

# Pregnancy 101

Common Pregnancy Questions



Outer Banks  
Health™

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# Welcome to Your Pregnancy Crash Course



**T**his booklet will answer common pregnancy-related questions. It will also help you nurture a healthy, empowering, and joyful pregnancy.

Register for the patient portal, MyChart, to view your health records and contact your care team.



Scan the QR code for a digital  
version of this booklet.

# The Gestational Weeks of Pregnancy

- **First Trimester:**  
0-12 Weeks  
+ 6 Days
- **Second Trimester:**  
13 Weeks – 27 Weeks  
+ 6 Days
- **Third Trimester:**  
28 Weeks – until  
delivery

## Prenatal Visits

- Every 4 weeks until 28 weeks of pregnancy
- Every 2 weeks 28-36 weeks of pregnancy
- Every week 36+ until your baby is born

Your visits may become more frequent if your pregnancy needs extra monitoring.

Please call your care team if you are running late and cannot make it to your appointment.



## Prenatal Labs

### Routine Labs:

Blood Type

Rh Factor

Rubella

Urine Test

Pap Test

STI Test

### Optional Labs:

Carrier Screening

Cell-Free DNA Genetic Screening

Quad Genetic Screening

Alpha-Fetoprotein Screening

*\*see next page for details*

Prenatal genetic testing can give you and your care team more information about the health of your baby and pregnancy.



**Carrier Screening** is done on parents using a blood test or tissue sample. These tests help determine whether a person carries a gene for certain genetic conditions. Carrier testing can be done before or during pregnancy. Extra testing may be advised for people with Ashkenazi Jewish background.

### Non-Invasive Prenatal Screening for Chromosomal Abnormalities (NIPS or NIPT)

**Cell free DNA Genetic Screening (“MaterniT21”)** tests DNA that is released from the placenta into a pregnant woman’s bloodstream. This DNA can be screened for Down syndrome, Patau syndrome (trisomy 13), Edwards syndrome, and sex chromosome abnormalities. It can also identify the sex of the baby. This is **a blood test done on the mother as early as 10 weeks**. It is often done together with AFP screening, which is described below. A positive cell-free DNA test result should be followed by a diagnostic test.

**Quad Screening is a blood test that measures the levels of four different substances in substances in mother’s blood for abnormalities.** The test screens for Down syndrome, Edwards syndrome (trisomy 18), and **neural tube defects (NTDs)**. This is a blood test done on the mother between 15-22 weeks.

**Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) Screening** is done to find possible NTDs in babies. NTDs are caused by a problem in the spinal cord or brain. This often occurs very early in human growth. The two most common NTDs are spina bifida and anencephaly.



This is a blood test done on the mother between 15-20 weeks. If the test result is abnormal, extra testing is ordered.

### Invasive Prenatal Diagnostic Testing for Chromosomal Abnormalities

**Chorionic Villus Sampling** can be performed at 10-14 weeks. Chorionic villus cells are removed from behind the placenta and tested for abnormalities.

**Amniocentesis** is a test that is performed during the 15th week of pregnancy or later. This involves removing fluid from the amniotic sac to be tested for chromosome abnormalities.

***Your health care provider will send you to a genetic specialist if extra testing needs to be performed.***



**Remember all of these tests are optional!  
Talk to your provider about your level of risk.**

## 8-20 Weeks

### Confirm Your Pregnancy and Genetic Testing (Optional)

- First Ultrasound
- Pregnancy Physical Exam and Pap Screen
- Optional Genetic Tests

## Around 20 Weeks

### Anatomy Ultrasound

This ultrasound is done around 20 weeks to check the baby's heart, brain, spine, and total growth. At this visit, the sex can often be seen. Another growth ultrasound is done to check baby's size at about 38 weeks. Extra ultrasounds are performed based on the health need.

## Around 28 Weeks

### Glucose Tolerance Test

This test screens for gestational diabetes. You do not need to fast before this test, but try to eat more protein and less carbs. You will be given a Glucola drink to consume within 5 minutes on the day of your test. It is okay to put the drink in the refrigerator or drink over ice. You will have your blood drawn one hour after finishing the drink – **this is a time-sensitive test!**

### Third Trimester Labs and Tdap Vaccine

- We will retest your blood for anemia (low iron), infection, blood type, Rh factor, antibodies, and glucose. If you have a negative Rh factor, you may need RhoGAM® before delivery.



- You will also be offered the Tdap vaccine shot at this visit. Tdap is a vaccine that protects both mother and baby against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). The tdap vaccine is recommended for all pregnant women in their 3rd trimester.

## Around 36 weeks

### Group B Strep Culture and STI Screen

Group B streptococcus (GBS) is a type of bacteria that can be found in a pregnant woman's vagina or anus. This bacteria is found in about 25% of all healthy adult women, and is usually not harmful to adults, but can be harmful to babies. Women who test positive for GBS or sexually transmitted infections may need antibiotics in labor to prevent giving an infection to the baby.

