

My choices.



My life.



My plan.



MY WORKBOOK HEALTHY PREGNANCY PROGRAM

Insight and support for the stages and changes of pregnancy.

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Welcome!

Welcome to Medica's Healthy Pregnancy Program

Pregnancy is a time of change, reflection and personal growth. While every pregnancy has similar stages, your pregnancy experience will be as unique as you are. Medica's Healthy Pregnancy Program is here to provide you with insight and support during this special time of your life. We'll connect you with one nurse who will get to know you, answer your questions, provide additional resources and offer personalized support through all stages of your pregnancy.

This program is designed to provide you with practical tools and information. You will receive phone calls and educational letters from your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse at approximately the following points in your pregnancy and more often if necessary or requested:

- 18 weeks: *Getting to Know You* (page 9)
- 22 weeks: *Getting in Touch With Your Pregnancy* (page 18)
- 26 weeks: *Getting in Touch With Your Baby* (page 27)
- 32 weeks: *Are You Ready?* (page 35)
- Postpartum: *What Do I Do Now?* (page 43)

This workbook contains tips, resources for health information and other tools you may find useful. We encourage you to use it when you talk to your nurse, at provider visits and as a practical source of health information you can use on your own. However you choose to use the workbook and the information in it, we encourage you use it in the way that works best for you. If the course of your pregnancy has changed, you may find the information in this book helpful whenever you are ready to plan another pregnancy.

There are many pregnancy topics that are not covered in this workbook, and you may find that you have additional questions or concerns. Remember you are welcome to call your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse at any time. ***We wish you the best of health!***



REFLECTION

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

—Lao Tse

Our Mission

The mission of Medica’s Healthy Pregnancy Program is to provide the support you need during this time and promote the best possible outcome for you and your baby.

Your nurse will actively listen, answer questions and keep you informed throughout your pregnancy. Our commitment to you is to enhance your overall health care experience by providing a range of pregnancy related information to help you understand and better manage your pregnancy.

Table of Contents

Medica’s Healthy Pregnancy Program	2
Prenatal Care	5
Nutrition	10
Exercise	14
Relationships	17
Support	19
Stress Management	22
Preparing for Birth	30
Congratulations, Your Baby is Born!	44
Baby Care Basics	47

My Healthy Pregnancy Nurse

Name:

Contact information:

Medica’s Healthy Pregnancy Program

What is a “mindful” pregnancy?

Pregnancy is a time of change, growth, reflection, development—and creativity! And, all of these things are in addition to the baby you are bringing into the world. This is a time when many women renew their commitment to their health. We all know the foundation of health is eating right, exercise, creating healthy connections and a healthy environment, but good health is much more than that. It includes our spiritual health, our emotional health, what gives us energy and how we respond to the world around us. Yet, how can you address all of these things when so much of a pregnancy is out of your control? This is where the concept of “mindfulness” comes in.

Mindfulness is the term used to describe the process of becoming more aware. It means paying attention to the things most of us take for granted, such as our breathing, perceptions, judgments, emotions and reactions. This heightened awareness allows us to observe how our body (and our baby) is affected by our behaviors, thoughts and emotions. Pregnancy is a time of insight, learning and personal growth. It is a time when women throughout history have set aside time to honor their health and take the time to nurture their spirit.

Health Planner Wheel



** Used with permission from the Center for Spirituality and Healing at the University of Minnesota and the Life Science Foundation. Access their Healthy Lifestyle tools at www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu.*

This workbook is designed to assist you as you move through the next nine months. Your dedicated nurse has special expertise in pregnancy education. Your nurse will be here to offer support and information, and to give you the opportunity to share your concerns. Health is about finding balance in every area of your life. The changes that are taking place in your life at this time will affect every other part of your life. We invite you to explore how mindfulness can help you through your pregnancy.

Take a few minutes to think about your health today and the Health Planner Wheel above. Write down your thoughts about the following questions:

What does balance look like to *you*? How do *you* define health? Where are you in balance? Where do you see opportunities for personal growth?

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What does it mean to have a healthy pregnancy?

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What action steps are you willing to take at this time to reach your vision of health?

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1st
trimester

2nd trimester
see page 16

3rd trimester
see page 29



An inside look at your growing baby and changing body:

1
Month

Your baby

- At the end of the first month, your baby will be about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch long.
- Limb buds will appear to eventually grow into arms and legs.
- Your baby's heart will start to beat on day 22 and tiny lungs begin to form.
- The neural tube begins to form. This will eventually be his or her brain and spinal cord.

