



# helpful tips for a healthy pregnancy

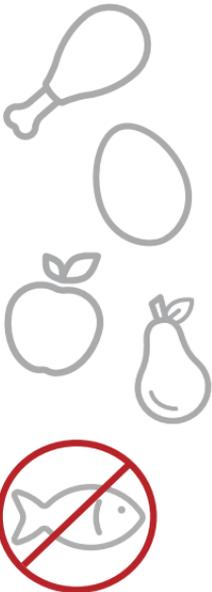
THE HEALTH PLAN'S GUIDE FOR EXPECTING MOTHERS

# Prenatal Care



Prenatal care is the health care you get when you are pregnant. This care will keep you and your baby healthy. It can prevent your baby from having problems after he or she is born. It also helps to find any problems for you or your baby early, so they can be treated.

## WHAT CAN I EAT?



Good nutrition is important for you and your baby. Try to gain a healthy amount of weight. Ask your doctor how much weight you should gain during pregnancy.

- Eat a variety of foods. Every day, you should try to eat fruits and vegetables, whole grains, dairy and protein foods.
- Eat three meals and one to two snacks each day.
- Drink plenty of fluids each day; water is the best.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating them.
- Don't eat rare or raw fish or meat.
- Don't eat fish with lots of mercury – shark, swordfish, mackerel, tilefish.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO?

These visits are important to check your blood pressure, weight gain, the baby's growth and heart rate.



- See your doctor as soon as you know that you are pregnant.
- Complete any blood or other tests the doctor orders for you.

### Follow up with the doctor at regular times during pregnancy:

Prenatal Visits Schedule	Doctor Visit Frequency
Weeks 4-28	Once each month
Weeks 28-36	Twice each month
Week 36-Birth	Every week

- Don't miss any visits or tests the doctor has scheduled for you during and after the pregnancy.
- Follow all of your doctor's instructions.
- Stop smoking and drinking alcohol. Don't use drugs.
- If you take prescription drugs, talk to your doctor about them.
- Take a multivitamin with iron and 400-800 micrograms of folic acid every day.
- Get a flu shot.
- Avoid X-rays; toxic chemicals and fumes; second hand smoke; hot tubs or saunas; cat and rodent feces.
- Stay physically active.
- Get plenty of sleep and keep stress under control.
- Ask the doctor about childbirth class to prepare you for the birth of your baby.

# Breastfeeding



## Is Breastfeeding for Me?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding for at least 12 months. You can continue to breastfeed for as long as you like.

### BREASTFEEDING BENEFITS

#### Benefits of Breastfeeding Your Baby

- Closeness and bonding with your baby.
- Cost savings.
- Breast milk provides good nutrition and is easy for baby to digest.
- Breast milk helps baby fight germs and illness.
- Health benefits for mom.
- While breast milk is the only nutrition your baby needs for the first six months, the doctor may order Vitamin D drops, in addition to breast milk. After six months, you can give baby other foods as directed by the baby's doctor.
- A pacifier can be given after the baby is able to latch on well, usually three to four weeks. Use the pacifier when you put the baby to bed to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

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## DO'S AND DON'TS OF BREASTFEEDING

### Do:

- Continue to eat a healthy diet with a variety of foods.
- Drink large amounts of water throughout the day.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Talk to the doctor or nurse about birth control options.
- Continue to take your medicine; talk to your doctor about them.
- Get vaccines for baby as scheduled by the doctor.

### Don't:

- Don't smoke. If you do smoke, don't smoke near the baby.
- Don't use recreational drugs – PCP, heroin, cocaine or others can hurt the baby.
- Don't drink alcohol in large amounts, but an occasional drink is fine; wait two hours to nurse the baby.
- Don't stop taking any medication that you have been taking for period of time.
- Don't rely on breastfeeding to prevent pregnancy.



# Pregnancy & Depression

Depression during and after pregnancy is a common problem. Sad, empty or anxious feelings that don't go away and interfere with your day-to-day life can be signs of depression. Depression is a serious illness that involves the brain and needs to be treated.

