Parkland
Community Health Plan

A Guide to Your Pregnancy



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Your Baby's
Ultrasound Photo

You're Expecting!

Having a baby can be exciting – and life-changing. What you do during your pregnancy can have a big impact on your baby's health – and your own health as well.

This guide will give you an idea of what to expect throughout your pregnancy, as well as during and after childbirth. Use it as a place to:

- Write down questions for your doctor.
- Take notes about how you're feeling.
- Track your baby's progress.
- Keep your baby's ultrasound photos.
- And more!

We're here to help you and your baby stay healthy – during your pregnancy and after the baby is born. If you have questions about the information in this guide, ask your doctor. You can also call Parkland Community Health Plan (PCHP) for more details about plan benefits and services – check the back of this guide for contact information.

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A Healthy Pregnancy Starts With Prenatal Care

It's important to start your pregnancy on a healthy note. You should go to the doctor as soon as you think you're pregnant. Common signs to watch for include:

- Missing your period.
- Feeling nauseous (wanting to throw up).
- Feeling more tired than usual.

If you're farther along in your pregnancy and haven't been to the doctor yet, don't worry – there's still time to get care!

During your pregnancy, you might notice other changes, including:

- Bodily discomfort.
- Tender breasts.
- Fatigue.
- Having to urinate more often.
- Feeling strong emotions at times.

What am I most excited about with this pregnancy? What am I nervous about?

The next few months are going to be busy, and you'll be noticing a lot of changes. You may want to write down your thoughts and feelings throughout your pregnancy. Use the journal pages at the back of this guide.

What happens at a prenatal visit?

You'll visit the doctor often throughout your pregnancy. Your doctor is there to answer questions about your health and the health of your baby. They'll also work with you to make healthy choices and get prepared for labor and delivery.

Even if you've had a baby before, it's important to see a doctor for each pregnancy. Your body may react differently from one pregnancy to the next – for example, you may have complications or conditions you didn't have with previous pregnancies.

During prenatal visits, the doctor will check your baby's growth. This includes monitoring their

- Heartbeat.
- Size.
- Movement.
- Position.

They'll also perform tests that check for birth defects or other complications.

A typical schedule for prenatal visits might be:

WEEKS 4 - 28

One checkup per month (every four weeks)

WEEKS 28 - 36

Two checkups per month (every two weeks)

WEEKS 36 UNTIL DELIVERY

One checkup per week

Don't have a doctor yet? Find one as early in your pregnancy as possible. Visit **ParklandHealthPlan.com/FindAProvider** to search for an OB/GYN (women's health provider) or a pediatrician for your new baby.

Prenatal visits are also a good time to ask your doctor questions about how much exercise you should get and how much weight you should gain while pregnant.

If possible, try to bring your baby's father (or another family member or friend) with you to your appointments so they can stay up to date on your condition and help you take notes or ask questions.

Don't forget about the dentist!

Pregnant women may be more prone to gum disease and cavities, which can affect your baby's health.

What Is a High-Risk Pregnancy?

Some pregnancies are considered "high risk," which means complications might be more likely. This could be because of a medical condition that you have. It could also be because of a condition the baby has, or because of other issues with your pregnancy. If you have a high-risk pregnancy, your doctor may want to see you more often. Risk factors can include:

- Your age (especially if you're 35 or older).
- High blood pressure.
- Obesity.
- Smoking.

Ask Your Doctor

How much exercise should I get? _____

_____

_____

How much weight should I gain? _____

_____

Other questions: _____

_____

How to Prevent Preterm Birth

If your baby is born before the 37th week of your pregnancy, that's known as a preterm birth. Babies who are born too early could have issues including low birth weight, trouble breathing, and feeding problems. You may be at risk for a preterm birth if you are age 35 or older, pregnant with more than one baby, or have had a previous preterm birth.

Prenatal care is an important way to prevent preterm birth. You should:



Go to all your doctor visits.



Eat healthy.



Not smoke, drink, or take drugs.

Warning Signs and Complications During Pregnancy

Sometimes, complications can happen during pregnancy. This includes things like:

- Anemia (low levels of red blood cells).
- Preeclampsia (a serious blood pressure condition).
- Hyperemesis gravidarum (severe nausea and vomiting).
- Gestational diabetes (a type of diabetes that can develop during pregnancy).

If you're not feeling well, be sure to tell your doctor during your prenatal visits.

If you notice any of these serious problems during pregnancy, call your doctor right away:

- Cramping or bleeding from your vagina.
- Severe pain, cramping, or lower abdominal pressure that doesn't go away.
- Pain or burning when you urinate.
- Dizziness or fainting.
- Severe swelling.
- Chest pain.
- Fever.