Your body

- Increased hormones may bring up and down moods.
- You may have some initial signs of pregnancy. Your breasts may be larger or they may feel sore. You may experience "morning sickness" (better described as all day nausea).
- Your eating habits may change, such as food aversion or cravings.
- You may feel tired or need to rest.

2
Month

Your baby

- The major body organs are forming (heart, brain, lungs).
- The placenta is now working to supply your baby with food and oxygen through the umbilical cord.
- Ears, ankles, eyelids, wrists, fingers and toes have formed; however, your baby's eyes are still sealed shut.

Your body

- Your breasts are still sore and are starting to get bigger. The area around your nipples starts to darken.
- Unfortunately, you may still have morning sickness.
- Your body starts to make more blood to support your pregnancy.
- Your uterus is starting to grow and you may feel as if you have to empty your bladder more often.
- You may experience fatigue and need to rest.

3
Month

Your baby

- At the end of the first trimester, your baby is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 inches long and weighs about an ounce.
- The fingernails and toenails are formed and the baby's mouth has buds that will eventually become teeth.
- Hair is now forming all over your baby's skin.
- You can now hear your baby's heartbeat, which will be fast while changing in intensity as they move around.

Your body

- Fatigue and morning sickness may still be happening.
- At this time you may have gained 2 to 4 pounds and your clothes will start to feel tight.
- You may get headaches, feel light-headed or dizzy.



NURSE'S Comment

One of the most important things you can do for your health, and your baby's health, is to get prenatal care.

Prenatal care can help keep you and your baby healthy. Babies of mothers who do not get prenatal care are three times more likely to have a low birth weight and five times more likely to die than babies born to mothers who do get care.

Source: www.womenshealth.gov

Prenatal Care

During the next nine months, 37–42 weeks, or three trimesters, you'll probably find yourself full of questions, possibly having some concerns and definitely wondering what is going to happen next. That's why it is so important to choose the right support system to help you with your pregnancy.

How do I choose a provider?

Every pregnancy is different and every woman has different views, goals and expectations for their pregnancy. Today, we're fortunate that there are many types of providers and birth settings, so you will be able to find one who supports your specific values and needs. When selecting the right provider for your pregnancy, ask questions and express your views about childbirth to make sure your provider understands and agrees with what is important to you.

It helps to think about your values beforehand. Use the following list as a starting point for your discussion. Answering these questions will help you determine the important things you want to discuss with a potential provider when you meet with him or her:

- *What are the most important values (personal, cultural) about pregnancy and birth that you want your provider to understand?*
- *How will these values help you select the right provider?*
- *What health concerns do you have that may influence your choice of a provider?*
- *What setting do you want to give birth in? Have you called Medica Customer Service to verify your choice is covered by Medica?*

NURSE'S Comment



After you choose a provider, write down this important information and make a copy to keep in a handy spot. It is also a good idea to give a copy to someone else, such as your spouse, birth coach, friend or family member.

Healthcare Provider:

Name:

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Phone:

.....
After Hours Phone:

Hospital:

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Phone:

Birth Support Contacts:

.....
Phone:

Here is a list of the different type of providers you may want to consider:

- **Obstetrician/OB-GYN:** Obstetricians are medical doctors who have specialized training in taking care of pregnant woman and delivering babies. They are able to do Cesarean sections when needed and support uncomplicated births as well as high risk pregnancies.
- **Nurse Midwife (CNM):** A nurse midwife specializes in providing care throughout pregnancy, labor or delivery in women who have healthy uncomplicated pregnancies. They are trained in both nursing and midwifery and provide care within the hospital or birth center.
- **Certified Professional Midwife (CPM):** Certified midwives are trained to provide prenatal care and deliver babies in a birth center or home setting to women with normal uncomplicated pregnancies.
- **Family Physician:** Family physicians are medical doctors who care for people throughout all stages of life—including during pregnancy, delivery and after birth.
- **Doula:** A doula does not deliver babies; rather a doula works alongside a midwife or doctor to offer additional support, care and guidance during labor and delivery.

