Coffee, tea, pop, and energy drinks may have caffeine in them. Too much caffeine is not good for your unborn baby. Try not to drink more than two cups of coffee each day. Drink less tea, pop, and diet pop. Some kinds of black teas and herbal teas are not safe to drink when you are pregnant. Ask your health care provider for a list of safe teas. It is better to drink water, milk, or 100% juice.

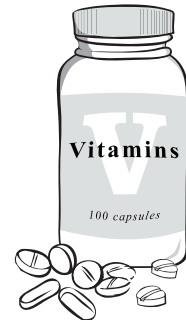


## Do I need to stop eating salt?

No. You and your unborn baby need salt. But eating too much salt is not healthy. Eat more fresh food and less canned foods, processed foods, and snack foods. Also, try to use less salt when you cook.

## Will I need to take prenatal vitamins?

Vitamin pills cannot take the place of healthy foods. Eat healthy foods and take a multivitamin every day that contains folic acid and iron. Some women need more folic acid or other vitamins. Talk to your health care provider.

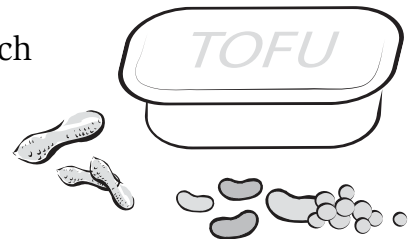


## What if I don't drink milk?

If you do not drink milk, you can have other foods high in calcium such as cheese, yogurt, enriched soy drinks, enriched orange juice, sardines, tofu, broccoli, okra, and almonds. Talk to your health care provider to make sure you are getting enough calcium and vitamin D.

## What if I do not eat meat?

If you do not eat meat or animal products, choose foods such as beans, lentils, tofu, nuts, and seeds. Talk to your health care provider about getting enough iron and protein.



## Can I drink alcohol?

It is safest not to drink any alcohol when you are pregnant. See page 25 for more information.





## Ways to Stay Healthy

Staying healthy is good for you and your baby.

In this section you will learn about:

- (1) The needs of your growing baby.
- (2) Healthy things you can do for yourself and your baby.

# Physical Activity

Physical activity during pregnancy can help you stay healthy and feel good. Speak to your health care provider before you start a new physical activity, and before you increase your physical activity.

## If you are already active often, light to moderate physical activity is okay:

- Labour and birth may be easier. You may recover more quickly after your baby is born.
- It may prevent constipation (poop that is hard and dry).
- You are more likely to gain a healthy amount of weight.
- You may have more energy. You may feel better about yourself.

## What kind of physical activity can I do?

- Talk to your health care provider about your plans to be active.
- Choose safe activities, such as walking or swimming.
- Drink plenty of water before, during, and after you are active.
- Try not to get too hot or too tired. You should be able to talk when you are active.
- If it hurts or feels uncomfortable, stop the activity.





## Stress

For many women, being pregnant involves dealing with a lot of change. Your body is changing. People may treat you differently. You may be thinking about your new baby. All of these changes and feelings are normal. If they begin to make you feel tense and anxious, you need to do something.

### Here are some tips to help you deal with stress:

- Think about what makes you feel stressed and what you can do about it.
- Talk to someone about these things.
- Eat healthy food.
- Go to a group program for pregnant women. Talking to people who understand what you are going through can help you feel better.
- Go for a walk.
- Relax with music or think about something pleasant.
- Get enough rest and sleep.
- Make lists to help you stay organized. Decide what you will take to the hospital.
- Do things that help you relax. Don't use tobacco, drugs, or alcohol.
- Ask for help if you need it. Accept help from others.

# Work

Most jobs are safe during pregnancy. A few small changes at work can add to your comfort and will help you to have a healthy baby. Some women must stop working or must change to a different type of work when they are pregnant. Talk to your health care provider about the type of work that you do.

If your work involves any of the items on the list below, you may need to make some changes or take extra care while you are pregnant:

- If you must stand up for long periods of time.
- If you must lift, push, or pull heavy items.
- If you are in contact with chemicals.
- If you work with X-rays.
- If there is a lot of noise at work.
- If it is very hot at work.
- If you work with animals, young children, or sick people.
- If you work long hours or do shift work.

There is NO strong proof that computers can harm your unborn baby.



# Drugs

Drugs such as marijuana, heroin, crack/cocaine, and LSD are not safe to use when you are pregnant. They are not legal. They could harm both you and your baby.

## Babies born to mothers who take drugs may:

- Be born too soon and too small.
- Have medical problems.
- Go through drug withdrawal.
- Have problems learning.

## What you can do:

- Do not use drugs during pregnancy.
- Talk to your health care provider and ask about programs to help you quit.

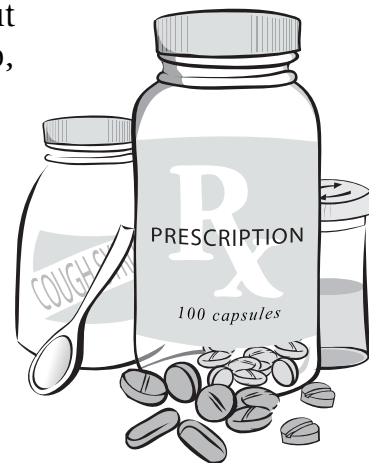


# Medicines

Some medicines that a doctor may prescribe can be a danger to your baby. Make sure that you check with your health care provider or pharmacist before you take any prescription medicines.

You must also be careful about medicines you buy without a prescription. This includes herbal products, cough syrup, eye drops, headache and allergy pills, etc.

If you have any questions about drugs or medicines, call Motherisk at 416-813-6780.



# Things to Avoid

Some things at home and work can harm your unborn baby.

## What you can do:

Talk to your health care provider about:

- Pesticides (used for killing insects).
- Mercury (in some fish).
- Lead (for example lead paint).
- Asbestos (in some home insulation).
- Solvents (in some paints).
- Extreme heat (for example hot tubs and saunas).
- Plastics.
- X-rays.
- Some cleaning products.

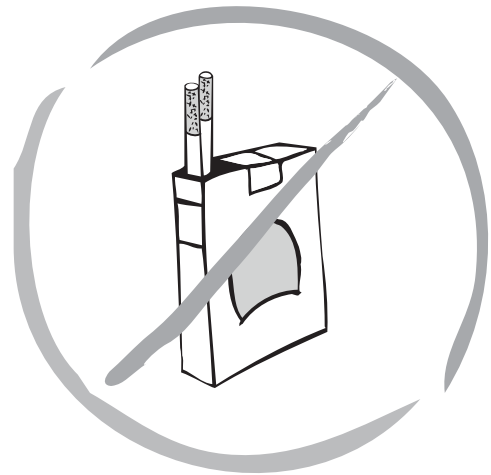
# Smoking

Smoking or being around people who smoke during your pregnancy can harm both you and your baby.

## Smoking can cause problems during pregnancy:

Your baby may:

- Not get enough food or oxygen.
- Be born too soon or too small.
- Die suddenly during pregnancy or after it is born.
- Have health or learning problems.



## What you can do:

- Ask for help to quit smoking or to smoke less.
- Ask friends and family not to smoke near you while you are pregnant (and after the baby is born, too!). Make your home and car smoke-free areas.

Smoking less, at any time in pregnancy, will help you have a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby.



# Alcohol

There is no safe amount of alcohol during pregnancy. There is no safe kind of alcohol. There is no safe time to drink alcohol during pregnancy. It is best not to drink alcohol at all if you are pregnant.

Mothers who drink alcohol when they are pregnant may have a baby who has:

- Brain damage.
- Vision and hearing problems.
- Trouble walking and talking.
- Organs that do not work properly.
- Birth defects.
- Problems learning, remembering, and thinking things through.
- Problems getting along with others.

If you need information or help to stop drinking, call Motherisk at 1-877-327-4636.



# Is Someone Hurting You?

## Does your partner...

- Yell at you or call you names?
- Break your things?
- Threaten to hurt you?
- Always need to be in charge?
- Keep you from seeing your friends, family, doctor, or midwife?
- Control the money?
- Threaten to take the kids away?
- Hit or kick you?
- Force you to have sex?

If you said YES to any of the above questions, this is abuse. Abuse usually gets worse over time. It will not stop when your baby is born.

## Abuse during pregnancy can cause you to:

- Feel anxious, sad, and alone.
- Feel bad about yourself.
- Have pain and injuries.
- Not eat or sleep well.

## Abuse may cause your baby to:

- Be born too small or too early.
- Be hurt or die.
- Have later health problems.

## What you can do...

- Tell someone you trust what is going on.
- Find people to help you.
- Get help to leave safely.



## Where to Get Help

- Police 911.
- Assaulted Women's Help Line 1-866-863-0511.  
Crisis line with help in 150 languages: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- [www.shelternet.ca](http://www.shelternet.ca)  
Shelternet connects women to nearby shelters.



# Infections

There are certain health problems that can harm your unborn baby if you get them during pregnancy. **If at any time during your pregnancy you think you may have any of the problems listed below, call your health care provider.**

Early treatment of health problems is the best thing you can do for you and your baby.

## Bladder Infection

**What is it?** – Your bladder is the bag that holds pee (urine). When you are pregnant, the baby may put more pressure on your bladder. A bladder infection is caused by germs called bacteria. These germs live outside the body and can move into the bladder.

**How do I know I have it?** – You may:

- Feel the need to pass urine often and in a hurry.
- Have a burning feeling when you pass urine.
- Feel pain in your lower stomach or back area.
- Have a fever or feel sick to your stomach.
- Have bloody or cloudy urine.
- Notice a strange smell in your urine.

**Why is it a danger?** – It can hurt your kidneys and cause your baby to be born too soon.

**What can I do to protect myself and my baby?**

- Drink lots of fluids (at least 8 glasses a day).
- Wipe yourself from front to back after using the toilet.
- Go to the toilet as soon as you feel the urge to pass urine, before sex, and after sex.
- See your health care provider right away if you think you have a bladder infection.

## Toxoplasmosis

**What is it?** – Toxoplasmosis is an infection that people can get from eating raw meat or meat that is not cooked well. It also comes from unwashed vegetables, and from touching cat poop (feces).