What to Expect During Pregnancy

Pregnancy is divided into three parts, or trimesters, and lasts about 9 months (or 40 weeks). Your baby will continue to grow and change over that time – and you'll notice different changes in your own body, too.

First Trimester (Weeks 0-13)

Your baby's heart, brain, eyes, nose, lips, lungs, kidneys, fingernails, and toenails are starting to form and grow. By the end of Month 3, the baby should be able to make a fist and move their legs.

What You May Be Feeling:

- More tired than usual.
- Hungrier than usual.
- Like you need to vomit ("morning sickness," which can happen at any time of day).
- Constipated, or like you need to go to the bathroom more than usual.
- Your breasts may feel tender or heavy.

Second Trimester (Weeks 14-27)

Your baby is starting to hear sounds. They can open their eyes and see light. Their eyebrows and eyelashes appear, and they may start sucking their thumb.

What You May Be Feeling:

- Indigestion.
- Leg cramps and backaches.
- Swollen feet and ankles.
- Your belly may feel itchy, and you may get stretch marks.
- You might begin to feel the baby move.

How Your Baby Is Growing

Third Trimester (Weeks 28-40)

Your baby's bones are fully formed. Their organs are working well, but the brain and lungs are continuing to develop. They can blink and taste some flavors from foods you eat. They can hear your voice and will often respond when you touch your tummy.

What You May Be Feeling:

- You may need to urinate often because the baby is pressing on your bladder.
- Backaches may increase.
- You may get short of breath or have trouble sleeping.
- You may have heartburn (a burning feeling in your chest or throat).
- Your breasts may leak milk (this is normal).
- Your belly will get lower as the baby gets into position for delivery.

Your baby is about the size of...

A poppy seed
Month 1

A grain of rice
Month 2



A grape
Month 3



An apple
Month 4



A sweet potato
Month 5



An eggplant
Month 6



A head of lettuce
Month 7



A pineapple
Month 8



Full birth size
(usually between 6 and 9 pounds)
Month 9

Preparing for the Birth of Your Child

Your baby is almost ready to arrive – and it's important to be prepared! Try to plan ahead as much as you can so when the big day arrives, you'll be organized and stress-free. Here are a few ways to get ready for the birth of your child.

You'll need to decide:

- Where/how to deliver (with a doctor or midwife, at a hospital or licensed birthing center). Talk with your doctor about the best option for you.
- How to get to the hospital.
- What to bring with you (see packing checklist).
- Who will take care of your other children or pets while you're in the hospital.
- Who will take you to the hospital and stay with you during labor (and take photos when the baby is born!).

You'll also want to think about the things your baby will need once you bring them home. This includes:

- ❍ Baby clothing (shirts, nightgowns, onesies)
- ❍ Towels, washcloths, and mild soap
- ❍ Bottles, formula, and bottle brushes
- ❍ Breast pump if you're breastfeeding
- ❍ Diapers and baby wipes
- ❍ Sheets and blankets
- ❍ Crib
- ❍ Diaper bag
- ❍ Strollers
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____

My packing checklist

Have a hospital bag ready to go a few weeks ahead of your due date. You may want to pack:

- ❍ Robe and slippers
- ❍ Warm socks
- ❍ Your own pajamas and underwear
- ❍ Pillow and blanket (if you have a favorite from home)
- ❍ Hair brush
- ❍ Hair clips or ponytail holders
- ❍ Glasses or contacts, if you wear them
- ❍ Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, lotion, etc.)
- ❍ Lip balm
- ❍ Flip flops
- ❍ Nursing or supportive bra
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____

- ❍ Extra absorbent maxi pads or adult diapers (if you have a specific brand you prefer)
- ❍ Loose-fitting outfit for you to wear home
- ❍ Phone charger
- ❍ Music
- ❍ Infant car seat (you'll need to have it installed correctly in your car before you can leave the hospital)
- ❍ Outfit for the baby to wear home
- ❍ Your ID and insurance card
- ❍ Your favorite treat (to enjoy after delivery)
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____
- ❍ _____

Signs of Labor

In most cases, you won't need to go to the hospital until you're in labor. Signs of labor typically include:

Your water breaking

This could look like a gush of fluid, or it could leak more slowly. Either way, call your doctor when it happens. (**Note:** You may experience other signs of labor before your water breaks. Your water may not break until you're in the hospital.)



Contractions

You'll feel them in your back, lower abdomen, and uterus. They will gradually get stronger, longer, and closer together. Time your contractions at home – if you're full term (39 weeks or more), it's usually good to be at the hospital when the contractions are about 5 minutes apart. Plan your route ahead of time so you'll know how long it takes to get to your delivery location.

In the later stages of pregnancy, you may feel contractions that are actually false signs of labor (also called Braxton-Hicks contractions). If you're having contractions, but they're not getting stronger or closer together (or if walking or other activity makes them go away), it could be false labor. If you're not sure, call your doctor.