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## SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

**If you have any of the following symptoms for more than two weeks, call your doctor:**

- Feeling restless or moody.
- Having trouble remembering things.
- Feeling sad, hopeless or overwhelmed.
- Feeling worthless and guilty.
- No interest or pleasure in activities you used to enjoy.
- Crying a lot.
- No energy or motivation.
- Withdrawing from family and friends.
- Having trouble making decisions or focusing.
- Eating or sleeping too little or too much.
- Having constant headaches, aches and pains or stomach problems.

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## CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS

### What Causes Depression?

**There is no one cause of depression. It is a mental illness that can come from more than one factor.**

- Family history of depression.
- Changes in brain chemistry or structure.
- Stressful life events.
- Hormone factors unique to women, as well as thyroid hormone problems.

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## RISK FACTORS

### Am I at risk for depression during or after my pregnancy?

**Some women are more at risk than others. Factors that put you at risk include:**

- Lack of support from friends and family.
- Problems in a previous pregnancy or birth.
- Anxiety or negative feelings about the pregnancy.
- Marriage, family or money problems.
- Stressful events in your life.
- Young age.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.



**Call 911 or your doctor if you have thoughts of harming yourself or your baby!**

# The Baby Blues & Postpartum

In the days after your baby is born, you will be tired and may be overwhelmed with caring for a new baby. Many women feel stress worrying about being a good mom, changes in work and home schedules, as well as the changes in your body. You may feel sad, anxious, or overwhelmed. You could also have mood swings, crying spells and trouble with eating and sleeping. These are symptoms of the 'baby blues' and most often go away in a few days or a week. If the symptoms last longer than a week or start to get worse, you may be developing postpartum depression.

**POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION** can develop anytime in the year following the birth of your baby. The symptoms can be the same as the baby blues but last longer and are more severe.

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## SYMPTOMS

- Not having any interest in the baby.
- Thoughts of hurting the baby.
- Thoughts of hurting yourself.

**POSTPARTUM PSYCHOSIS** is a rare mental health disorder that usually begins in the first two weeks after the baby is born.

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## SYMPTOMS

- Seeing things that aren't there.
- Feeling confused.
- Rapid mood swings.
- Trying to hurt the baby or yourself.

# Depression



**Seek medical help immediately if you have any of these symptoms.**

## What can I do if I'm feeling this way?

Call your doctor if your baby blues last more than one to two weeks or seem to be getting worse. Symptoms of depression can start any time after birth, even months later. It is important to know that you did not cause this to happen. It is important to tell your doctor about these feelings.

### OTHER STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- Rest as much as you can.
- Ask friends & family members for help; let your partner know that you need help.
- Don't try to do too much or be perfect.
- Make time to go out, visit friends or spend time alone with your partner.
- Talk to other mothers who can help you.
- Talk about your thoughts and feelings.
- Ask about support groups in your area.
- Don't make big changes during pregnancy or right after birth if you can help it. This creates stress.

Postpartum depression is a serious problem that needs to be treated by a doctor.





# Treating Depression

## Treating Depression

Depression is treated with medicine and talk therapy. Talk therapy is talking to a therapist, psychologist or social worker to learn how to change how depression makes you think, feel and act. Medicine is prescribed by a doctor. Untreated depression can affect your baby and your long-term health. Not treating your depression can interfere with how you care for yourself during pregnancy, which can increase the risk of problems for the baby. After your baby is born, depression can affect how you take care of the baby.

# Information on **Care & Services**



Your doctor or other health care provider can answer your questions or help you with medical care. Community resources are also available for you.

## **The Health Plan Perinatal Nurses**

**1.800.624.6961  
Ext 7644**

The Health Plan perinatal care nurses can help you understand pregnancy care and assist you with finding care and services you need.

National Mental Health Association  
1.800.969.6642  
[www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)

American Psychological Association  
1.800.374.2721  
[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

March of Dimes  
1.914.997.4488  
[www.marchofdimes.org](http://www.marchofdimes.org)

U.S. Department of Women's Health  
1.800.994.9662  
[www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov)

American College Obstetricians  
and Gynecologists  
1.202.638.5577  
[www.acog.org/patients](http://www.acog.org/patients)

## **Breastfeeding Help:**

La Leche League International  
1.800.525.3243  
[www.llli.org](http://www.llli.org)

*Source: U.S. Department of Health and  
Human Services Office on Women's Health*



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