**Why is it a danger?** – It can make your baby very sick.

**What can I do to protect myself and my baby?**

- Cook meat well. Wash vegetables well. Ask someone else to change the cat litter.
- Wash your hands and any surfaces that you use to prepare food.
- Do not drink or eat unpasteurized milk products.
- Wear gloves when gardening or if you must change the cat litter box. When you are done, wash your hands.

## Streptococcus B (Strep B)

### What is it?

- Strep B or GBS (Group B Streptococcus) is a bacteria that grows in the birth canal (vagina) or bladder (bag that holds pee). Often, there are no signs that you have Strep B.

### Why is it a danger?

- It can make your baby very sick.

### What can I do to protect my baby and myself?

- Talk with your health care provider about how to protect your baby.
- If the treatment is a prescription medicine, make sure you follow the directions.
- You may need to have intravenous medicines during labour and birth.

## Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

**What are they?** – STIs are diseases that can spread from person-to-person during sex. Examples of STIs are herpes, chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea, and hepatitis B. You can get an STI before, during, or after you are pregnant.

**Why is it a danger?** – STIs can harm both you and your unborn baby.

### What can I do to protect myself and my baby?

- Talk to your health care provider about getting tested for STIs.

## HIV/AIDS

**What is it?** – HIV is a virus that can lead to AIDS. You can get HIV by having unprotected sex with someone who has the virus. You can also get HIV from needles that have been used by someone who has the virus. If you have HIV, it may be passed on to your baby when you are pregnant, during birth, or during breast feeding. If you have HIV, medicines can help protect your unborn baby.

**Why is it a danger?** – The virus can attack your immune system and your nervous system. It can do the same to your baby, making you both very sick.

### What can I do to protect myself and my baby?

- Do not share needles with others.
- Ask your health care provider about having an HIV test early in pregnancy.
- Talk with your health care provider about how to protect yourself, or to treat HIV/AIDS.



## The 9 Months of Pregnancy

This section gives you details about each stage of pregnancy. It will tell you:

- (1) What to expect.
- (2) What to do.
- (3) How your baby is growing.

# How Long Does Pregnancy Last?


Pregnancy usually lasts 40 weeks (about 9 months). It takes this much time for a baby to develop.

Pregnancy has three parts. Each part is called a trimester. Each trimester is about 3 months long.

## Pregnancy Time Line

Use a coloured pencil or pen to colour in the months. Then you will know where you are in your pregnancy.


By the end of the 1st trimester your baby begins to look like a human baby.



**1st Trimester (weeks 1 – 12)**

- 1st Month
- 2nd Month
- 3rd Month


By the end of the 2nd trimester babies suck their thumbs, and open and close their eyes.



**2nd Trimester (weeks 13 – 28)**

- 4th Month
- 5th Month
- 6th Month

During the 3rd trimester your baby is well developed. Your baby still needs stronger lungs and other organs. Your baby needs to grow and put on weight.



**3rd Trimester (weeks 29 – 40)**

- 7th Month
- 8th Month
- 9th Month

# Your Growing Baby

## First Trimester (1 to 3 months)

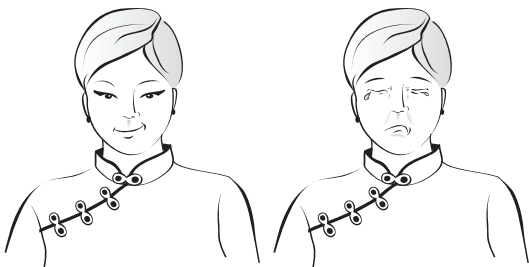





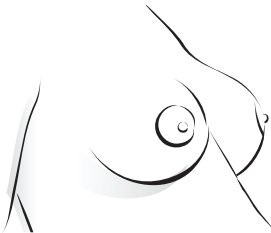

By the end of the first trimester:

- Your baby will be 7 to 10 cm long (3 to 4 inches) and weigh 28 grams (1 ounce).
- The heart is beating.
- The eyes, ears, and nose are forming.
- The arms, legs, fingers, and toes are forming.
- The fingernails and toenails are forming.
- The arms and legs move now but you cannot feel the kicks.
- The bones are forming.
- The brain is growing quickly.
- The spine is forming.
- The face is forming but the eyes are closed.
- The digestive tract is forming.
- Your baby is beginning to look like a real person.
- The sex of the baby is set.

# Changes You May Feel

First Trimester (1 – 3 months)

What to expect	What to do
<p>You may have mood swings (happy for a while and then sad). This is caused by changes in your hormones as your body adjusts to being pregnant.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your partner, close friends, or family about your feelings.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care provider if these feelings do not go away or if you always feel sad.</li> </ul>
<p>“Morning Sickness” (feeling sick and throwing up). It usually stops by the fourth month. You may feel sick in the morning, or all day.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat dry toast or crackers before you get out of bed in the morning.</li> <li>• Get out of bed slowly.</li> <li>• Eat small amounts of food every 1 to 2 hours, before you feel hungry.</li> <li>• Avoid spicy, fried, or fatty foods.</li> <li>• Drink fluids between meals. Do not drink fluids with meals.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care provider if the vomiting continues.</li> </ul>
<p>You will pee (pass urine) more often. This is caused by your womb (uterus) pressing against your bladder, and by changes in your hormones.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink less in the evening.</li> <li>• Try Kegel exercises (see page 42).</li> <li>• Make sure that your bladder empties each time you pass urine.</li> </ul>

What to expect	What to do
<p>You may feel tired.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rest.</li> <li>• Eat small amounts of food many times during the day.</li> <li>• Drink lots of fluids.</li> <li>• Try to work less.</li> <li>• Accept help from others.</li> </ul>
<p>Thin milky fluid may flow from your birth canal (vagina).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear small pads in your underwear or change your underwear often.</li> <li>• Keep the area clean and dry.</li> <li>• Avoiding douching (pushing fluid into your vagina).</li> <li>• Call your health care provider if the fluid smells bad or makes you feel itchy.</li> </ul>
<p>Your breasts may become larger. This is to prepare for breast feeding your baby.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear a bra that provides good support.</li> <li>• Wear your bra at night if your breasts are uncomfortable.</li> </ul>
<p>You may feel like you are going to faint. This is caused by demands on your blood system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get up slowly.</li> <li>• When you change position, move slowly.</li> </ul>
<p>Your interest in having sex or in other activities may change. This may be caused by feeling tired and sick.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your partner about your feelings.</li> </ul>

# Getting Healthy for You and Your Baby

## First Trimester (1 – 3 months)

During this time you may have many different feelings as you get used to the idea of being pregnant and becoming a mother.

### What you can do:

- Think of healthy things you can do for yourself and your growing baby.
- Choose your health care provider.
- Ask your health care provider what you can do to have a healthy pregnancy.
- Sign up for a Prenatal Program.
- Make healthy changes as early as you can.
- Get some books from the library so you can learn more about pregnancy.
- Think about how you were raised and how you want to raise your baby.
- Talk to your partner or support person about your feelings.
- Talk to your partner about the kind of parent that you want to be.
- Find out about supports and services in your community.





# Your Growing Baby

## Second Trimester (4 to 6 months)


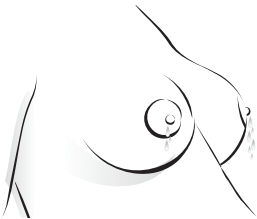




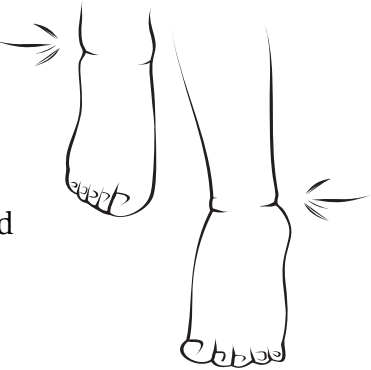
By the end of the second trimester:

- Your baby will be about 36 cm long (14 inches) and weigh 1 kilogram (2 pounds).
- The eyes can open and the eyebrows and lashes appear.
- The heartbeat is stronger and can be heard by your health care provider.
- You can feel your baby moving.
- Unborn babies can suck their thumbs and hiccup.
- The teeth develop inside the gums.
- Soft, fine hair is growing on the body.
- A white coating (vernix) begins to cover the baby's body.

# Changes You May Feel

## Second Trimester (4 – 6 months)

What to expect	What to do
<p>You begin to feel closer to your baby and more interested in what the baby is doing.</p> <p>You feel the baby move inside you. It may feel like fluttering, bubbles, or like the baby is poking you.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get to know your baby.</li> <li>• Enjoy the feeling.</li> <li>• Take note of the first day you felt your baby move. Tell your health care provider.</li> </ul>
<p>Fluid may leak from your breasts.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear breast pads in your bra.</li> </ul>
<p>The colour of your cheeks (face) may change. This is caused by the hormones of pregnancy. These changes will slowly fade after the baby is born.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear a hat.</li> <li>• Use a sunblock with at least SPF 15 when you go outside.</li> </ul>
<p>You may have throbbing legs and swollen veins. This is caused by the pressure of the growing baby.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk to help the blood flow in your legs. Do not cross your legs when you are sitting down.</li> <li>• Put your feet up when you can.</li> <li>• Use support stockings.</li> <li>• Do not wear knee high socks or stockings.</li> <li>• Avoid tight clothing.</li> <li>• Tell your health care provider.</li> </ul>
<p>You may feel less sick and less tired. Your body is getting used to being pregnant. You may have to pee (pass urine) less often. Your growing baby is moving off your bladder.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy this time.</li> </ul>

What to expect	What to do
<p>Your gums bleed more easily.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brush and floss your teeth every day. See a dentist at least once during your pregnancy. Remember to tell the dentist that you are pregnant.</li> </ul>
<p>You may feel low back pain. This is caused by your growing tummy and loose joints.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flatten your lower back by pulling in your stomach and buttocks. This is called the <b>pelvic tilt</b>.</li> <li>• Wear shoes with low heels.</li> <li>• Avoid standing for long periods of time.</li> <li>• Use correct posture to lift and carry objects.</li> <li>• Have a massage if you enjoy it.</li> </ul>
<p>You may have hard dry poop (bowel movements). This is called constipation. This is caused by hormones and by pressure of the growing baby on the bowels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of fluids a day.</li> <li>• Eat more foods that are high in fibre, such as – whole grain breads, prunes, bran, etc.</li> <li>• Do activities such as walking or swimming.</li> <li>• Tell your health care provider.</li> </ul>
<p>You may have swollen ankles and hands. This is caused by extra fluid in your body and slower blood circulation.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put your feet up.</li> <li>• Sleep on your left side.</li> <li>• Do not lie on your back.</li> <li>• Avoid long periods of sitting or standing.</li> <li>• Do not cross your legs at the knee.</li> <li>• Avoid tight clothing.</li> <li>• Tell your health care provider.</li> </ul>
<p>Your interest in sex may change because you are feeling less tired and less sick.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your partner about your feelings.</li> </ul>

# Getting to Know Your Baby

## Second Trimester (4 – 6 months)

Take some time while you are pregnant to get to know your growing baby. At the start of your pregnancy, your baby may not seem real to you. For most women, this changes when they feel the baby move or hear the heartbeat. Enjoy this special time!