Delivering Your Baby

Giving birth can take several hours – and it can be different for every mother, every time. This is one reason why it's important to have a doctor, nurse, or midwife present for every birth.

Staying relaxed

Have a plan to stay relaxed during labor. This might include doing breathing exercises, playing music, or sucking on ice chips.

Active labor begins when your cervix is dilated 5-6 cm. The doctor or nurse will tell you to start pushing when the cervix is fully dilated (about 10 cm). After the baby is born, you'll also have to deliver the placenta (afterbirth).

Cesarean (C-section) delivery

Some women may need to have a Cesarean (C-section) delivery. A C-section is an operation to deliver the baby. It may be necessary if the baby is in distress or in the breech position (not head first), or if the mother has been pushing for several hours, but the baby hasn't moved down. Your doctor can answer any questions you may have about this type of delivery.

Member Benefit

*Medicaid (STAR) members only.

Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT)* is available to all PCHP Medicaid (STAR) members. You may be able to get rides to and from the doctor, dentist, hospital, drugstore, or other Medicaid service providers at no cost. They could include:

- Public transportation, like the city bus.
- Commercial transit, like a bus or plane.
- Money to buy gas.
- A taxi or van service.

STAR members can also schedule one free ride per month to a local grocery store, food bank, WIC office, or Medicaid renewal appointment.

Postpartum Care

Congratulations on becoming a mom! As you get used to life with a new baby, it's important – for both of you – to keep getting regular care so you'll stay healthy.

Your next steps

If you can, make your baby's first doctor appointment before leaving the hospital. You'll want to see the pediatrician about 3 to 5 days after your baby is born. The doctor will do a head-to-toe checkup and measure your baby's weight and pulse. They will want to know how your baby is doing with feeding and sleeping. They may also ask you about any complications during the pregnancy or birth, as well as information about your family's medical history.

The first few weeks will be a busy time. It can be helpful to get a journal and take notes on your baby's eating and sleeping habits. That way, you'll have the information handy for future doctor visits.

Don't have a pediatrician?

Visit **ParklandHealthPlan.com/FindAProvider** to search for a provider near you.

Be sure to make an appointment for yourself, too. Your doctor will want to see:

- How well your body is healing (this includes checking things like your weight, breasts, pelvis, and blood pressure).
- If you need birth control.
- If you've had a C-section, the doctor will want to examine the incision to make sure it's healing.

Member Benefit

Car Seat. PCHP members can get a free car seat when they complete their first prenatal visit within the first trimester or within 42 days of enrolling with Parkland Community Health Plan.

Member Rewards

Postpartum and Well-Child Checkups. PCHP members can receive a $50 reward when they receive a postpartum checkup within 7-84 days of delivery.

Members can also receive a portable play yard with bassinet when they complete a postpartum checkup within 7-84 days of delivery.*

Additionally, members can earn up to $160 in rewards for the completion of up to 6 timely well-baby checkups between ages 0-15 months and up to 2 timely well-child checkups between ages 16-30 months.**

*Excludes CHIP and CHIP Perinate
**Excludes CHIP Perinate

Your Recovery

Be kind to yourself – your body has been through a lot during pregnancy and childbirth! Healing takes time. As you start to recover, you may experience different physical and emotional reactions:

- Cramps for the first few days after delivery.
- Bleeding or discharge for a few days or weeks.
- Swollen or tender breasts.
- Constipation.
- If you're breastfeeding, your period may be delayed for a while. If you're not breastfeeding, your period should return about 4-8 weeks after birth.

Is it the "Baby Blues" or Postpartum Depression?

In the days and weeks after your baby is born, it's normal to feel lonely, anxious, restless, or irritable. You may also have minor mood swings from time to time. This is known as the "baby blues."

Postpartum depression is a more serious condition. Seek help from your provider if you experience the following:

- Overwhelming tiredness or loss of energy.
- Depressed mood or severe mood swings.
- Trouble sleeping or eating.
- Trouble concentrating.
- Uncontrollable crying.
- Withdrawing from family and friends.
- Lack of interest in your baby.
- Fear of harming the baby or yourself.

Self-Care is Important, Too

As you adjust to this new stage of life, you're likely to face some challenges along the way. It's important to be patient – with yourself, and with your baby (you're both learning and getting used to each other!)

Taking care of yourself can include:

- Finding time to rest and relax (for example, try to sleep when your baby is sleeping).
- Accepting help when it's offered.
- Making healthy choices. A healthy diet and regular exercise will help you have more energy and lose some of the weight gained during pregnancy. Ask your doctor when it's safe to start exercising (this could include walking or a low-impact exercise class). Try to eat meals that include lean meats, high-fiber foods, low-fat dairy products, and plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Calling your doctor if you don't feel well or have pain. This can include both physical and emotional symptoms you may be experiencing.
- Spacing your pregnancies at least 2 years apart to allow your body to fully heal.
- Sharing your feelings with family and friends (and other moms) – remember, you're not alone!