## 38 Weeks

### Growth Ultrasound

More pictures of your sweet baby! A growth ultrasound will be done to check the baby's size and overall health before delivery. You'll be amazed at how much baby has grown!

# Safe Medicines to Use in Pregnancy

Snap a picture of the list below to have with you while you are at the drug store!

## Acne/Skin Care

Benzoyl Peroxide  
Salicylic Acid  
Coconut Oil

### Do Not Take:

Accutane®, Retin-A®,  
Tetracycline,  
Minocycline

## Rash

1%  
Hydrocortisone  
Cream

## Cold/Allergies

Benadryl®  
Claritin®  
Zyrtec®  
Mucinex®  
Tylenol® Cold & Sinus  
Vicks Vapo Rub®  
Cough Drops  
Robitussin®

## Constipation

Colace®  
Miralax®  
Senakot®  
Metamucil®

## Nausea

Vitamin B6 25mg +  
Unisom® 1/2 tablet  
Diclegis  
Dramamine®  
Ginger  
Acupressure

## Headache

Cold Ice Pack  
Tylenol®  
**Do Not Take:**  
Ibuprofen, Motrin®  
or Aleve®

## Heartburn

Maalox®  
Pepcid®  
Prilosec OTC®  
Tums®

## Hemorrhoids

Anusol®  
Hydrocortisone  
Cream  
Preparation H®  
Witch Hazel/Tucks®

## Sleep Aids

Benadryl®  
Chamomile Tea  
Unisom®  
Tylenol® PM

## Pregnant? Top Three Reasons Why You Need the Flu Shot

- 1.** The flu is a serious health problem that can be worse during pregnancy. It can be life-threatening for newborns and pregnant women.
- 2.** Getting the flu shot during pregnancy helps protect your newborn from the flu.
- 3.** The flu shot is safe for both you and your fetus. You cannot get the flu from the flu shot. Get the flu shot during each pregnancy, as soon as the shot is available. You can get the flu shot during any trimester.

Learn more at <https://www.acog.org/programs/immunization-for-women>

## COVID-19 Vaccine

Getting the COVID-19 vaccine while pregnant is a safe and helpful way to stop or lower the chance of getting coronavirus. Nursing, vaccinated mothers can pass antibodies to COVID-19 through their breast milk, further protecting their babies. You may get this shot during any trimester.





## Breastfeeding

### **Breastfeeding is encouraged for babies during at least the first year of life.**

Your breast milk has nutrients that your baby needs for growth and development. Breastfeeding can help prevent SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) and stomach upset.

We have many ways to help and support you during your breastfeeding journey!



## Breastfeeding Benefits

For Mom	For Baby
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Breastfeeding releases oxytocin and may lower the amount of bleeding you have after giving birth.</li><li>• Breastfeeding may help with postpartum weight loss.</li><li>• Women who breastfeed longer have lower rates of type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.</li><li>• Women who breastfeed have lower rates of breast cancer and ovarian cancer.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If your baby is born preterm, breast milk can help reduce the risk of many of the short-term and long-term health problems.</li><li>• Breast milk has the right amount of fat, sugar, water, protein, and minerals needed for a baby's growth and development.</li><li>• Breast milk is easier to digest than formula, and breastfed babies have less gas, fewer feeding problems, and less constipation.</li><li>• Breast milk has antibodies that protect infants from certain sickness, such as ear infections, diarrhea, respiratory illnesses, and allergies.</li></ul>



**If you feel that the demands of breastfeeding are hurting your mental health, please reach out to your care team. We are here to support you and your baby no matter how you choose to feed your baby.**

## Pre-eclampsia and Hypertension

Pre-eclampsia is a serious complication that can happen during your pregnancy or after birth. Pre-eclampsia is related to high blood pressure and can develop very quickly. Signs and symptoms to watch for are stomach pain, headaches, nausea and vomiting, swelling in your hands and face, seeing spots/vision changes, and gaining more than 5 pounds in one week. If you notice any of these signs or symptoms, call the office right away. Diagnosing this early is very important to keep you and your baby safe.

## Anxiety and Depression

Many women have mood changes during pregnancy and after birth. Good eating habits, getting plenty of sleep, limiting stress, and relying on your support system during this time can help with symptoms. If you are feeling overwhelmed, scared or anxious, or are not able to care for yourself or your baby, please let us know so we can help.



**If you have any thoughts of hurting yourself, your baby, or someone else, you should go to the emergency room or call 911 right away.**

We are actively and aggressively working to reduce stigmas linked to mental health!



- **Vaginal Discharge**

Vaginal discharge that is white and milky is common in pregnancy. If the discharge is watery or has a foul odor, call the office to rule out your water breaking or an infection.