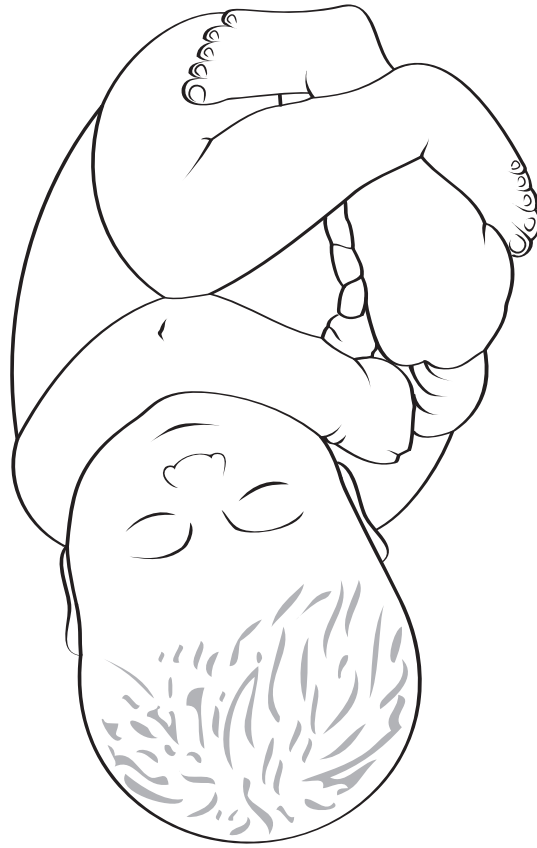
### What you can do:

- Talk or sing to your baby.
- Play music that you enjoy for your baby.
- Find books that you liked as a child to read to your baby.
- Think about what your baby may be doing. Is your baby moving his or her arms and legs, or sucking a thumb?
- Notice when your baby moves and what you are doing at that time.
- Think about names for your baby.
- Start thinking about the things that you will need for your baby.
- The father of your baby, or your partner, can get to know the baby as well.



# Your Growing Baby

## Third Trimester (7 to 9 months)

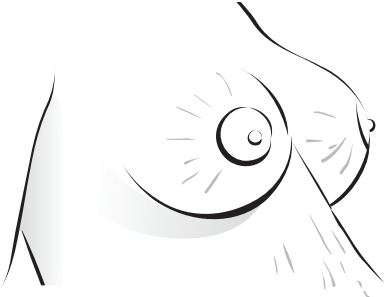





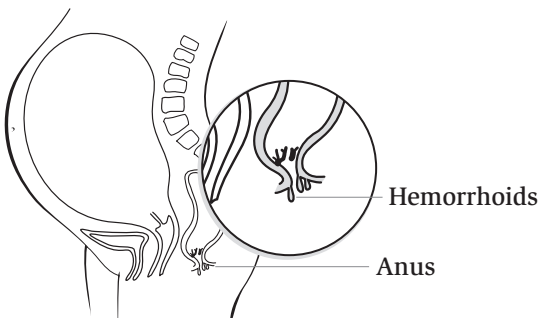

By the end of the third trimester:

- Your baby will be about 51 cm long (20 inches) and weigh 3.5 kilograms (7.5 pounds).
- The skin becomes less wrinkled as the baby gains weight.
- Your baby is hearing sounds, such as your voice.
- Your baby may not be as active, but will still kick and wiggle often.
- Your baby may move into a head-down position, getting ready to be born.
- Your baby's head has hair.
- Your baby's brain, lungs, and other organs continue to develop.
- Your baby responds to light.
- The sex organs are developed.

# Changes You May Feel

Third Trimester (6 – 9 months)

What to expect	What to do
<p>You may have stretch marks on your tummy and breasts. They may feel itchy. This is caused by stretching of your skin.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a lotion or skin cream to help with the itching.</li> <li>• Do not use lotion or skin cream on the nipple area unless recommended by your health care provider.</li> </ul>
<p>You may feel your womb (uterus) tighten all over and then relax. These are called pre-labour or Braxton-Hicks contractions (see page 48).</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk around.</li> <li>• Relax and take deep breaths.</li> <li>• If they do not go away, call your health care provider.</li> </ul>
<p>You may feel pain in your legs (leg cramps).</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put your feet up.</li> <li>• Stretch your leg by bending your ankle and pointing your toes towards your nose.</li> <li>• Make sure you get enough calcium. Eat foods that are high in calcium, such as cheese, tofu, and yogurt.</li> <li>• If your leg is swollen or the pain does not go away, see a health care provider right away.</li> </ul>

What to expect	What to do
<p>You may have a burning feeling in your chest and throat (heartburn). This is caused by the growing baby pressing on your stomach.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not eat spicy or fried foods.</li> <li>• Do not drink fluids with meals.</li> <li>• Eat smaller amounts of food. Eat more often.</li> <li>• Do not lie down right after eating.</li> <li>• Rest or sleep with lots of pillows under your head and upper body.</li> <li>• If the pain does not go away, call your health care provider.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care provider before taking any medication.</li> </ul>
<p>You may get hemorrhoids (swelling in or around your anus) and have hard dry poop (bowel movement). This is called constipation. Hemorrhoids and constipation are caused by the growing baby pressing on your bowels.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat more foods that are high in fibre, such as whole grain breads, prunes, bran, etc.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Walk around.</li> <li>• Do not sit or stand for a long time.</li> <li>• Sleep on your left side.</li> <li>• Put your feet up when you are sitting.</li> <li>• Try Kegel exercises (see page 42).</li> <li>• Avoid straining or pushing hard when you are having a bowel movement.</li> <li>• Tell your health care provider.</li> </ul>
<p>You may feel shortness of breath. This is caused by the pressure of the growing baby against your lungs. Toward the end of the third trimester, your baby will move lower and your breathing will get better.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sleep with your head propped on 2 or more pillows.</li> <li>• Wear clothing that is loose around your chest and tummy.</li> <li>• Stand up straight.</li> </ul>



## What to expect

You may begin to feel anxious about labour and birth. You may be tired of being pregnant.



## What to do

- Distract yourself by getting things ready for the baby.
- Just think: soon your baby will be born.
- Talk to your health care provider about your concerns.
- Talk to your partner about your feelings.

You may need to pee (pass urine) more often. This is caused by your baby pressing on your bladder.

Many women notice that urine leaks when they sneeze, laugh, or cough.



- If it hurts or smells bad when you pee (pass urine), call your health care provider.
- Kegel exercises help to strengthen the muscles and can decrease the chance of urine leaking:
  - Tighten the muscles around your birth canal (vagina) and anus and hold for several seconds. (These are the same muscles you use when you are peeing).
  - Repeat this several times during the day. Try to do this exercise 25 times each day.

Your interest in sex may change because you feel so big.



- Talk to your partner about your feelings.

# Getting Ready For Your Baby

This is a good time to start getting ready for labour and birth and to bring your baby home.

## What you can do:

- Talk to other mothers about their labour and birth. Ask them how they felt during the first few weeks at home.
- Talk to your health care provider about what your labour and birth may be like.
- Go on a hospital tour.
- Decide who you want to have with you during labour and birth.
- Make a list of the things your baby will need. Ask friends or family if they have things you can borrow. Buy the things your baby will need, a few at a time.
- Decide where your baby will sleep. Get this place ready. It is safest for your baby to sleep in your room, in a crib.
- Arrange for family or friends to help out during the first few weeks at home.
- Think about why babies cry and what you can do to soothe them.
- Learn more about breast feeding.
- Find out about taking time off work.
- Rest when you can. Ask for help if you need it.
- Learn about group programs that help new parents.



# What to Take to the Hospital

Ask what the hospital will provide and what you need to bring with you.  
Pack your suitcase 3 – 4 weeks before your due date.

## What to Pack Before Going to the Hospital

### *For You*

- ☐ Health card
- ☐ Pen and paper
- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ Nursing bra or good support bra
- ☐ Toiletries (toothbrush, hairbrush, etc.)
- ☐ Sanitary pads
- ☐ Nightgown and robe
- ☐ Loose fitting clothes for the trip home
- ☐ Plastic hospital registration card, if you have one
- ☐ Money for pay phone or extra food
- ☐ Phone numbers for friends and family
- ☐ Camera

### *For Your Baby's Trip Home*

- ☐ Car seat
- ☐ T-shirt
- ☐ Diapers and wipes
- ☐ Sleeper
- ☐ Socks or booties
- ☐ Hat
- ☐ Sweater
- ☐ Thin blanket
- ☐ Heavy blanket (for winter)





# Labour and Birth

The way labour begins and what happens during labour is different for each woman. It is normal to feel nervous, afraid, excited, happy, and sad all at once!