Helpful Resource

Breastfeeding Education. PCHP has partnered with Dallas Healthy Start to produce videos about prenatal care, postpartum care, and breastfeeding. These are available through the PCHP YouTube channel. You can also check with local organizations near you to see if they offer classes on pregnancy and childbirth.



A Note About Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is a great way to make sure your baby gets the nutrients they need. However, many new moms are not able to do it for more than a few weeks—or at all. If you're having trouble breastfeeding, talk to your doctor about the best options for you and your baby.



Member Benefit

Member Benefit
Postpartum members may receive up to 10 healthy, home-delivered meals per month following their pregnancy. STAR and CHIP members can get meals for 3 months after their pregnancy ends. CHIP Perinate members can get meals for up to 2 months following their pregnancy.

Keeping Your Baby Safe

Here are a few simple – but very important – ways to keep your baby safe when you first bring them home from the hospital:

- Ask visitors to stay home if they are feeling sick, and make sure they wash their hands before holding or touching the baby. Your baby's immune system is still developing, which means they're more easily affected by germs.
- Don't smoke (or allow others to smoke) around your baby.
- Never shake your baby – it can cause serious brain injury.
- Don't leave your baby in a car seat, carrier, or bouncer all day. Regular "tummy time" is important for helping their muscles develop.

It's also important to make sure your baby is sleeping safely, to reduce the risk of suffocation or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Just remember the "ABCs"! Babies should always sleep:

- **A**lone – not in a bed with parents or other children.
- On their **B**ack.
- In a **C**rib with a firm mattress covered by a tightly fitted sheet (no stuffed animals, pillows, blankets, or crib bumpers in the bed).

☆ Helpful Resources

Living Well. Get health and wellness tips, plus information on plan coverage and member rewards: **ParklandHealthPlan.com/Articles**

Events Calendar. Attend PCHP events online and in person. See our upcoming events here: **ParklandHealthPlan.com/Events**

Additional Resources

findhelp

Findhelp is an online directory that connects people to free assistance from local programs and organizations, including help with food, housing, transportation, financial services, legal services, and more. Visit **ParklandHealthPlan.FindHelp.com** to see what assistance is available in your area.

TEXAS WIC
Smart Choices • Healthy Families
Opciones sabias • Familias sanas

Texas WIC, or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children is a program for pregnant or breastfeeding women and families with children younger than 5. Program offerings include breastfeeding support, food packages, and nutrition classes. To learn more, visit TexasWIC.org.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

If you're having thoughts of suicide or need help with severe anxiety or depression, call **9-8-8** right away. You'll be connected to a trained counselor who can help you get the support you need.

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

Unfortunately, being pregnant does not stop many women from being abused. The abuse may be physical (hitting, kicking) or emotional (yelling, insulting) – either way, it can be dangerous for both mom and baby. If you're being abused, please talk to your doctor, or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-SAFE (7233)**.

Parkland Community Health Plan

PCHP offers services that can help members with mental health or substance use conditions. We can help connect you to a therapy provider if you do not have one.

Please call **1-888-672-2277** (STAR Medicaid) or **1-888-814-2352** (CHIP) to speak to our staff about your behavioral health needs.

If you are having a mental health crisis, please call our Behavioral Health Crisis Line at **1-844-603-1134** (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Doctor Appointment Log

Appointment Date_____ **Appointment Time**_____

Question_____

_____

Answer _____

_____

Appointment Date_____ **Appointment Time**_____

Question_____

_____

Answer _____

_____

Appointment Date_____ **Appointment Time**_____

Question_____

_____

Answer _____

_____

Appointment Date_____ **Appointment Time** _____

Question_____

_____

Answer _____

_____

Appointment Date_____ **Appointment Time**_____

Question_____

Answer _____

Important Information



Provider Name _____ **Provider Phone** _____

Provider Address _____



Hospital Name _____ **Hospital Phone** _____

Hospital Address _____



Emergency Contact Name _____

Relationship _____ **Emergency Contact Phone** _____

Emergency Contact Address _____

Emergency Contact Name _____

Relationship _____ **Emergency Contact Phone** _____

Emergency Contact Address _____



Your Blood Type _____



Your Medications

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____



Notes

_____

_____

_____

Pregnancy Journal

Use these pages to write down your thoughts, questions, and feelings during your pregnancy.

Connect With Us

Visit Us Online
ParklandHealthPlan.com/Pregnancy-Support
ParklandHealthPlan.com

For upcoming events, visit
ParklandHealthPlan.com/Events

www.facebook.com/
ParklandCommunityHealthPlan

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