

Women's Health

# Pregnancy guidelines



## Congratulations on your pregnancy!

Our goal is to help you have a healthy pregnancy, delivery and baby! You will likely have many questions during your pregnancy. We hope the information we provide today and throughout your pregnancy will give you the answers to those questions.

## MyChart

As part of your care, we encourage you to create a MyChart account ([mychart.spectrumhealth.org](http://mychart.spectrumhealth.org)). This account will allow you to see test results, email your physician, refill prescriptions, request appointments and see office visit notes. Your MyChart account will provide these benefits beyond your pregnancy and connect you with all of your Corewell Health providers.

Corewell Health is a learning institution. Your care team may include physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, certified nurse midwives, residents, students and interns.

At Corewell Health, we support team-based care, which leads to improved outcomes and better patient satisfaction. For your convenience we also collaborate with other community programs, such as Healthier Communities, Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP), Strong Beginnings and Healthy Start.

## Importance of early and consistent care

Regular prenatal care is important during your pregnancy. Frequency of visits is as follows: You will be scheduled every four weeks through the first six months of your pregnancy, then every two weeks until the last month of your pregnancy, and then every week until you deliver. More frequent visits may be necessary if there are any concerns.

## Insurance

We encourage you to contact your insurance company for coverage details specific to your plan. Prenatal care includes visits directly related to caring for your pregnancy. Conditions treated unrelated to pregnancy, such as colds or sore throats, may result in additional co-pays or charges.

## Nausea and vomiting

Gastrointestinal issues are common in early pregnancy but can be difficult to deal with. Here are some tips to help you.

- Try to eat small, frequent meals that consist of bland foods; avoid spicy/fatty foods.
- Sour and salty foods are sometimes better tolerated.
- Try eating some crackers first thing in the morning before getting out of bed.
- Try to drink sips of water and/or Gatorade throughout the day and eat dry foods in between (do not try to drink a large glass of water with your meal).
- Avoid triggers, food preparation and strong smells.

Some other things to try:

- Ginger, 250 mg capsules four times daily (from the health food store) or ginger or peppermint tea.
- Peppermint oil (to inhale).
- Sea-Bands (available at many drug stores, to help with seasickness).

If these efforts do not work, try adding vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) 25 mg three to four times daily with a half a tablet of Unisom at bedtime.

## Nutrition and weight gain

We encourage you to eat a healthy balanced diet with three servings of protein each day.

- The amount of weight gain that is recommended in pregnancy depends on your health and your body mass index (BMI) before pregnancy. Your provider will discuss recommended weight gain with you at your first appointment.
- We recommend that you take a prenatal vitamin daily and continue to take it while breastfeeding.
- You need 400 mcg of folic acid daily. This is provided in your prenatal vitamin.
- Calcium is used to build your baby's bones and teeth. You should try to get 1,200 mg of calcium a day. Milk and other dairy products such as yogurt and cheese are the best sources of calcium. If you have trouble digesting milk products, you can get calcium from other sources, such as broccoli, leafy greens, sardines or a calcium supplement. We also recommend 600 IU of vitamin D daily. This may be included in your calcium supplements.
- You will also need to get increased iron during pregnancy. This can be found in red meats and dark green leafy vegetables. Many prenatal vitamins will have added iron as well.
- Omega-3 supplements are safe for use in pregnancy. Some research shows that the omega-3 fatty acid DHA plays a role in brain development. Recommended daily dose in pregnancy is 250 mg.
- Try to stay well hydrated. You should drink six 8-ounce glasses of water or caffeine-free drinks like juice and milk per day.

## Food to avoid

- Discuss herbal supplements with your provider before consuming.
- Avoid any fish caught locally (inland lakes, rivers and the Great Lakes). We encourage you to eat up to 12 ounces a week of low-mercury fish (e.g., salmon, tilapia) but limit albacore tuna to 6 ounces a week. You should not consume any raw fish or seafood. You should also avoid swordfish, shark and tuna steaks, as they are more likely to be high in mercury.
- Avoid sugary drinks like soda and energy drinks.
- Avoid unpasteurized dairy products and apple cider.

## Exercise and activity

Being active and exercising at least 30 minutes on most, if not all, days of the week can benefit your



health during pregnancy. Regular activity also helps keep you fit during pregnancy and may improve your ability to cope with labor. Walking, swimming and cycling are good activities during pregnancy. If you were a runner before pregnancy, you can typically continue to run during pregnancy, although you may need to modify your routine. If you have any complications during pregnancy, your provider may restrict activity.

Guidelines for safe and healthy exercise in pregnancy include:

- Avoid doing any exercise on your back after the first trimester.
- When lifting weights, limit weight to 25 pounds.
- If it has been some time since you have exercised, start slowly and work up to 30 minutes of exercise daily.
- Drink plenty of water to help keep from overheating and dehydrating.
- If you experience pain, cramping or bleeding during exercise, stop the activity and call the office if the symptoms persist.
- Sexual activity is safe during pregnancy. Your doctor may restrict sexual activities if you are having any complications with your pregnancy. If you experience pain or bleeding, contact the office.

## Miscellaneous

- We will have all patients complete a depression screening during each trimester and at your postpartum visit. Let us know if you have any concerns or questions regarding depression or anxiety during your pregnancy.

