



You're Pregnant - Now What?

Finding out you're pregnant can bring on a flood of emotions - excitement, happiness, nervousness and plenty of questions.

The early weeks can feel overwhelming, but it's normal to wonder what to do first, when to schedule your initial obstetrician/gynecologist (OB-GYN) appointment and whether your pregnancy symptoms are normal.

The good news is that you don't need to have everything figured out right away. The first 8-12 weeks are less about having the perfect plan and more about taking a few important first steps to support your health, your baby and your peace of mind.

This guide is designed to help you navigate those early weeks with a little more confidence, clarity and support - whether you're becoming a mom for the first time or growing your family again.



Your First and Most Important Step: Choosing the Right OB-GYN

The OB-GYN you choose will be by your side throughout your pregnancy, so this decision matters more than most people realize. Whoever you choose will set the tone for the rest of your pregnancy, so you want to pick an OB-GYN who makes you feel heard, supported and confident in their care.

Here are a few things to look for:

- **Good communication:** You should have open, transparent communication with your OB-GYN and feel comfortable asking as many questions as you need. The right OB-GYN will be one who is always ready to discuss your concerns and birth plan, and whose answers you can trust.
- **Hospital affiliation:** Your OB-GYN's hospital affiliation determines where you'll deliver your baby. If you're partial to a specific hospital, check that your OB-GYN has privileges there.
- **Expertise and experience:** Whether your pregnancy is routine or high-risk, you'll want to choose an OB-GYN with experience that can support your unique needs.
- **Philosophy of care:** Every OB-GYN has a different approach to pregnancy and delivery, so it's important to find an OB-GYN whose birth approach aligns with your preferences. Ask about their philosophy of care, such as how they might support a natural birth, when they recommend interventions like inductions, epidurals and C-sections, and how they involve you in the decision-making process.



Questions to Ask an OB-GYN

Finding the right OB-GYN is about more than their credentials. When speaking with different OB-GYNs, it's important to feel comfortable asking questions about their communication style, philosophy of care and approach to childbirth. Here are some questions you should consider asking an OB-GYN:

- What is your approach to birth plans and patient preferences?
- How do you support shared decision-making throughout pregnancy and labor?
- How do you typically handle inductions and C-sections?
- Under what circumstances do you recommend these interventions?
- Will I see the same provider at each visit? If not, how will I get to know the providers who may deliver my baby?
- How do you support pain management and what pain relief options do you offer?
- What happens if you're not on call when I go into labor?
- Who might deliver my baby, and will I have the opportunity to meet them beforehand?
- How do you work with nurses, doulas and support people, and how is my support team incorporated into my labor and delivery experience?

What to Expect During Each Trimester

Pregnancy is full of changes, some exciting, some uncomfortable, and some entirely new. Knowing what to expect can help make the entire experience feel less intimidating.

Even if you've given birth before, a new pregnancy can feel very different from the last. Symptoms, energy levels, emotions and even timelines can vary greatly from pregnancy to pregnancy.

Here's a simple breakdown of each trimester:

First Trimester

- Weeks 1-12
- During this stage, the baby is just beginning to form. Your body is also beginning to go through major changes, so you may feel symptoms like nausea, fatigue, breast tenderness and frequent urination.
- Prenatal vitamins as well as getting blood work done are vital during this time.
- Schedule your first appointment, including your first ultrasound, as well as follow-up visits with your OB-GYN.



Second Trimester

- Weeks 13-28
- During the second trimester, the fetus begins developing bones, organs mature further and you may begin to feel their first movements (known as “quickening”).
- The second trimester is known as the “honeymoon phase” because you may experience fewer unwanted symptoms than the first. Your energy level may be higher and nausea may subside.
- Routine ultrasounds are an important part of this trimester to keep track of your baby’s development. You should also plan a hospital tour and look into birthing classes during this time.

Third Trimester

- Weeks 29-40
- During the final trimester, your baby begins to add weight quickly and major organ systems finalize development.
- The expanding uterus may put pressure on your bladder and surrounding organs, leading to more frequent urination, backaches, heartburn and Braxton Hicks contractions (false labor).
- Continue seeing your OB-GYN to monitor your blood pressure, check fetal position and screen for late-pregnancy complications like preeclampsia.

Early Pregnancy Symptoms

Early pregnancy symptoms look different for everyone. Even experienced moms may be surprised to find how different one pregnancy feels from another.