- **Nausea, Vomiting, and Heartburn**

Eat small, frequent meals, sit upright after eating, and eat bland foods like plain crackers, toast, or dry cereals to help ease these symptoms. **Ginger** and **peppermint** are great natural cures for nausea. If you are not able to keep fluids down or are having severe symptoms, call your care team.



- **Constipation**

Constipation is very common during pregnancy and can be caused by hormones, increased iron, diet changes, and dehydration. Be sure to increase your fiber intake and drink plenty of water. There are also safe over the counter meds that can help or stop symptoms.

- **Swelling**

Your body has extra fluid and blood during pregnancy. If you are having swelling, you can elevate your feet, drink plenty of fluids, and limit salt intake. Support/compression stockings can also help. **If the swelling is followed by headache or visual changes, call your care team right away.**

- **Cramping**

Feeling cramps and contractions is normal at all stages of pregnancy. You may feel more if you are dehydrated, had sex recently, or have been standing for a long time. If you are less than 36 weeks pregnant and having more than six contractions per hour, call your care team.

- **Frequent Urination**

Frequent urination happens from day one of pregnancy! This is a normal change in pregnancy. If urinary frequency is followed by **burning, low back pain, blood, or has a bad odor**, call your care team.

- **Vaginal Bleeding**

Vaginal bleeding may be spotting or **light** bleeding during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. This could be normal or mean that there is a problem. A blood test, vaginal exam, or ultrasound may be used to find the cause.



## Raw Meat

Do not eat undercooked beef, pork, poultry, seafood, or sushi due to the risk of bacterial contamination. Deli meats or hot dogs should only be eaten if they are heated until steaming hot.

## Caffeine

Limit caffeine intake to one serving a day or less. Too much caffeine may be linked to miscarriage, premature birth, low birth weight, and withdrawal symptoms in infants.

## Fish with Too Much Mercury

Fish is healthy for you and the baby during pregnancy and helps the baby's brain and eye development. You should try to eat 2 servings per week of low mercury fish such as salmon, catfish or tilapia. Do not eat high mercury fish such as shark, swordfish, tile fish or mackerel.

## Soft Cheeses and Unpasteurized Milk

These may have listeria and should not be eaten due to the risk of miscarriage or early labor.

BMI
Less than 18.5
18.5-24.9
25.0-29.9
30.0 and above

Recommended Weight Gain
28-40 pounds
25-35 pounds
15-25 pounds
11-20 pounds

If your pre-pregnancy weight was within normal range, you can expect to gain between 0.5-1 pounds per week.



### Is My Baby Moving Enough?

Sometime between 16-22 weeks, you will start to feel your baby move and kick! Start paying close attention to fetal movements at 28 weeks – These are “Fetal Kick Counts.” If you are worried about your baby’s movement, you can drink a cold drink, eat a snack, and lie down in a quiet room. Place your hands on your belly, and pay close attention to what you feel. You should be able to feel your baby move about 10 times within 2 hours. If you are concerned or notice a decrease in movements, call your care team right away.

### Can I Still Exercise While Pregnant?

Exercise is recommended in pregnancy at a low/mild level. It is not recommended to start a new rigorous workout program during your pregnancy.

### Can I Travel?

Travel during a normal pregnancy is permitted up to 34 weeks. Drink plenty of fluids so you do not get dehydrated. While traveling, get up and stretch your legs at least every 2 hours to prevent blood clots.

### Can I Go to the Dentist?

Gum disease and bacteria in the gums can become more common during pregnancy. You may have your teeth cleaned by your dentist every 6 months during pregnancy. Postpone routine X-rays until postpartum.





### Hospital Registration

Call the hospital where you plan to deliver your baby to pre-register for your admission. Your care team will give pre-registration information and instructions during one of your early prenatal appointments.

### Select a Pediatrician

You will need to select a doctor for your baby before you deliver. Call the pediatrician office before delivery to make sure they will take your insurance and are accepting new patients.

### Am I in Labor?

Remember 4-1-1! Labor contractions are 4-5 minutes apart, last for 1 minute, and continue for at least 1 hour. There may also be a large gush of fluid or nonstop leakage of fluid. If you think you are in labor, call the office (even after hours), or go to Labor and Delivery Triage at your hospital.

### How Long Will I Be in the Hospital After My Delivery?

Normal vaginal deliveries often go home 24-48 hours after delivery. Normal length of stay after a c-section delivery is 2-4 days. Your insurance company may influence the length of your stay.

### When Should I Call the Doctor?

- Vaginal bleeding
- Any new or worsening pain
- You do not feel your baby move for several hours after 28 weeks
- Major decrease in your baby's movement
- Regular painful contractions every five minutes or less for one hour
- Your water breaks, with or without contractions
- Nonstop leakage or a gush of fluid from the vagina
- If you have a fever greater than 101 degrees
- Belly trauma or car crash