Here are different settings to consider:

- **Hospital:** Hospitals provide technical medical care and surgery services in case Cesarean sections need to be performed. Many hospitals are now providing more options for pregnant women during labor and delivery to support a wider range of choices and values surrounding birth. Researching your area hospitals will provide you with additional information on available birth options.
- **Birth Center:** Some birth centers exist within hospitals and some are freestanding. There is less technical intervention and often more options available to support natural childbirth. Birth centers only provide care to women with uncomplicated pregnancies and will have to move the mother and baby to a hospital if there is need for an intervention.
- **Home Birth:** Just as the name suggests, home births are deliveries in the home. Though some nurse midwives and doctors may do home deliveries, most often professional midwives provide the care. Home births are usually not covered under most insurance plans and transportation must be available in case of the need to transfer mother and baby to a hospital.

No birth is the same and no woman has the same needs and values. It is possible to find a provider who will honor and support your values and preferences. Some of these options may require you to pay out of pocket or obtain a referral. Contact Medica Customer Service to find out what is covered by your insurance plan.

Source: This information was adapted from womanshealth.gov, which provides additional information regarding provider types and birth settings.



Your prenatal checkup—what's included in your first visit?

What can you expect during your first prenatal checkup? You'll get a general checkup that typically includes:

- Weight and blood pressure measurement
- A pelvic exam and Pap smear
- Your general health history
- Blood and urine tests to check for infections
- STD testing
- A discussion about chronic health concerns
- Information about prenatal vitamins and nutrition
- Time to discuss emotional or environmental health
- Time for your questions

Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement www.icsi.org.

A note about medications. Make sure to tell your provider about all prescription and over-the-counter medications or herbs you are taking. These things could affect your health and your baby's health and you may need to stop taking them or ask the doctor to suggest other alternatives while you are pregnant.

Providers may differ in their approach to how often they want to see you for prenatal care, but most say every 4 weeks for the first 28 weeks, then every 2 weeks through week 36 and then once a week until delivery. If you are considered high risk, your provider may ask you to visit more frequently. If this is not your first pregnancy, but you are seeing a new provider, make sure he or she knows about your pregnancy history.

What do I want to share with my provider?

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I quit smoking when I found out I was pregnant with my son.

I have to admit, I felt like I was going crazy with everything going on in my life. Every time I wanted to have a cigarette, I remembered sitting outside with my father having a cigarette with him.

Do I really want to sit down with my son and bond over a cigarette? This became the image that got me through these initial few weeks—an image that has now been replaced with something more in alignment to my values. Knowing what I didn't want and knowing what I do want were essential to quitting smoking!

* Name changed to protect member privacy.

Special situations

Some pregnancies present special situations that are important for you and your provider to discuss. Here are just a few of them:

- Having multiples—twins or triplets
- Age—being a teenager or over age 35
- Chronic health conditions
- Underweight or overweight
- Economic challenges
- Home or work situations
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Emotional or mental health issues
- Anything that causes you concern or raises unanswered questions about your health, your future or the health of your baby

If you are in one of these unique situations, you are not alone. It is important to clarify your thoughts and emotions so you can decide how you want to address them. Remember, all of your conversations with your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse and your health care provider are kept confidential.

As you think about any unique situations you are facing, write down your concerns here so you can discuss them with your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse and/or your provider:

What special concerns do you have about your pregnancy?

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What information or resources do you need or want at this time? Are there people you need to contact?

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What plan can you create to address your pregnancy challenges?

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Getting to Know You

About 18 weeks into your pregnancy, your Medica Healthy Pregnancy Nurse will call you. During your first call, your nurse will discuss prenatal care, assess your individual needs and get a chance to know more about your specific situation. This is a time to begin to explore what you will need to care for yourself and your baby.

Please take time to think about these questions before your nurse calls. It will give you a chance to think about what you want to discuss during your first phone visit. Write your answers or questions here.

How do you feel about this pregnancy?

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What are your thoughts surrounding being pregnant, your health or your future?

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What emotions are you experiencing at this time? Do your emotions change from day to day? What do you think about these changes?

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What do you need to move forward? Are there any actions that you need to take at this time? What resources would be helpful?

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Do you have any questions you would like to discuss with the nurse?

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Are there any questions you want to ask your provider but are not sure how to explain your needs or concerns? Your Medica Healthy Pregnancy Nurse can help coach you about how you can explain your needs clearly.

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NURSE'S Comment



Did you know?

- 200 milligrams of caffeine a day is the recommended limit for pregnant women? That is equal to about one 12-ounce cup of coffee.
- A pregnant woman only has to eat an additional 100–300 calories per day to support her pregnancy. That is the amount of calories in one medium apple and one 8 oz. glass of skim milk.

Source: March of Dimes



Nutrition

Nutrition is one of those topics that we tend to make more difficult than it needs to be. This is especially true during pregnancy. All you need to know are a few simple guidelines.

