

Your Pregnancy Guide

Help is Here
For You and Your Baby



 **maryland**
physicians care
Medicaid with a Heart
mpcMedicaid.com



Congratulations!

You are about to begin one of life's most exciting journeys. Whether this is your first baby or you have been here before, every pregnancy is unique, and so is your care. As a Maryland Physicians Care (MPC) member, you have access to personalized support, trusted medical care, and helpful benefits for both you and your baby.

This guide is designed to help you during your pregnancy by providing useful information and resources to support you throughout your journey.

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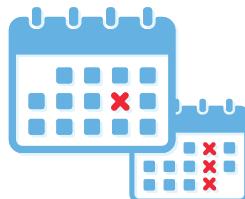


Pregnancy: What to Expect

Pregnancy is an exciting time in your life. Your body will go through many changes to help your baby grow. Your doctor will schedule regular check-ups to make sure you and your baby stay healthy. You will also have tests and ultrasounds to check your baby's growth.

WHEN TO SEE YOUR OB DOCTOR

An **obstetrician** or **OB** is a doctor who sees patients who are pregnant.



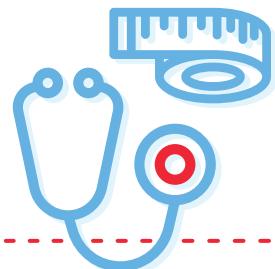
You will have more doctor visits as your baby grows:

- Every 4 weeks until you are 28 weeks pregnant
- Every 2 weeks from 28 to 36 weeks
- Every week from 36 weeks until your baby is born

WHY THESE VISITS MATTER

Prenatal visits help keep you and your baby healthy.
At each visit, your doctor will:

- Check how your baby is growing
- Look for any health problems
- Answer your questions



Even if you feel fine, you still should go to every visit.

Your Pregnancy Checklist

FIRST TRIMESTER: Weeks 1 to 12

- Pick a provider
- Schedule your first OB appointment
- After your first visit, make your other prenatal appointments
- Get your first blood test
- Talk to your doctor about genetic tests (tests to check for birth problems)



SECOND TRIMESTER: Weeks 13 to 26

- Get an ultrasound to check your baby's growth
- Sign up for a birth class

THIRD TRIMESTER: Weeks 27-Delivery

- If you have Rh-negative blood, get your **RhoGAM shot** between weeks 26 and 28
RhoGAM shot - a shot that protects your baby
- Get checked for diabetes and anemia
- Pick a **pediatrician** and call their office
Pediatrician - a doctor who provides care to children
- Get a **Tdap shot** after 27 weeks, but before 36 weeks
Tdap shot - This shot protects against whooping cough (also called pertussis). Whooping cough causes long, hard coughing fits and spreads easily from person to person. Getting the shot passes immunity to your baby
- Ask your OB doctor about a breast bump
- Talk to your OB about birth control options for after your baby is born
- Pack your hospital bag
- Get tested for **Group B Strep (GBS)**
GBS - is a disease that can be life-threatening. Pregnant people should get a GBS test to protect their newborn
- Put the baby's car seat in your car

Pregnancy Do's and Don'ts

Everything you do while pregnant can affect your baby. It is important to make safe choices.

DO:

- Go to all your doctor visits
- Take a prenatal vitamin every day with folic acid
- Limit how much caffeine you drink
- Pelvic exercises, like Kegels
- Call your OB doctor to ask about a breast pump
- Get shots to protect you and your baby
- Eat healthy foods
- Get plenty of rest
- Always wear your seat belt
- Stay away from places where there is smoke and people who smoke

DON'T:

- Use illegal drugs, drink, smoke, or vape
- Take any medicines unless your doctor says that it is okay
- Take hot baths
- Eat raw or undercooked meat, soft cheeses, or raw sprouts
- Clean cat litter or touch pet hamsters or guinea pigs
- Get X-rays unless your doctor says it is safe



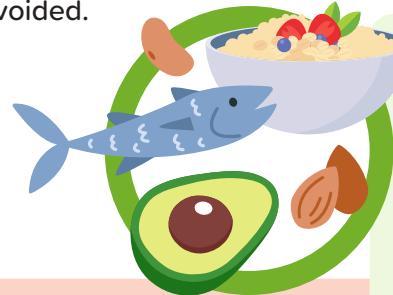
SMOKING AND PREGNANCY: WHAT TO KNOW

- Smoking or vaping can harm your baby's growth.
- Smoking may cause early birth, birth defects, or even miscarriage.
- Breathing in other people's smoke is also dangerous.
- E-cigarettes, or vapes, are not safe during pregnancy.
- Quitting at any time helps you and your baby.