In this section, you will learn:

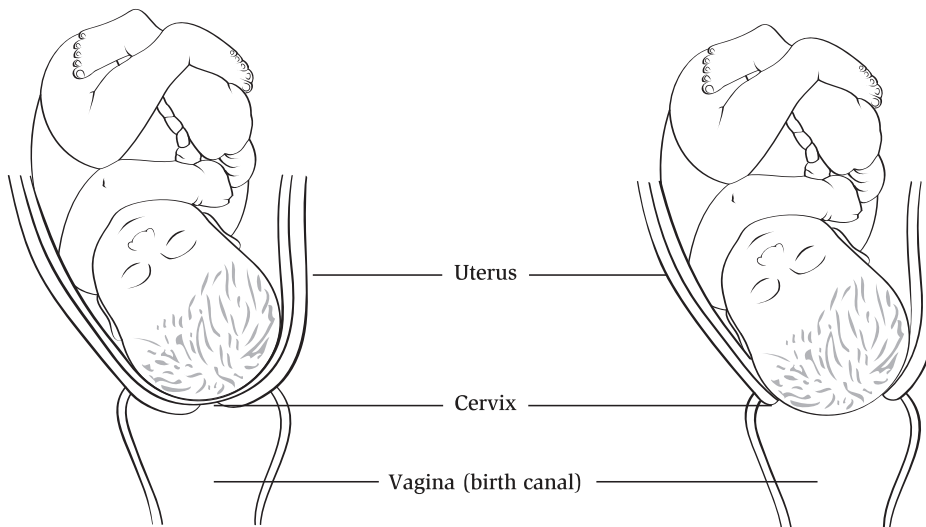
- (1) How to tell if you are in labour.  
When to go to the hospital.
- (2) How labour happens.  
Tips to help you cope.
- (3) The medical procedures your health care provider may use.

# What is Labour?

Labour is the work your womb (uterus) does to help the baby come out. For many hours, your uterus will tighten (contract), rest, and then tighten (contract) again. This makes the opening of the uterus (cervix) get thinner (efface) and open (dilate).

A contraction is when your womb (uterus) gets tight, rests, and then gets tight again. You will feel many contractions when you are in labour. The “pain of childbirth” comes mainly from the contractions. When your cervix opens to 10 cm, your contractions and your pushing will move the baby down the birth canal (vagina) and out into the world.

## The Thinning and Opening of the Cervix



### Efface

Your cervix gets thinner (effaces) before it opens (dilates).

### Dilate

Your cervix will open (dilate) to about 10 cm (4 inches) before your baby comes out.

## How long does labour last?

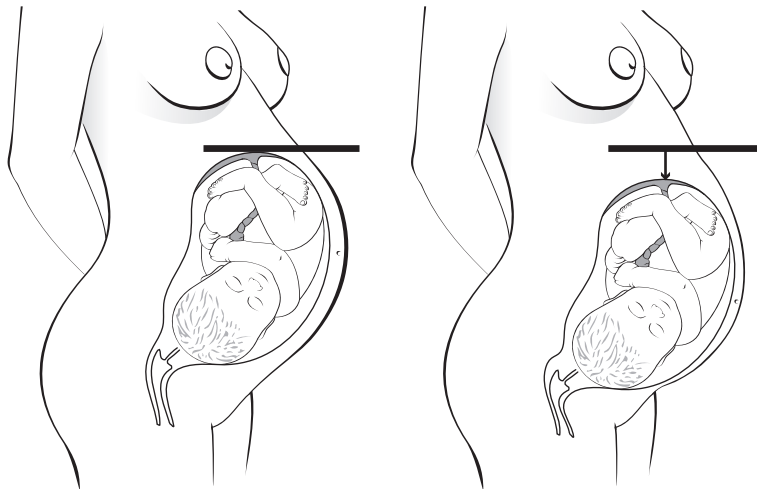
Every labour and birth is different. It is hard to know how long your labour will last. For a first baby, labour may last 12 to 20 hours.

# Signs of Labour

There are some normal signs that tell you that your labour may begin soon. Most women go into labour within a week of their due date. If you have signs of labour before you are 37 weeks pregnant, go to the hospital right away.

## (1) Lightening

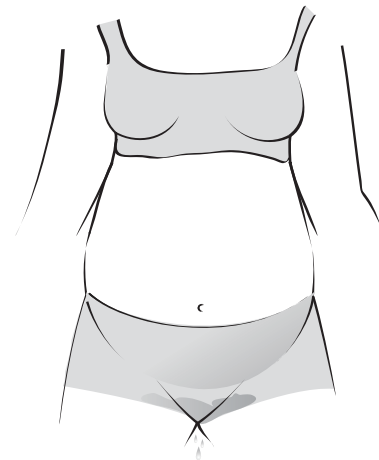
Near the end of your pregnancy, your baby will move down. When this happens you will be able to breathe better. You will feel less burning in your chest and throat after you eat. You will have to pee (pass urine) more often. If this is your first baby, this may happen 2 to 3 weeks before you go into labour. If this is not your first baby, this may not happen until closer to the time you will give birth.



Baby drops lower near the end of pregnancy.

## (2) Mucous Plug

While you are pregnant, you have a thick mucous plug in your cervix. As the baby's birth gets closer, your cervix begins to thin and open, and the plug comes out. When this happens you will notice thick mucous on your underwear, or in the toilet, or you may not notice it at all.



## (3) Bloody Show

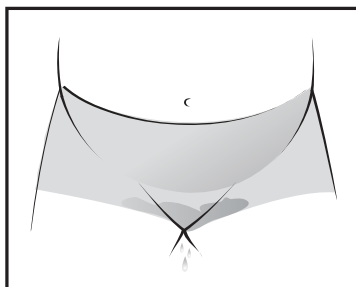
You may notice a pink, red, or brown discharge a few days before labour or during labour. This is called bloody show. Tell your health care provider when this happens.

#### (4) Bag of Water Breaks

Your baby is inside a bag of water (amniotic sac) in your womb (uterus). When the baby is ready to be born it is normal for the bag of water to break. This is an important sign. When it happens, you may have a little or a lot of water leaking from your birth canal (vagina). Sometimes women do not know whether this is water or pee (urine). If you are not sure, call your health care provider.

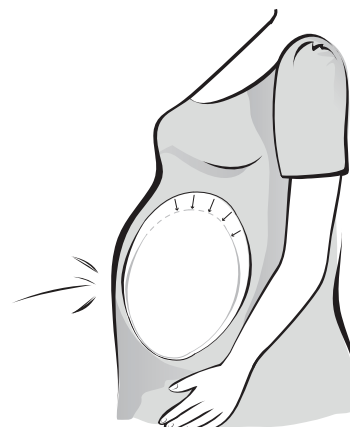
When your bag of water breaks:

- Write down the time that your bag of water broke.
- Look at the colour of the water (it should be clear).
- Notice if there is a smell (it should not smell).
- Do not use a tampon – use a pad in your underwear.
- Call your health care provider or hospital for instructions.



#### (5) Contractions

Late in your pregnancy you may have contractions (uterus tightens, rests, and tightens again) that are very strong. They may come and go for hours or days and then stop. These contractions are helping your womb (uterus) get ready for birth and are called **pre-labour** or Braxton-Hicks contractions. The chart below will help you know when you are really in labour.



Pre-labour contractions	True labour contractions
Do not get stronger.	Get stronger.
Do not become regular.	Become regular and closer together.
Go away with walking.	Get stronger when you walk.
Feel strongest in front.	May begin in back and move to front.
There is no bloody show.	A bloody show is usually present.

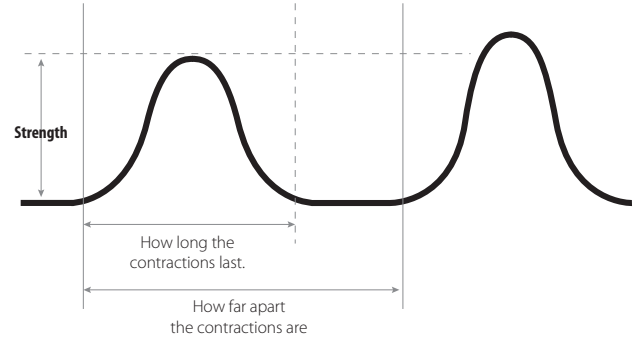


# How to Time Your Contractions

By learning how to time your contractions, you will know when you are in true labour.

Write down:

- When each contraction begins and ends.
- How far apart the contractions are.
- How long each contraction lasts.
- How strong the contractions feel.



Use a clock or watch with a second hand. To find out how long the contraction lasts, start timing from the beginning of the contraction to the end of the same contraction. To find out how far apart contractions are, time the beginning of one contraction to the beginning of the NEXT contraction.

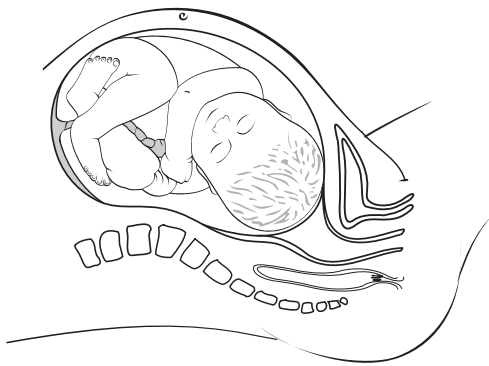
## Labour Record

Time contraction begins	Time contraction ends	How long contraction lasted	Number of minutes to the next contraction	How strong was the contraction?

# When Should You Go to the Hospital?

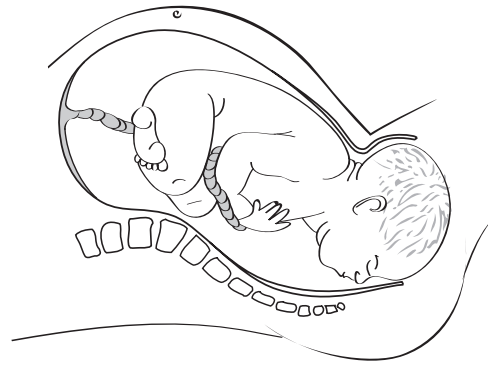
- When you are bleeding from your birth canal (vagina).
- When your contractions are 5 minutes apart (your health care provider may ask you to go to the hospital earlier).
- When your bag of water breaks.

## Four Stages of Labour



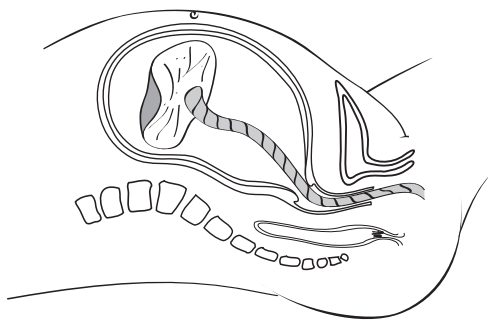
### Labour

Your contractions will slowly get stronger. They will happen more often and last longer. By the end of this stage your cervix will be thinner (effaced) and will open (dilate) to 10 cm (4 inches). Your baby will move down into your pelvis.