Keep it simple

Embrace:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables—go for a variety of colors in nature.
- Whole grains and complex carbohydrates.
- Hydrate! Drink plenty of water.
- Healthy fats found in flax seeds, nuts, low mercury fish and vegetable oils.
- Foods high in folic acids, such as beans, leafy green vegetables and orange juice.
- Lean proteins.

Limit:

- Processed foods, sugary foods, junk foods, unhealthy fast food choices.
- Reduce your intake of caffeine, which is in coffee, tea and soft drinks.
- Eat no more than about 12 ounces of shrimp, salmon, pollack, catfish, canned light tuna or 6 ounces of albacore tuna a week.

See *MN Department of Health Fish Consumption Guidelines* for more information.

Avoid:

- Raw meat and fish.
- Uncooked eggs.
- Non-pasteurized milk or juice.
- Fish high in mercury, such as swordfish, shark, king mackerel or tilefish.



NURSE'S Comment

How much is in a “normal” size serving?

It's not often that we have time to measure all of our food in cups or ounces. If you're watching portions, use this tip: A serving size is usually equal to the size of your fist or palm of your hand.

So, how much should I eat in a day?

Grains: *Eat 6 ounces or 6–11 servings per day*

1 ounce of grains is equal to:

- 1 slice of bread
- 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal
- ½ cup cooked rice, pasta or cereal
- 1 small pancake (4½ inches in diameter)
- 1 small tortilla (6 inches in diameter)

Veggies: *Eat 2½ cups or 5 servings per day*

1 cup of vegetables is equal to:

- 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables
- 1 cup of vegetable juice
- 2 cups raw, leafy greens
- 1 medium baked potato (2½ to 3 inches in diameter)

Fruits: *Eat 1½ to 2 cups or 3–5 servings per day*

½ cup of fruit is equal to:

- ½ cup 100% fruit juice
- ½ cup fresh, frozen or canned fruit
- ½ a fruit (small orange, apple or banana)

Milk products: *Eat 3 cups or 3 servings per day*

Low-fat or skim is the best. 1 cup of milk product is equal to:

- 1 cup of milk
- 1 cup of yogurt
- 1½ ounces natural cheese (cheddar, parmesan)

Proteins: *Eat 5–5½ ounces or 2 servings per day*

1 ounce of protein is equal to:

- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter
- ¼ cup cooked dry beans
- 1 ounce lean meat, poultry or fish
- 1 egg
- ½ ounce nuts (12 almonds, 24 pistachios)

NOEL'S Story*



The big surprise was how little control I had over my body.

My baby took over and my appetite was turned upside down. What I normally loved: chips, sweets, salads, I couldn't eat. Hamburgers, tuna and chicken salad on a bagel were my craving foods. This lack of control over my body was my first lesson in the humbling job of parenting!

* Name changed to protect member privacy.

Are you really eating like you think you are eating?

Try filling out this food diary for one week to gain some perspective. For most of us, becoming more aware of our food choices can offer some surprises... or it can give you peace of mind knowing that your eating habits are supporting good health. Be specific, such as writing down if your chicken is baked, fried, has skin or is skinless. Don't forget that some beverages have calories too!

My Food Diary

Try filling out this food diary for one week to gain some perspective. For most of us, becoming more aware of our food choices can offer some surprises... or it can give you peace of mind knowing that your eating habits are supporting good health. Be specific, such as writing down if your chicken is baked, fried, has skin or is skinless. Don't forget that some beverages have calories too! *Diary continues on reverse side.*

Day 1 Record all food and beverages consumed today	
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	
Water	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Try to drink up to 8 glasses of water a day.
Other Beverages	

Day 2 Record all food and beverages consumed today	
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	
Water	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Try to drink up to 8 glasses of water a day.
Other Beverages	

Day 3 Record all food and beverages consumed today	
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	
Water	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Try to drink up to 8 glasses of water a day.
Other Beverages	

Day 4 Record all food and beverages consumed today	
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	
Water	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Try to drink up to 8 glasses of water a day.
Other Beverages	

My Workbook ◀ 53

Find a copy of this food diary on pages 53–54 of this workbook. Make copies or use a free online diary to track your food intake.

As you review your food diary, think about these questions:

- *What do you notice about your eating habits?*
- *What would you like to change?*
- *How can you create more balance in your diet?*

Eating healthy on a budget

It's always important to eat healthy and it is especially important for pregnant women to have good nutrition.

