

## Partners for Healthy Babies Frequently Asked Pregnancy Questions

### ***1. What is prenatal care? When should I get it?***

Prenatal care is medical care that a woman gets when she is pregnant. This helps to keep both the mom and baby healthy.

You should begin prenatal care as soon as you know you are pregnant, and maintain regular prenatal check-ups until your baby is born.

### ***2. What can I expect during a prenatal care visit, and what should I ask my doctor or nurse?***

During your visit, your doctor will:

- Ask about your daily life
- Give you a physical exam
- Test your blood, urine and blood pressure
- Talk about healthy behaviors (such as eating the right foods for you and your baby, and not using drugs, drinking alcohol or smoking)
- Listen to your baby's heartbeat
- Measure your stomach
- Talk with you about any concerns or questions you have

You should ask about child-birth classes, breastfeeding, parenting classes, nutrition and proper weight gain to make sure that you and your baby are healthy, and any other concerns that you may have.

### ***3. How much weight should I gain when I am pregnant?***

The right amount of weight when you are pregnant is important to your growing baby's health. For each person it is different, so ask your doctor how much weight gain is right for you.

In general:

- If you were **normal** weight before you got pregnant, you should gain **25 – 35** lbs.
- If you were **underweight**, you should gain **28 - 40** lbs.
- If you were **overweight**, you should gain **15 - 25** lbs.

### ***4. How do I know that things are fine with my baby and me?***

The number one way is by getting your prenatal check-ups. As soon as you miss a period, go to your doctor to see if you are pregnant. As soon as you notice any health problems call or go to your doctor or nurse. Make sure that someone who is close to you – your baby's father, a family member or a good friend – knows your doctor's phone number and can take you there or to the hospital in an emergency. If you need

to find a doctor where you live, please call **Partners for Healthy Babies at 1-800-251-BABY (2229)**.

**5. *What are some warning signs that there might be something wrong?***

If you notice any of the signs listed below, please see your doctor or nurse right away:

- Vaginal bleeding or spotting
- Fluid leaking from your vagina
- Cramping or stomach pain, that feel like your period
- Dizzy or fainting spells
- Burning or painful urination
- Severe headaches and vomiting
- Blurred vision
- Chills, fever or rash
- Sudden swelling in your hands, feet or face
- Seizures
- Your baby is not moving well, or is pushing down really hard
- You have more than 6 contractions in one hour

**6. *How can I stay healthy when I am pregnant?***

- Eat three regular meals a day or have six small meals. Small meals help with morning sickness. Switch to less fatty meats, skim milk, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Cut back on fried food and fast food and drink plenty of water (6-8 glasses a day).
- While you are pregnant, take 30 mg of iron a day. If you don't get enough iron, you may feel tired or weak, a common problem for pregnant women.
- Exercise is good for you and your baby, too. It can make you feel better and help you deal with the weight gain. If you are very active, keep it up. If you're not active, start walking (a half hour each day, maybe). It is important to talk with your doctor about any exercise you do while pregnant.
- If you smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs, stop right now as they can hurt both you and your baby.

If you have questions or need help, please talk to your doctor, or call **Partners for Healthy Babies at 1-800-251-BABY (2229)**.

**7. *What can smoking, drinking alcohol or using drugs do to my baby?***

**Smoking** can cause your baby to be born too soon and too small, which can cause your baby to die. It can put your baby at risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome). Also, do not let people smoke around you while you are pregnant because that smoke hurts your baby too.

If you drink **alcohol**, you might have a miscarriage or suffer liver problems. Your baby might be born too soon or too small. Your baby could have Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and be mentally retarded or have many other problems. Your baby is more likely to die.

Using **illegal drugs** like crack, cocaine, heroine and marijuana, or **abusing prescription drugs** can cause your baby to be born too soon or even die. You and your baby could get AIDS if you use a needle. Your baby could be born an addict or have undeveloped organs.

### ***8. Should I breastfeed my baby? Why?***

***YES!***

- Breast milk is the perfect food for your new baby because it protects babies against colds, diarrhea and allergies. Breastfeeding keeps you and your baby healthy!
- Breastfeeding helps you lose weight
- Breastfeeding is ideal for building the mother/baby bond
- Breastfeeding costs less than formula!

If you want to breastfeed but have to work or go to school, call **1-800-251-BABY (2229)** to find the nearest WIC clinic or contact La Leche League 1-800-LALECHE for more information on breast pumps.

### ***9. What is SIDS and how can I prevent SIDS?***

SIDS is Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and is also known as crib death. To help prevent SIDS make sure your baby sleeps face up, and do not put toys or pillows in the crib with the baby. Babies who sleep on their backs have lower risk of SIDS. To learn more about SIDS, call **1-800-221-7437**.

### ***10. Why and how often does my baby need shots?***

Shots (also known as immunizations) help your baby's body fight against disease. They are very safe and protect the body against future sickness. Your child will need proof of shots before starting daycare or grade school.

Your baby needs shots at

- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 12-15 months
- 4 years

### ***11. What should I do if I feel really sad, worried or lonely?***

This is normal. You're going through very big changes, and that may seem like too much. And maybe you hadn't planned on getting pregnant – or feel lonely or worried about how you will afford a baby. That is why it is vital to share your feelings with friends and family; they can help! If you feel depressed or are being abused, talk to your doctor—they can help too.

If you have questions or need help, please talk to your doctor or call **Partners for Healthy Babies at 1-800-251-BABY (2229)**.