### Delivery

You will have more contractions. They will be very strong. You will feel the need to push. Your baby will be born.



### Postpartum

During this stage you will be pushing your placenta out.



### Recovery

During this stage you will be resting after all your effort during labour and birth. You will be spending time with your baby. Skin to skin contact with your baby will help you bond with your baby. This is a good time to start breast feeding.

# Things to Help You During Labour

Here are some tips that you can use to stay comfortable during labour. By learning to relax, you can help your baby to get enough oxygen during labour. It helps your baby to move down into the birth canal.

Use the special breathing that you learned in prenatal class or ask someone to show you.



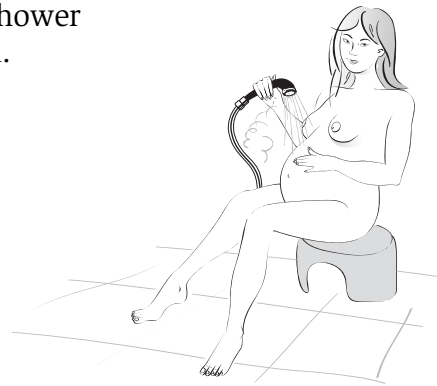
Ask your support person to massage different parts of your body. If your lower back hurts, ask your support person to push on your lower back.



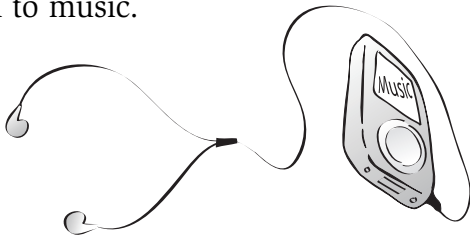
Try to find something to look at or think about during your contractions.



Have a shower or a bath.



Listen to music.



Go to the toilet to pee (pass urine) at least every hour.



Drink juice or water, or chew on ice chips. Eat small amounts of food.



Some women want medicines to help reduce the pain. Talk to your health care provider about the kinds of pain medicines that might help.

# Positions

It is important to change positions during labour. Doing so will help you to stay comfortable and help your baby move down. Try some of these positions to find the ones you like.

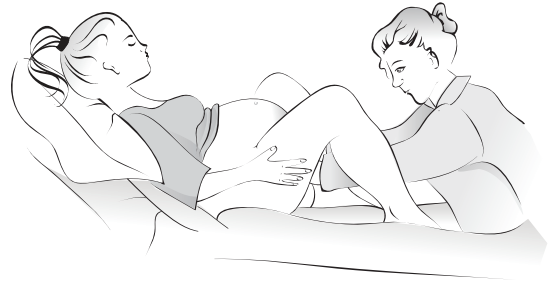


# Medical Procedures

Sometimes babies need some help to be born. Here are some medical procedures that your health care provider **may** use. Talk with your health care provider about these during your prenatal visits. This will help you to know what to expect and to be aware of the risks and benefits of each procedure.

## Induction

- Ways to start your labour such as special medication.
- Labour may be induced because the baby is overdue, the bag of water breaks but there are no contractions, or for special health reasons.



## Pain Medication

- *Intravenous Infusion (IV)* may be used to give you fluids, medication, or pain medicine through your arm.
- An *Epidural* may be used to give you pain medicine through your back.



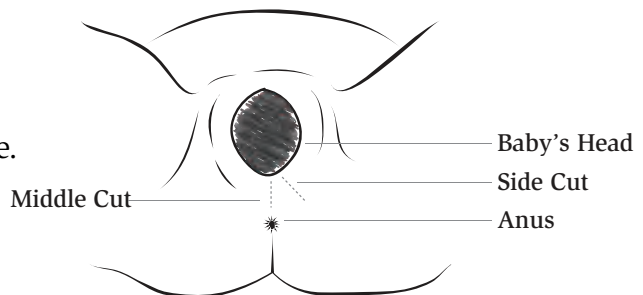
## Fetal Monitoring

- A machine called a “fetal monitor” may be used to listen to the baby's heart beat. It can also be used to check your contractions.



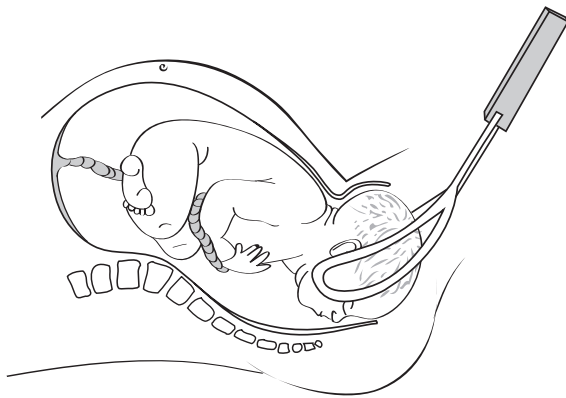
## Episiotomy

- This is a small cut to make the opening of the birth canal (vagina) bigger.
- The cut may be in the middle or on the side.
- It helps the baby to come out if the baby needs to be born quickly.
- You will need to have stitches.

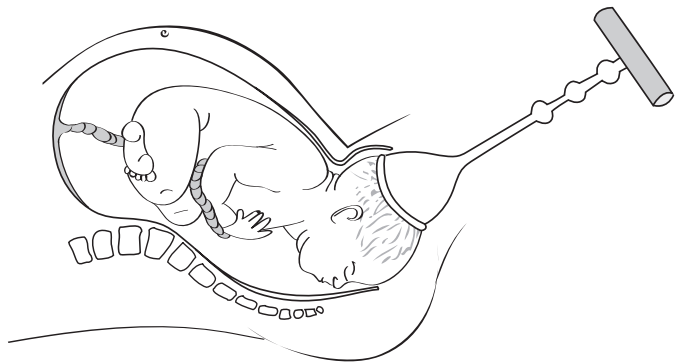


## Forceps and Vacuum Extraction

- Forceps are a spoon-like tool that fits around the baby's head.
- Vacuum extraction uses a soft cup that fits on top of the baby's head and is attached to a machine.
- They are used when:
  - The mother is too tired to push.
  - The baby is not in a good position to be born.
  - The baby needs to be born quickly.



Forceps



Vacuum Extraction

## Caesarean Section (C-section)

- This involves the baby being born through a cut in your abdomen and womb (uterus).
- There are many reasons why a C-section may be done:
  - The baby is very big.
  - The baby is lying with its legs down instead of its head.
  - Special health reasons.
  - Problems with the umbilical cord or placenta.
  - The baby needs to be born quickly.
  - Labour is very strong with little progress.
- Having a C-section may be unexpected. Your health care provider will let you know if a C-section is needed to help your baby be born safely.



## After Your Baby is Born

This is a time to start breast feeding, rest after labour and birth, and enjoy your baby.

If your baby is born in the hospital, you will stay for 1 to 2 days. In most cases, your baby will be with you in your room. Now is a good time to ask questions about baby care. If you have questions after you go home you can call the hospital, your health care provider, or the public health nurse.

A public health nurse or your midwife may visit you in your home to make sure you and your baby are healthy.



# Changes to Your Body After Birth

There are many normal changes that will happen to your body after you have a baby. Here is what to expect.

## Afterpains

After your baby is born you may feel painful contractions as your womb (uterus) goes back to its normal size. This is normal. Your health care provider will check to make sure that this is happening. You may feel these pains the most when you breast feed because your baby's sucking helps your uterus return to its normal size. Afterpains usually go away after a week. Call your health care provider if the afterpains do not go away or if they are very painful.

## Bleeding from your Vagina

You will have bleeding from your birth canal (vagina) for 2 to 6 weeks. At first, the bleeding will be heavy and dark red. In a few days the bleeding will slow down. The colour will change to brown, pink, and then to white. It is important to keep this area clean and to change your pad often. Do not use a tampon during this time.

Call your health care provider if your flow is heavier than normal, is heavier than a period, smells bad, or has large clots.

## Sore Perineum

The area between your legs may be sore or swollen. If you had stitches you may feel more pain. Try freezing a damp maxi pad and putting it in your underwear. Try sitting in a warm bath. Also, keep the area very clean by pouring warm water on the area between your legs after you pee (pass urine) or poop (have a bowel movement). You should also do the Kegel exercises (see page 42) you learned when you were pregnant. Call your health care provider if the stitches open or if you notice smelly fluid.

## Constipation

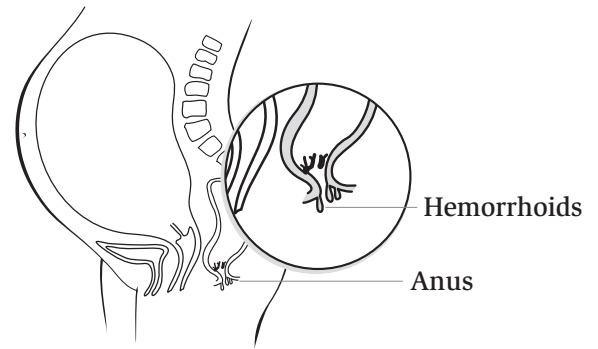
You may find it hard to have a poop (bowel movement) after your baby is born. Eat foods high in fibre and drink lots of fluids to make the bowel movement softer and easier to push out.

## Breasts

Your breasts will get firmer and bigger. Your breast milk will be yellow at first (colostrum). It provides everything your baby needs. See pages 64-66 for more information.

## Hemorrhoids

Women can get hemorrhoids during pregnancy and after they have a baby. Eat foods high in fibre and drink lots of fluids to keep the poop (bowel movement) soft and easy to pass. Ask your health care provider about medicines that may help.



## Hard to Pee (Pass Urine)

You may find it hard to pass urine for a couple of days after your baby is born. Drink lots of fluids and remind yourself to go to the toilet even if you do not feel like you have to go. If it burns or hurts when you pass urine, talk to your health care provider.



## Getting your Period

Your period may not start until after you stop breast feeding, or start to give your baby solid food at 6 months. If you are not breast feeding, your period will probably start within 2 months after you have your baby.