Here are some ideas to create healthy meals on a budget:

- Buy fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers markets.
- If you can't get fresh vegetables and fruits, frozen is the next best option.
- Once in a while, try a protein-rich vegetarian meal, such as rice and beans.
- Foods that are in season are usually less expensive.
- Watch grocery store ads and create your grocery list and plan meals based on what is on special.
- Make a grocery shopping list and stick to it and you'll spend less.

What are your creative ideas for healthy meals on a budget?

Write them down here:

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If finding or paying for healthy food is a challenge, don't hesitate to contact your local WIC office (see the resources page on the inside back cover of this book). WIC is available for various income levels, so check into it even if you are not sure that you qualify. There may also be some county resources. Contact your county human services or your local food shelf.

Are there any additional resources you need? Your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse can assist you in finding resources.



Exercise

There is no way to get around it—exercise is beneficial. It keeps you in shape before, during and after pregnancy, enhances your mood, helps you prepare for labor and gets you in touch with your body. And some studies show it may actually be just as beneficial for your baby’s health as it is your own! Weight loss may be easier for women postpartum if they exercise during pregnancy. Always remember to contact your provider before beginning any new exercise routine. Unless your provider tells you that now is not the right time for you, enjoy moving.

Just remember—if you are an avid exerciser, listen to your body and adjust. If you are new to a routine, take it slow—your body will let you know how much is right.

- Remember to breathe.
- Avoid exercise that puts you at risk for falling or getting bumped.
- Hydrate—drink plenty of fluids, especially water.
- Have the right shoes for the activity you are doing.

What should I do if I have never exercised?

Certain exercises are universally beneficial to pregnant woman of any fitness level. Find what works for you. Contact your provider before beginning any new exercise routine. Here are a few things you may want to try:

- Yoga
- Walking
- Stationary bike
- Swimming
- Low impact aerobics designed for pregnancy

Signs of concern... when to call your provider

When you are exercising, your body will let you know if you need to slow down and take a break. Make sure you call your provider right away if any of the following occur:

- Headache
- Feeling dizzy or faint
- Chest pain or shortness of breath
- Swelling or pain in your calf
- Vaginal bleeding or leaking fluid
- Contractions

Knowing how your body works and knowing your limitations, how are you going to design your exercise routine while pregnant?

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What is your usual exercise routine when not pregnant? How can this translate into an exercise routine for pregnancy?

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How do you know when you are overdoing it?

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What questions or concerns about exercise do you have for your provider?

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An inside look at your growing baby and changing body:

4 Month

Your baby

- At the end of this month, your baby is about 6 or 7 inches long and weighs about 4 or 5 ounces.
- Your baby is moving, kicking and swallowing.
- Your baby's skin is translucent and pink—you could see right through him or her.
- Your placenta is providing your baby with everything it needs and is sharing everything you take in as well (food, drugs, smoke, etc.).

Your body

- As morning sickness resolves, your appetite may increase. Heartburn is a possibility.
- Your energy returns and you feel less fatigue.
- Many women have reported feeling their baby move for the first time near the end of the fourth month.
- The weight gain begins—approximately 1 pound per week.
- This may be the time to start wearing maternity clothes as your belly begins to grow.

5 Month

Your baby

- This is the month where your baby really starts to grow. At the end of the 5th month, they are about 10 inches long and weighs ½ to 1 pound.
- Your baby is now more active. They can roll around, turn upside down, kick and punch.
- You may notice cycles where your baby is less active—and they just may be asleep. Your baby will continue to have cycles of sleep and being awake similar to the days after birth.

Your body

- At this time, you will feel your baby moving on a regular basis.
- Your heart will begin to beat faster as your body continues to change.
- You may need additional rest! Make sure you are getting at least 8 hours of sleep a night, take breaks and rest when possible.

6 Month

Your baby

- Your baby will be about 12 inches long and weigh 1½ to 2 pounds at the end of the sixth month.
- Your baby is now wrinkled, has red skin and is covered by a layer of soft fine hair.
- The kicks are strong—and they still have plenty of room to pack a wallop.
- Your baby may start to open their eyes now that they are completely formed.

Your body

- Some of the discomforts of pregnancy are presenting in full force.
- Your skin may itch on your belly and stretch marks may form.
- Your back may hurt and you may feel pain down the sides of your stomach.
- Constipation is an additional possibility.



SHERLYCE'S Story*

The best piece of advice I received on how to take care of a baby came from my father.

He said treat them like you would want to be treated—that's all you need to know.