For free help, call **1-800-QUITNOW**

What to Eat While Pregnant

When you are pregnant, it is important to eat the right foods to help your baby grow strong and healthy. Some foods are great for you and your baby, but others can be harmful and should be avoided.



Eat These Foods:

- Avocados
- Pregnancy-approved fatty fish
- Leafy greens
- Nuts
- Beans & lentils
- Yogurt
- Oatmeal
- Lean meats

Avoid These Foods:

- Undercooked eggs
- Undercooked meat
- Alcohol
- Raw fish & sushi
- Too much caffeine (over 150 mg a day)
- Certain types of cooked fish (like shark, swordfish, tilefish, and king mackerel)
- Unpasteurized foods (like some juice, cheese, or milk)



Pregnancy: Milestones

Pregnancy milestones show how your baby grows each week.

These milestones also help you understand the changes in your own body, like new feelings, symptoms, and what to expect as your due date gets closer.

MONTH	SYMPTOMS	BABY DEVELOPMENT
1 weeks 1-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missed period Very tired Sore or swollen breasts Feeling sick or like throwing up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Egg is fertilized Baby is the size of a poppy seed
2 weeks 5-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Morning sickness Going to the bathroom more Strong smells may bother you Mood swings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heart and blood system begin to form Nose, mouth, and ears start to grow Brain and intestines begin to form Baby starts to move Breathing tubes start growing
3 weeks 9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less morning sickness Still tired, but more energy Clothes feeling tighter Headaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organs are forming Gaining weight Tiny arms and legs can bend Nails are growing Reflexes work Mouth makes sucking movements
4 weeks 13-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less nausea Belly starts to grow Feeling hungrier Trouble going to the bathroom (constipation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Veins and organs visible Kidneys start to work Baby can sense light Legs are growing Head is upright Ears are almost in place

MONTH	SYMPTOMS	BABY DEVELOPMENT
5 weeks 17-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel baby move Back pain Heartburn (a burning feeling in your chest) Swollen feet or hands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joints move Bones are forming Flex arms and legs Senses like smell and taste are starting Baby can swallow
6 weeks 21-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More baby kicks Leg cramps Hard to sleep Itchy skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looks like a miniature newborn Muscles and bone are stronger
7 weeks 25-28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard to breathe Going to the bathroom often Feeling warmer than usual Braxton Hicks contractions (practice contractions that are not real labor) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby gains weight Hair is growing Baby is breathing Brain is active Eyes blink and have eyelashes
8 weeks 29-32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby moves a lot Swelling in hands and feet Back and hip pain Very tired again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muscles and lungs are working Head is growing Layer of fat is building
9 weeks 33-40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby drops lower in the belly More Braxton Hicks contractions Hard to sleep Feeling ready to meet your baby! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brain and lungs keep growing Kidneys and liver work Baby is fully developed by 39 weeks, but keeps growing bigger

Anxiety and Depression

Being pregnant or having a baby can bring about many feelings. Some are good, but some may be hard. You might feel sad, worried, or not like yourself. This could be depression or anxiety, and it can happen before or after your baby is born.

Look for signs like:

- Feeling very angry, worried, or sad
- Big mood changes
- Trouble taking care of yourself
- Sleeping or eating too much or not enough
- Not enjoying things you used to like

You are not alone, and it is not your fault. Many women feel this way.



If you are having a mental health crisis, please go to the nearest emergency room or call **9-8-8**.

- *Reach out and get help.* Support is available through Carelon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Visit: [Maryland Carelon](http://MarylandCarelon.org)



Call (800) 888-1965

- Learn more about mental health [here](#).



Labor and Delivery

Why Waiting Until 39 Weeks Is Best For Delivering Baby

Your baby keeps growing and getting stronger during the last few weeks of pregnancy.

- At 35 weeks, your baby's brain is only about two-thirds the size it will be at 39-40 weeks.
- Other body parts like the lungs, liver, eyes, ears, and swallowing muscles, are still developing too.
- Babies born too early may have trouble breathing, hearing, seeing, or eating.