**Remember, you can still get pregnant, even if you do not have your period. It is important to talk to your health care provider about birth control.**

## Having Sex

It is safe to have sex after the bleeding from your birth canal (vagina) has stopped and the area between your legs has healed. Even so, you may not feel ready to have sex. The best thing is to talk to your partner about how you are feeling.

Go to see your health care provider 6 weeks after your baby is born for your check-up. Ask about birth control methods. You can get pregnant even if you are breast feeding and your periods have not started again.

## Postnatal Physical Activity

Taking care of yourself helps you to take care of your baby. Being active after your baby is born will improve your blood flow and make you stronger. Ask your health care provider or public health nurse about activities to do after having your baby.

## If You had a C-Section

If you had a C-section, you will need to take extra care and will need extra rest. Ask for help. Talk to your health care provider.

# Your Changing Feelings

The first few days and weeks after your baby is born are both exciting and tiring. You may have many new feelings.

## Baby Blues

Many new mothers feel sad or cry easily for a week or two after the baby is born. This should be better after 2 weeks. If not, talk to your health care provider. This is called having the baby blues. These feelings are normal and happen for many reasons, such as:

- Changing hormones.
- Lack of sleep.
- Not feeling sure how to care for the baby.
- Worry about being a mother.
- Trying to do everything at once.
- Your changing relationship with your partner.



## Here are some tips to help you cope during the first few weeks:

- Before you leave the hospital, ask a lot of questions about how to care for your baby.
- Try to get as much rest as you can when you get home. Sleep when your baby sleeps.
- Limit the number of visitors and keep the visits short.
- Arrange for family and friends to help with cooking and cleaning.
- Give yourself time to adjust to your new life.

## Postpartum Depression

When the feelings of “baby blues” continue for a longer time and feel stronger or get worse, you may have postpartum depression.

### *You may be feeling:*

Sad, alone, worried, or nervous. You may also feel overwhelmed, ashamed, guilty, angry, upset, or irritable. You may not enjoy being with other people (including your baby) or you may get angry very easily.

### *You may also:*

- Be tired all the time (especially after feeding the baby at night).
- Want to sleep all the time.
- Have trouble sleeping or relaxing.
- Cry easily and for no reason.
- Have no appetite or want to eat all the time.
- Feel like your heart is beating too fast.
- Feel sweaty, numb, or tingling.
- Have a lump in your throat.
- Worry a lot about the baby.

If these feelings last more than 2 weeks, **get help right away**. Talk with your health care provider or public health nurse. They will know how to help.



Some women think about hurting themselves or their baby. If you feel this way, **get help right away**. Go to the hospital or call your health care provider.

For more information [www.lifewithnewbaby.ca](http://www.lifewithnewbaby.ca)

## Fathers, Partners, Friends, and Family

You can help a new mother get the care and support they need. If you notice signs of postpartum depression, help her contact her health care provider right away.

## See a Health Care Provider Right Away if:

- There is a bad smell coming from your birth canal (vagina).
- Large blood clots come from your birth canal (vagina).
- The amount of blood coming from your birth canal (vagina) is heavier than normal.
- Blood is still coming from your birth canal (vagina) after 6 weeks.
- Your stitches open.
- You have a fever.
- You have signs of postpartum depression (see page 59).
- You think something is not right.



## Your Baby

As a parent you need to create a loving, safe, and healthy home for your baby. In this section you will learn:

- (1) How to comfort your baby.
- (2) When to get help for your baby.
- (3) About breast feeding.
- (4) How to keep your baby safe.

# Being a Parent

In the first year of life, parenting is about comforting your baby and making sure they are safe. Your baby will feel loved and safe if you comfort them when they are startled, scared, or upset. You will not spoil your baby by holding them. Your baby wants to be close to you.

Babies cry to tell you that they need something. They may be hungry, tired, wet, cold, or hot. They may want to be held. Try to respond before your baby is crying loudly. Learn the early signs that your baby needs something.

## When your baby is crying or fussy:

- Try feeding your baby.
- Check to see if your baby needs a clean diaper.
- Check to see if your baby is too hot or too cold.
- Try carrying or rocking the baby using very gentle movements.
- Wrap your baby in a soft blanket. Take your baby to a quiet room and turn off the lights.
- Play soft music, sing, or hum to your baby. Avoid loud, sudden noises.
- Give your baby a warm bath or massage.
- Show your baby bright, colourful objects.
- Take your baby for a walk outside.



## If you are feeling upset because your baby is crying:

Some babies cry more than others. All babies have a time in their first few months when they cry more often. Sometimes nothing you do will calm your baby. If you are feeling upset:

- Put your baby in his or her crib and leave the room.
- Ask someone to hold the baby for you while you take a break.
- Call a friend, family member, or someone you trust and talk to them about your feelings.

**Never shake a baby or child.** It can cause brain damage or death.



# When to Get Help for your Baby

If your baby has any of the following signs, or if you feel something is not right, see a health care provider right away. Do not wait.

- Your baby is hard to wake or seems very weak.
- Your baby is breathing very quickly or has trouble breathing.
- Your baby's lips or ear lobes are blue or grey.
- Your baby is losing weight or not gaining weight.
- Your baby has a fever (has a temperature).
- Your baby has sunken eyes or the soft spot on top of the head is sunken.
- Your baby has a dry mouth, lips, tongue, or nose.
- Your baby's skin is pale, cold, and moist.
- Your baby's whole body, arms, and legs are shaking (having a seizure).
- Your baby vomits more than twice in one day.
- Your baby is passing less pee (urine) or has dark yellow urine.
- Your baby has more poops (bowel movements) than usual, and they are watery.
- Your baby usually has regular poops (bowel movements), but suddenly stops.
- Your baby feeds poorly or refuses to feed.
- Your baby cries more often, or differently. Nothing you do seems to help.

# Why Breast Feed Your Baby?

Breast feeding is one of the best things you can do for your baby and yourself. For the first 6 months, breast milk is all your baby needs. After 6 months, you can start adding other foods while breast feeding to 2 years or more.

## Breast feeding is healthy for your baby:

- Provides the best food that is always fresh and ready.
- Helps prevent an upset tummy.
- Protects against illnesses and allergies.
- Helps to promote proper jaw and tooth development.
- May reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.
- Provides closeness and warm touch from the mother.
- Promotes good health and brain development.



## Breast feeding is healthy for you:

- Helps your womb (uterus) return to its normal size more quickly.
- Uses up the extra fat you gained during pregnancy.
- Helps protect you from cancer.
- Saves time and money.
- Helps you bond with your baby.

# What You Need to Know About Breast Feeding

Most pregnant women know that breast feeding is best for them and their babies. But they may not know that:

## Breast feeding gives mothers a lot of freedom.

Some mothers think that breast feeding will limit what they can do. **This is not true.** You can breast feed your baby anywhere, and anytime. You do not need to take along bottles or formula. There is no need to worry about where to warm up the milk or about sterilizing bottles.

## Breast feeding mothers can eat all foods.

A breast feeding mother should eat many kinds of foods and follow Canada's Food Guide. You can eat all the foods you want in moderation. Only in some cases do babies react to foods that you have eaten. If that happens do not eat that food for a while or eat only a small amount.

## Mothers who smoke can breast feed.

Some mothers who smoke think they should not breast feed. This is not true. It would be better if the mother quit smoking or smoked less. If she cannot do this, she can still breast feed because it is good for both her and her baby. It is best to smoke after you breast feed your baby. If you smoke outside, your baby will breathe in less smoke.

## Mothers can breast feed in public.

You can breast feed your baby at any time, anywhere. In Canada, all mothers have the right to breast feed their babies in public. Some mothers feel more comfortable by placing a blanket over their shoulders when they are breast feeding their baby in public.



## **Most mothers make more than enough milk for their babies.**

The amount of milk depends on how often and how well the baby feeds on the breast. More milk will come when the baby breast feeds more often and has a good latch and suck.

## **Fathers and partners can be involved.**

Fathers and partners can learn about how breast feeding will help their baby. They can bring the baby to be breast fed. They can offer the mother a glass of water or juice while she is breast feeding. They can burp the baby afterwards. Fathers and partners can encourage mothers to keep breast feeding, and to get help if they need it.

Fathers and partners play an important role with the new baby. They can get to know their new baby by bathing, changing, and holding their baby. They can encourage the mother to rest when she can. They can make sure the mother is not bothered by the phone or visitors when she is resting.



## **Breast feeding does not hurt.**

In the first week, it is common for nipples to feel tender. This gets better in a few days. The two most common reasons for painful breast feeding are poor positioning and poor latch. If you are feeling pain, make sure you get some help.

## **Breast feeding mothers can tell if their babies are getting enough breast milk.**

A mother knows that her baby is getting enough breast milk by the number of wet and dirty diapers, the amount of weight the baby gains, and the way the baby breast feeds.

## **Breast feed often.**

Start breast feeding right after your baby is born. Your new baby will need to feed often. Breast feed whenever your baby seems hungry. Don't wait until your baby is crying loudly. They may be too upset to feed well.

## **Breast Feeding Resources**

There are many resources that can help you learn more about breast feeding and where to get help. See page 75.

# Safety Tips

When your baby comes home, here are some important safety tips you need to know.

## How to keep your baby safe:

- Never leave your baby alone except in a crib or a playpen.
- Put your baby down to sleep on his or her back.
- Always support your baby's head. Your baby's neck muscles are weak.
- When you are changing the baby's clothes or giving your baby a bath, always keep one hand on the baby's body at all times. Do not turn away or leave the room.
- Never leave your baby alone in the bathtub.
- Do not prop a bottle in your baby's mouth. Your baby may choke.
- Be sure that toys are sturdy and washable with no small parts.
- Keep small objects out of your baby's reach.
- Test your baby's bath water before you put the baby in the bath. It should feel warm, **not hot**. Use the inside of your wrist or your elbow to test.
- Your tap water should be no hotter than 49°C (120°F).
- Never hold your baby when you are smoking, drinking a hot drink, or cooking.
- Keep emergency phone numbers posted in an area where you can reach them quickly.
- Make sure you have working smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and a fire extinguisher in the house.
- The best way to keep your baby safe is to stay close to your baby.
- Be aware that prevention is the most important part of safety. Children are active and need to explore. Parents need to ensure that the child's environment is safe as they grow and develop new skills.