- Toxoplasmosis is an infectious disease that is caused by a parasite. Cats are primary carriers. Patients should avoid changing kitty litter while pregnant. It is also possible to contract toxoplasmosis from undercooked or raw meat.
- It is safe to use latex paint while pregnant. You should avoid exposure to all oil-based paints and stains.

### Work-related hazards

If you are employed where you may be exposed to hazardous materials or chemicals, your employer should have a Material Safety Data Sheet or Right to Know manual available to explain any risks that you could incur by exposure.

- Avoid prolonged sitting and standing.
- Avoid chemicals and toxic fumes; be aware of what is in your workplace.
- Do not lift more than 25 pounds.
- Do not climb a ladder. Balance can be affected by your expanding belly.
- If you work around X-rays, use the proper equipment and precautions.

### Medications

Frequently used medications that are safe for use in pregnancy:

- Tylenol® (acetaminophen)—regular or extra strength as prescribed on the bottle.
- Robitussin DM®—for cough and congestion.
- Mylanta®, Maalox® or Tums®—for heartburn or upset stomach.
- Pepcid AC®—for heartburn and indigestion.
- Benadryl®, Zyrtec® or Claritin®—for allergy symptoms.

Medications to avoid:

- AVOID Sudafed® during the first trimester. It is safe for use in the second and third trimesters.
- AVOID Motrin® and Advil® (ibuprofen).
- AVOID aspirin unless specifically prescribed by your doctor.
- AVOID Pepto-Bismol®.

### Vision

You may experience temporary vision changes during pregnancy. It would be best to wait until after your pregnancy to have an eye exam as long as your vision changes do not interfere with performing your daily activities.

### Dental care

It is important for you to continue routine dental care during your pregnancy.

- Inform your dentist that you are pregnant.
- If X-rays are taken, be sure to have a shield placed over your abdomen.
- Nonemergency appointments should be scheduled after 13 weeks of pregnancy.
- Local anesthesia is safe during pregnancy.

### Travel

- Always wear your lap and shoulder seat belt. The lap belt should be worn across your hips and under your belly, and the shoulder harness above your belly.
- If traveling a long distance, get out of the car every few hours and walk around.
- Try to avoid high-sodium (salty) foods and drink plenty of water.
- If traveling by airplane or train, check on requirements for pregnant passengers.
- Long-distance travel after 36 weeks of pregnancy should always be discussed with your doctor.
- Discuss any overseas travel plans with your doctor.



### Classes

Corewell Health offers multiple classes, including prepared childbirth, breastfeeding, sibling classes and many others that you may want to attend. The information on pregnancy and parenting classes can be found in your Corewell Health folder.

There is also an online prepared childbirth class available.

**Notify the office right away if you experience any of the following symptoms at any time during your pregnancy:**

- Constant vomiting. This is not the same as occasional morning sickness.
- Vaginal bleeding or bloody discharge, with or without cramps.
- Sharp or continuous abdominal pain, menstrual-like cramps or tightening of uterus, with or without pain in regular pattern.
- Sudden gush of watery fluid from vagina (at any time before your due date).
- Severe headaches, dizziness or both.
- Excessive swelling of your face, hands, ankles or legs.
- Blurred or double vision and spots before your eyes.
- Rapid weight gain—overnight or within a few days.
- No urine or very small amounts of urine.
- Pain or burning with urination.
- Failure to feel the baby move after you have been feeling regular movement.
- Chills and fever, other than minor cold.
- Fainting spells or loss of consciousness.
- Vaginal discharge with color, odor and itching.

**Recognizing premature labor**

Any of the following symptoms prior to 37 weeks

- Uterine contractions that happen every 10 minutes or more often, for two hours in a row.
- Increase in vaginal discharge—fluid or blood from the vagina.
- Pelvic pressure that feels like your baby is pushing down. Pressure comes and goes.
- Abdominal cramping, with or without diarrhea.

**If you have any of the above signs and symptoms:**

- Lie down tilted toward your left side. Place a pillow at your back for support.
- Drink several glasses of water. Monitor contractions for one hour.
- If symptoms persist or worsen after one hour of rest, contact your physician.

**Call right away if** you have a sudden increase in vaginal discharge—any fluid or blood from your vagina.

**Call if** you have uterine contractions every 10 minutes or more often (more than five contractions in one hour), for two hours in a row.

**Call if** you have any of the other signs and symptoms for one hour.

**Genetic screening tests are available**

You will have an opportunity to discuss with your provider which screenings are appropriate. You will also need to contact your insurance company to verify your level of coverage.

Corewell Health offers a variety of genetic screening tests during pregnancy, including:

- Sequential screening—done at 10 to 14 weeks, includes ultrasound and a blood test.
- Quad test—blood test done between 15 and 24 weeks.
- Panorama—blood test that can be done at any time after 10 weeks.

**Recommended online resources**

- [acog.org/patients](https://www.acog.org/patients)
- [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)
- [webmd.com](https://www.webmd.com)
- [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

Additional online patient educational materials, known as EMMI modules, can be provided to you by your provider at appropriate times during your pregnancy. Talk with your physician for additional information.