If your pregnancy is healthy, it is best to wait for labor to start on its own.



Labor and Delivery

(continued)

Stages

Labor happens in steps. Your body gets ready to help your baby come out. Each step is called a stage. Knowing what to expect during each stage can help you feel calmer and prepared.

First Stage - Contractions

- Starts with contractions that feel like a cramp or squeeze around your belly
- Contractions get stronger and closer together over time
- This stage can take 12-24 hours for first-time moms

Second Stage - Pushing and Birth

- Once you are ready for the baby to come, you push during contractions
- Some people may need a C-section instead of pushing during contractions
- This stage can take a few minutes to a few hours
- Your baby is born

Having a C-section is just one of the many safe ways to give birth.

During a C-section, your doctor delivers your baby through a cut made in your belly. Every birth is unique. What is most important is the health and safety of both you and your baby.

Third Stage - Placenta

- After your baby is born, the placenta comes out
- This can take anywhere from 5 to 30 minutes



When to Go to the Hospital

Go to the hospital if:

- **Contractions** come every 5 minutes, last 1 minute, for 1 hour
- Your **water breaks** (even if you do not have pain)
- You have **heavy bleeding**
- You feel **strong pain or pressure**
- You **don't feel the baby move** like usual

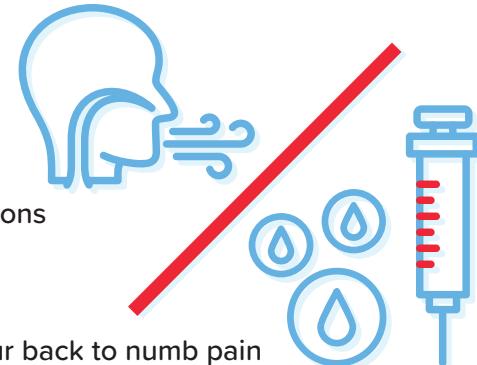
If you are not sure, call your doctor or hospital. They can help you decide.

Pain Management

You have choices to help with pain during labor.

Without Medicine

- Deep breathing
- Warm bath or shower
- Massage
- Walking or changing positions



With Medicine

- **Epidural** – medicine in your back to numb pain
- **IV medicine** – pain medicine through a tube in your arm

Your Maryland Physicians Care Benefits

If you are pregnant and have Medicaid through Maryland Physicians Care (MPC), you can get free health care for you and your baby.

Benefits to Support Mom

Learn more about [pregnancy benefits](#) with MPC.

- **There are no co-pays when you see your doctor**
- **Free prescription drugs**
- **Free breast pump:** Ask your OB to order one. If you need help getting a breast pump after talking to your OB, call MPC Care Management at 800-953-8854.
- **Home visiting services:** Provides support to pregnant people during pregnancy and childbirth, as well as to parents and children from birth through age three.
- **Doula support:** A trained doula can help during pregnancy, labor, and postpartum.
Doula - a trained professional who gives emotional, physical, and educational support to people during pregnancy, labor, and after birth.
- **Nutrition help:** Get healthy food and support through the **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program** or the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**.



[health.maryland.gov/phpa/wic/
pages/wic-apply.aspx](http://health.maryland.gov/phpa/wic/pages/wic-apply.aspx)



dhs.maryland.gov/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program/applying-for-the-food-supplement-program/

Pacify App

Download the **Pacify app** and use your MA number to sign up for FREE at pacify.com/enroll/mpc. Pacify connects you with trusted doulas and lactation consultants, offering flexible support to guide you through every stage of pregnancy and postpartum. Available any time, day or night.



MyVirtual|MPC

by maryland physicians care

MyVirtualMPC

24/7 Support from Anywhere. Use the **MyVirtualMPC** app to video chat, text, or share images with a doctor any time, day or night. Download the app from the App Store or Google Play. Bilingual help is available.



MPC Care Management Team

You can also call the MPC Care Management Team at **1-800-953-8854** (Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) for help with your benefits, finding a doctor, or making an appointment.



For information on additional Free Member Benefits, please visit mpcMedicaid.com/freeprograms, or view your member handbook by visiting mpcMedicaid.com/handbook.



Pregnancy Benefits That Work for You.

Scan the QR code or visit

mpcMedicaid.com/benefits

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HealthChoice is a program of the Maryland Department of Health