# Safe Sleeping

Your baby will sleep a lot in the first month after they are born. The safest place for a baby to sleep is in a crib in your room. It is not safe for a baby to sleep on a couch, waterbed, or in a bed with another adult or child.

These tips will help your baby sleep safely. They may help protect your baby from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (baby dies suddenly):

- Lay your baby on his or her back to sleep, not on the tummy or side.
- Remove pillows, toys, stuffed animals, bumper pads, plastics, or mattress wrapping from the crib. These could affect the flow of air around your baby.
- Keep your baby warm but not hot. If your baby is sweating, this means your baby is too hot.
- Ask friends and family not to smoke in your home.
- Breast feed your baby.
- Keep emergency phone numbers near your phone.



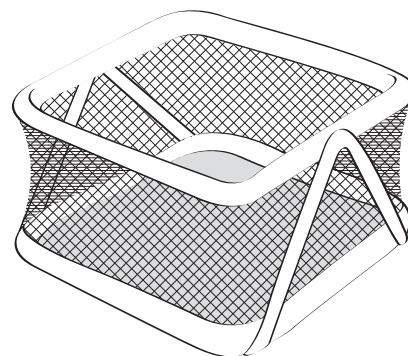
# Is Your Baby Equipment Safe?

If you borrow baby equipment, make sure it is well maintained. Consumer Product Safety at Health Canada has information on the safety of baby products. Go to [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/index-eng.php) or call 1-866-662-0666. The Canadian Safety Standards Association (CSA) regulates some types of baby equipment. The CSA symbol shows that the equipment is safe for use in Canada:



## Playpens must:

- Be in good repair.
- Have a sturdy floor with a thin foam pad.
- Have secure hinges that can not pinch the baby.
- Have sides made of very fine mesh with no rips.



## Cribs must:

- Be made after 1986.
- Be put together carefully. Follow instructions.
- Be sturdy. Make sure it is built with screws and bolts, not hooks or clamps.
- Have a secure support system for the mattress.
- Have a firm mattress that fits snugly. The mattress is too small if you can fit more than 2 fingers between the mattress and the side of the crib.
- Have no pillows, toys, or bumper pads in them.



## Baby Seats must:

- Have a wide and sturdy base.
- Have safety straps.
- Have a non-slip base.
- Always be set down on the floor, never on a table.



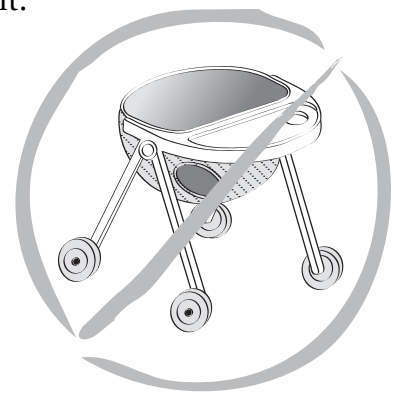
## High Chairs must:

- Be far away from the stove and kitchen counters.
- Have a wide and sturdy base.
- Have a safety belt.
- Have no sharp edges or parts on the tray that might pinch little fingers.
- Have no gaps between the tray and the back of the chair. This will prevent the child's arm or head from getting trapped.



## Strollers

- Must be sturdy.
- Must have brakes that are working.
- Should be the right size for your child's height and weight.
- Do not carry extra children in the stroller.
- Make sure to use the lap belt.
- Do not use pillows or blankets as padding.



## Walkers

- **No** walkers are safe. They are banned in Canada.

## Window Safety is Important

Children can fall from a window or strangle on window cords. In some towns and cities, all apartment windows that are 2 metres or more above the ground, and do not lead to a balcony, must have special safety devices on them.

### *To protect your child's safety:*

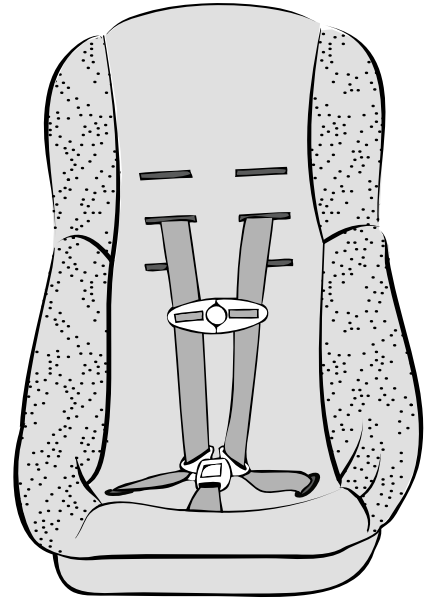
- Be sure to keep furniture, or anything else children can climb, away from windows.
- Never leave a child alone.
- Teach your child not to lean against windows or screens and not to play near them.
- Keep window cords out of the reach of children.
- Test your window safety devices regularly. Make sure they are working the way they should and that the release lock can be opened in case of an emergency.

## Clothes

- No hanging cords, drawstrings, ribbons, or scarves.
- Should fit snugly

# Car Seats

- Your child's car seat must have a label showing that it meets the **Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (CMVSS)**.
- The car seat's label should also show that it is less than 10 years old.
- Make sure the car seat has **not** been involved in a car crash.
- Make sure the car seat has **not** been dropped from a height of one metre (3 feet) or more.
- Whether you buy or borrow a car seat, make sure it comes with instructions on how to use it and that it has all its parts. Call the company that made the car seat if something is missing.
- Make sure the car seat has not been recalled with a safety problem. To find out, call Transport Canada 1-800-333-0371.
- Make sure the car seat is in good condition:
  - No cracks or chips in the molded plastic.
  - No warping, rust, or broken rivets in the frame.
  - No cut, frayed edges, or broken stitches in the harness straps.
  - No rips in the seat's padding.
  - All the harness buckles work properly.
- For more information, see page 76 under Child Safety.



## Using a Car Seat

Car seats for babies must face the back of the car. When your baby has reached a certain age, weight, or height, you may need to buy another car seat. Read the instructions to find out how to use your car seat. Find out about clinics to help you learn how to use your car seat safely.

- Make sure the car seat fits well in your car.
- The safest place for the car seat is the back seat of the car, in the middle.
- The car seat's harness straps and buckles are supposed to be snug. No more than one finger should fit between the harness strap and your baby's collar bone.
- The chest clip should be at your baby's armpit level.
- Read the instructions to find out the recommended position for the carry handle.





## Community Resources

# Resources and Services for Pregnant Woman

It is normal to have questions about pregnancy and having a new baby. This list provides you with helpful websites, phone numbers, and program names to help you to learn more about having a healthy pregnancy and baby.

## Abuse

### ***Assaulted Women's Help Line***

1-866-863-0511

Crisis line with help in 150 languages:  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### ***Police 911***

***www.shelternet.ca***

Shelternet connects women to nearby shelters.



## Alcohol and Drugs

### ***Alcohol and Pregnancy***

The Public Health Agency of Canada's website provides information about alcohol and pregnancy.

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fasd-etcaf/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fasd-etcaf/index-eng.php)

### ***Alcohol-Free Pregnancy***

Best Start Resource Centre website provides information about alcohol and pregnancy.

[www.alcoholfreepregnancy.ca](http://www.alcoholfreepregnancy.ca)

### ***Motherisk***

Alcohol and Substance Use in Pregnancy Help Line

1-877-327-4636 • [www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org)

## Bereavement (Grief)

### ***Canadian Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths***

Information about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and bereavement.

1-800-363-7437 • [www.sidscanada.org](http://www.sidscanada.org)

### ***Perinatal Bereavement Service Ontario***

Support services for families that are coping with the death of an infant.

1-888-301-7276 • [www.pbso.ca](http://www.pbso.ca)

## Breast Feeding

### ***Canadian Lactation Consultant Association***

Find a lactation consultant.

[www.ilca.org](http://www.ilca.org)

### ***Infact Canada***

Breast feeding rights in Canada.

[www.infactcanada.ca](http://www.infactcanada.ca)

### ***La Leche League Canada***

Information and support for breast feeding.

1-800-665-4324

[www.LLCC.ca](http://www.LLCC.ca)

### ***Your Local Public Health Department***

Public health nurses provide information and support. They may also have a lactation consultant.

1-800-267-8097

## Children's Health and Development

### ***About Kids Health***

The Hospital for Sick Children offers parents a website with reliable, current information about all aspects of child health and quality of life. The website is easy to understand.

[www.aboutkidshealth.ca](http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca)

### ***Best Start Resource Centre***

Online resources about prenatal and child health.

[www.beststart.org](http://www.beststart.org)

### ***Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs***

Parenting resources, including a directory of family resource programs across Canada.

1-866-637-7226

### ***Canadian Immunization Guide***

Immunization schedule for Canadian children.

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/p03-01-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/p03-01-eng.php)

## Children's Health and Development (continued)

### ***Caring for Kids***

Child and youth health information from the Canadian Paediatric Society.

1-613-526-9397

[www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca)

### ***Growing Healthy Canadians***

Information on how to promote the well-being of children and youth.

[www.growinghealthykids.com](http://www.growinghealthykids.com)

### ***Infant Care***

The Public Health Agency of Canada's website provides information about infant care.

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/prenatal/index\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/prenatal/index_e.html)

### ***Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program***

Education and support program for parents of children from birth to age five.

1-705-567-5926

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/family\\_famille/nobody\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/family_famille/nobody_e.html)

### ***Oral Health from Birth to Age 5***

Ontario Government information about oral health for children from birth to age 5.

[www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/early/baby\\_teeth.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/early/baby_teeth.html)

### ***Your Local Public Health Department***

Public health nurses provide information and support.

1-800-267-8097

## Child Safety

### ***Car Seat Information***

Ontario Government information about choosing and installing car seats.

[www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/carseat/choose.htm](http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/carseat/choose.htm)

### ***Car Seat Safety***

Transport Canada information about safety in the car for children.

1-800-333-0371

[www.tc.gc.ca/eng/roadsafety/safedrivers-childsafety-index-53.htm](http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/roadsafety/safedrivers-childsafety-index-53.htm)



## **Child Safety** (continued)

### ***Safe Kids Canada***

This national program is part of The Hospital for Sick Children. It helps partners and parents across Canada to reduce children's injuries and deaths.