Common early symptoms include:

- Backaches
- Bloating
- Breast tenderness
- Constipation
- Fatigue
- Food aversions or cravings
- Frequent urination
- Headaches
- Mood swings
- Nausea and vomiting, aka “morning sickness”



When to Contact Your OB-GYN

Most early symptoms are normal, but reach out if you experience:

- Nausea and vomiting so severe you cannot keep food or fluids down for more than 24 hours – this may be hyperemesis gravidarum, a treatable condition that shouldn't be ignored
- Significant weight loss due to inability to eat or drink
- Severe abdominal pain or cramping
- Any vaginal bleeding
- Persistent feelings of depression or anxiety

When in doubt, call your OB-GYN. Your care team would always rather hear from you than have you wondering whether something is worth mentioning.



Lifestyle Changes for a Healthy Pregnancy

Taking care of yourself during pregnancy doesn't have to be complicated, but making a few lifestyle changes can make a meaningful difference for both you and your baby.

Prenatal Vitamins

Start taking a prenatal vitamin as early as possible, ideally before you ever conceive (if you're planning ahead). Folic acid is especially important in the first trimester to support your baby's neural development, but ask your OB-GYN which prenatal vitamin is right for you.

Nutrition and Hydration

Focus on eating meals that include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats. If nausea is affecting your appetite, try eating small frequent meals instead of three large meals per day.

Some foods and drinks you should avoid include:

- Raw or uncooked meat, poultry, seafood and eggs
- High-mercury fish such as swordfish, shark and king mackerel
- Unpasteurized dairy, soft cheeses and deli meats (unless heated until steaming)
- Alcohol
- Caffeine above 200mg per day (roughly one 12oz cup of coffee)

Aim to drink 8-10 glasses of water per day. Good hydration supports healthy amniotic fluid levels and can ease symptoms like headaches.

Exercise

Gentle, regular exercise is beneficial for most pregnancies. Walking, swimming and prenatal yoga are great options, but be sure to check with your OB-GYN before starting or continuing an exercise routine.



Quit Smoking, Vaping and Using Recreational Drugs

Smoking, vaping and drug use are associated with serious and even life-threatening risks to your baby's development. If you need help quitting, talk to your provider – they'll be able to connect you with helpful resources without judgment.

Limit Chemical Exposure

Use cleaning products in well-ventilated spaces, limit pesticide exposure and check with your provider before taking over-the-counter medications, supplements or herbal remedies.

Touring Your Hospital

Touring your hospital ahead of your delivery can help you feel more confident before the big day arrives. During a tour, you'll be able to see where you'll check in when labor begins, walk through the labor and recovery rooms, learn what to expect when you arrive and ask questions about policies, amenities and safety features.



Preparing for Labor with Childbirth Classes

Touring your hospital ahead of your delivery can help you feel more confident before the big day arrives. During a tour, you'll be able to see where you'll check in when labor begins, walk through the labor and recovery rooms, learn what to expect when you arrive and ask questions about policies, amenities and safety features. It's normal to feel unsure about labor, but childbirth classes can help ease your anxiety. Birthing classes are designed to help you feel both informed and empowered. Even experienced parents may find a refresher class helpful – especially if it's been a few years since their last delivery or if they're planning a different birth experience this time around.

Birth classes can teach you:

- How labor progresses
- How your partner or support person can help
- How to manage pain and stay comfortable
- When it's time to go to the hospital

You might also want to consider taking classes that cover breastfeeding basics, newborn care, and infant CPR.

Why Families Choose Us

Choosing where to receive pregnancy and delivery care is deeply personal. Our maternity team is committed to providing compassionate, supportive care from your very first appointment through delivery and beyond.

Families choose us for:

- 24/7 access to experienced OB-GYNs and specialized care teams
- Advanced care for both routine and high-risk pregnancies
- Obstetric emergency room (Hillcrest Medical Center)
- Comfortable labor and delivery suites designed with families in mind
- TeamBirth program
- Laboring tubs (Hillcrest South)
- Level III NICU services for newborns requiring advanced care, including babies with low birth weight and babies born as early as 22 weeks (Hillcrest Medical Center)
- Gentle C-section approach that supports early family bonding (Hillcrest Medical Center)
- Free lactation consultations
- High-risk antepartum unit (Hillcrest Medical Center)

Most importantly, we're here to help you feel supported – not overwhelmed – through every stage of early pregnancy and beyond.

You Don't Have to Do This Alone

Pregnancy comes with a lot of unknowns – whether this is your first baby or you've been through pregnancy before. Every journey is different, and you don't have to navigate it by yourself. Whether you're booking your first appointment, exploring delivery options, or simply looking for reassurance, we're here for every step ahead.

Ready to Take the Next Step?

- Find an OB-GYN

Every pregnancy journey is unique.

We'd be honored to support you through yours.