1-888-723-3847

[www.safekidscanada.ca](http://www.safekidscanada.ca)

### ***Your Local Public Health Department***

Public health nurses provide information and support. Most have an infant development program.

1-800-267-8097

## **Health Care Providers**

### ***Association of Ontario Midwives***

Information about midwifery services in Ontario.

1-866-418-3773

[www.aom.on.ca](http://www.aom.on.ca)

### ***Canadian Doula Association***

Information about doulas, and directory of doulas.

[www.doulacare.ca](http://www.doulacare.ca)

### ***College of Family Physicians of Canada***

National voluntary organization of family physicians.

1-800-387-6197

[www.cfpc.ca](http://www.cfpc.ca)

### ***Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada***

Promotes women's health.

1-800-561-2416

[www.sogc.org](http://www.sogc.org)

### ***Telehealth Ontario***

A free Ontario Government phone service to get health advice from a nurse.

1-866-797-0000

## New Immigrants

### ***Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs***

Welcome Here website offers links to a variety of parenting resources in many languages.  
[www.welcomehere.ca](http://www.welcomehere.ca)

### ***Citizenship and Immigration Canada***

Assists newcomers to Canada with citizenship registration and language instruction.  
1-888-242-2100  
[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

### ***Ontario Immigration***

Information for new immigrants to Ontario on procedures to follow and relevant links.  
[www.ontarioimmigration.ca](http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca)

### ***Settlement.org***

Offers settlement resources and information in more than 30 languages. Links to resources such as Newcomer Information Centres and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC).  
[www.settlement.org](http://www.settlement.org)

## Nutrition

### ***Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP)***

Community-based services provide food, nutrition information, support, education, referral, and counselling on health issues.  
[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/cpnp\\_main-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/cpnp_main-eng.php)

### ***Canada's Food Guide***

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index_e.html)

### ***Dietitians of Canada***

Information on food and nutrition for Canadians.  
[www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)

### ***EatRight Ontario***

Get answers to your nutrition and healthy eating questions.  
Offered by the Ontario Government.  
1-877-510-510-2  
[www.eatrightontario.ca](http://www.eatrightontario.ca)

### ***Your Local Public Health Department***

Public health nurses and dietitians provide information and support.  
1-800-267-8097

## Parenting

### ***Government of Ontario Best Start Initiative***

Early learning and child development services. Includes infant hearing, speech and language, child care, and services for children with low vision.

[www.ontario.ca/beststart](http://www.ontario.ca/beststart)

### ***Canadian Child Care Federation***

Online fact sheets and resources about parenting.

[www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca](http://www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca)

### ***Community Action Program for Children (CAPC)***

Programs to address health and development of young children.

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/capc\\_main-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/capc_main-eng.php)

### ***Rainbow Health Ontario***

Works to improve the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people in Ontario.

[www.rainbowhealthontario.ca](http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca)

### ***Father Involvement Initiative***

Resources and information about father involvement.

[www.cfii.ca](http://www.cfii.ca)

### ***Healthy Babies Healthy Children***

Government of Ontario initiative for pregnant women and parents of young children. Provides information for all parents, and additional help and support for parents who need it.

1-800-267-8097

[www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/earlychildhood/health/index.aspx](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/earlychildhood/health/index.aspx)

### ***Multiple Births Canada***

Support, education, research, and advocacy about multiple births.

1-866-228-8824

[www.multiplebirthscanada.org](http://www.multiplebirthscanada.org)

### ***Ontario Early Years Centres***

Ontario Government centres where parents can get parenting information and take part in parenting programs.

1-866-821-7770

[www.ontario.ca/earlyyears](http://www.ontario.ca/earlyyears)

### ***Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres***

[www.ofifc.org](http://www.ofifc.org)

## Parenting (continued)

### ***Registering a Birth in Ontario***

How to register a birth and apply for a birth certificate.  
[www.ontario.ca/en/life\\_events/baby/004436](http://www.ontario.ca/en/life_events/baby/004436)

### ***Your Local Public Health Department***

Public health nurses provide information and support.  
1-800-267-8097

## Postpartum Depression

### ***Canadian Mental Health Association***

Information about postpartum depression.  
[www.cmha.ca/bins/content\\_page.asp?cid=3-86-87-88&lang=1](http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=3-86-87-88&lang=1)

### ***Life with a New Baby***

The Best Start Resource Centre's website offers information about postpartum mood disorders.  
[www.lifewithnewbaby.ca](http://www.lifewithnewbaby.ca)

### ***Mood Disorder Society of Canada***

Postpartum depression information.  
[www.mooddisorderscanada.ca](http://www.mooddisorderscanada.ca)

### ***Your Local Public Health Department***

Public health nurses provide information and support.  
1-800-267-8097

## Pregnancy

### ***Canadian Diabetes Association***

Information about diabetes.  
[www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)

### ***Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP)***

Community-based services provide food, nutrition information, support, education, referral, and counselling on health issues.  
[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/cpn\\_p\\_main-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/cpn_p_main-eng.php)

### ***Due Date Calculator***

[www.sogc.org/health/pregnancy-calculator\\_e.asp](http://www.sogc.org/health/pregnancy-calculator_e.asp)

## **Pregnancy** (continued)

### ***Health Before Pregnancy***

The Best Start Resource Centre's website offers information about health before pregnancy.

[www.healthbeforepregnancy.ca](http://www.healthbeforepregnancy.ca)

### ***Healthy Pregnancy***

The Public Health Agency of Canada's website provides information about healthy pregnancy.

[www.healthy Canad ians.gc.ca/hp-gs/index\\_e.html](http://www.healthy Canadians.gc.ca/hp-gs/index_e.html)

### ***Lamaze International***

Information about Lamaze techniques and classes.

[www.lamaze.org](http://www.lamaze.org)

### ***Maternity and Parenting Leaves***

Information on length of maternity, parental, and adoption leave.

[www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/benefits/maternityparental.shtml](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/benefits/maternityparental.shtml)

[www.ontario.ca/en/life\\_events/baby/012214](http://www.ontario.ca/en/life_events/baby/012214)

### ***Motherisk***

Information and guidance for pregnant or breast feeding women about the risks of being exposed to drugs, chemicals, infections, disease, and radiation.

Main Line: 1-416-813-6780

Alcohol and Substance Use in Pregnancy: 1-877-327-4636

Morning Sickness: 1-800-436-8477

HIV in Pregnancy: 1-888-246-5840

[www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org)

### ***Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres***

[www.ofifc.org](http://www.ofifc.org)

### ***Ontario Human Rights Commission***

1-800-387-9080

[www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)

### ***Oral Health during Pregnancy***

Government of Canada information about oral health during pregnancy.

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-gs/guide-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-gs/guide-eng.php)

### ***Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada***

Women's health information about pregnancy, birth control, and sexual health.

[www.sogc.org](http://www.sogc.org)

## **Pregnancy** (continued)

### ***SportCARE – Exercise and Pregnancy Question Hotline***

Phone line for questions about exercise and pregnancy.

1-866-937-7678

### ***Women's Health Matters Pregnancy Health Centre***

Online information about pregnancy.

[www.womenshealthmatters.ca/centres/pregnancy/index.html](http://www.womenshealthmatters.ca/centres/pregnancy/index.html)

### ***Your Local Public Health Department***

Public health nurses provide information and support.

1-800-267-8097

## **Sexual Health**

### ***Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network***

Non-profit network of people and organizations that support Aboriginal people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in all parts of Canada.

1-888-285-2226

[www.caan.ca](http://www.caan.ca)

### ***Canadian Federation for Sexual Health***

Information and resources on sexual and reproductive health.

1-613-241-4474

[www.cfsh.ca](http://www.cfsh.ca)

### ***HIV/AIDS Testing***

Public Health Agency of Canada information about HIV/AIDS testing.

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/aids-sida/info/4\\_e.html#find](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/aids-sida/info/4_e.html#find)

### ***Provincial and Territorial STI/HIV/AIDS Helpline Telephone Numbers***

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/phone\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/phone_e.html)

### ***Sexualityandu.ca***

Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada website provides information and education on sexual health.

[www.sexualityandu.ca](http://www.sexualityandu.ca)

### ***Your Local Public Health Department***

Public health nurses provide information and support.

1-800-267-8097

## Smoking

### ***Aboriginal Tobacco Strategy***

The purpose of the Aboriginal Tobacco Strategy is to promote “tobacco wise” Aboriginal communities.  
[www.tobaccowise.com](http://www.tobaccowise.com)

### ***Canadian Cancer Society Smokers’ Helpline***

Free service that provides private and personal support, advice and information about quitting smoking or tobacco use.  
1-877-513-5333  
[www.smokershelpline.ca](http://www.smokershelpline.ca)

### ***Canadian Lung Association***

Information about asthma and pregnancy, smoking and tobacco, and smoking help phone line.  
1-888-566-5864  
[www.lung.ca/home-accueil\\_e.php](http://www.lung.ca/home-accueil_e.php)

### ***Go Smokefree***

Health Canada website provides a wide range of information and resources on tobacco control.  
[Gosmokefree.gc.ca](http://Gosmokefree.gc.ca)

### ***Pregnets – Smoking and Pregnancy***

Information about quitting smoking for pregnant women and new mothers.  
[www.pregnets.org](http://www.pregnets.org)

### ***Your Local Public Health Department***

Public health nurses provide information and support.  
1-800-267-8097



## Notes

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- McMaster Children's Hospital
- Motherisk Program, The Hospital for Sick Children
- Niagara Region Public Health
- Nutrition Resource Centre
- Ontario Breastfeeding Committee
- Ottawa Public Health
- Perinatal Partnership Program of Eastern and Southeastern Ontario
- Peterborough County-City Health Unit
- Registered Nurses Association of Ontario
- Safe Kids Canada
- St. Joseph's Healthcare
- Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada
- SportC.A.R.E., Women's College Hospital
- Toronto Public Health
- Windsor-Essex County Health Unit
- Women's College Hospital
- Interested nurses, family physicians, paediatricians and midwives

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Best Start: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn  
and Early Child Development Resource Centre  
[www.beststart.org](http://www.beststart.org)

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young children. Best Start Resource Centre is a key program of  
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**best start**  
**meilleur départ** 

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