It really was that simple. All I had to do is be kind, respond when needed, listen to their life problems with compassion and caring and keep them and their environment comfortable. Oh, and it was important to have a good sense of humor. I did not even have to be perfect—I just had to be there. By taking care of a baby, I learned how to really care for myself.

* Name changed to protect member privacy.

Relationships

It's normal to reevaluate your relationships when you are pregnant. After all, you are bringing another human being into the world who will be placed in the middle of the connections and supports you have created. In addition, you are requiring more support—and letting go of stressful situations is a gift you can give yourself.

What situations do you need to ask yourself about?

Relationship with Self: Are you always kind to yourself? Even if you are kind to others and take care of their needs, do you take time for yourself or your needs? Are you criticizing yourself or judging yourself for things that are out of your control? How is this going to help you right now?

Toxic Relationships: It's important to be aware of toxic relationships. These are the people who are stressful, demanding and take more than they give. How can you set boundaries with these people?

Abusive Relationships: Emotional, physical or sexual abuse is always inappropriate and is harmful to you and your baby. Get out and get help.

If you need to talk, get further information or find ways to keep yourself safe, there are people who can help. See the resource guide at the end or this booklet for information or talk to your Medica Healthy Pregnancy Nurse.



Getting in Touch With Your Pregnancy

Your 22-week call is about getting in touch with the changes and challenges of pregnancy. Your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse will assist you in developing awareness about how you can deal with discomforts or weight gain. You may wish to learn more about self-care, and the possibility of preterm labor. You will have the opportunity to ask questions, reflect on how your life is changing and receive information on additional resources if you need them.

To prepare for your 22-week call, it is helpful to take a few minutes to reflect on how your pregnancy is moving forward. This will prepare you for the call and help you determine if you have any questions or concerns you want to discuss.

How is your pregnancy progressing? What changes have you noticed? What challenges are you facing?

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How familiar are you with the signs and symptoms of preterm labor? Do you know when to contact your provider and how to reach them after-hours?

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Have you considered a hospital tour? Do you have a plan for getting to the hospital?

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Do you have any questions for your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse? Write them down so you don't forget to ask.

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Support

Who supports you?

Pregnancy is a time when you may need additional support and care. This can include financial support, childcare or prenatal care, but can also mean getting support from the person (or persons) you can count on in challenging times or when things may not go right during pregnancy. Often, we are so busy caring for others that we do not take the time to care for or create a support system for ourselves.

Here are some things for you to consider:

- *Who can I count on when I need emotional support or just to be there if I need them?*
- *Who can I count on to take care of my needs if I need to go on bed rest?*
- *How will I manage my life if I have to take time off of work or if I am limited in my activity?*
- *Who is going to take care of my children during childbirth?*
- *How am I going to get to medical care when needed? Who is going to assist me when I go into labor?*
- *Who is the person who can inspire me to create healthy habits? Who is the person who can inspire me to be the person I want to be—to be the parent I want to be?*

Preterm labor... is this something I have to think about?

Even if you do everything right, even if you invest in self-care and follow your provider's suggestions, preterm labor can happen. Preterm labor is any labor that occurs before 37 weeks. Many times we never know why. If you do have signs of preterm labor, your health care provider may suggest additional medical interventions, a plan of self-care, and/or bed rest. Remember to listen to your body—it is the best way to gather the information needed to have a healthy pregnancy.

Signs of preterm labor

If you notice these things happening, you need to take action:

- Contractions that make your belly tighten up like a fist (10 minutes apart or less)
- Change in color of vaginal discharge or bleeding
- Pelvic pressure (as if the baby is pushing down)
- Low, dull backache
- Period like cramps
- Belly cramps with or without diarrhea

Your provider may tell you to:

- Come into the office or go to the hospital
- Stop what you are doing
- Rest on your left side
- Drink 2–3 glasses of water (not coffee or soda)

If your symptoms continue after one hour, call your provider back. If they get better, take it easy and relax for the rest of the day. You can discuss your next steps with your provider. Though preterm labor is unlikely, it is important to know how and when you need to take action.

Is there any additional information that would be helpful for you to know? Have you noticed any symptoms you want to discuss with your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse or your provider? Even if they are not on the list above, they may be important. It never hurts to ask.

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...continued from page 20.

hopefully, prevent preterm labor. We were going in for weekly check ups and taking it easy and all went well until 28 weeks. The same week we moved into a new house, I was told that I could no longer go to work.

Our son was growing well; however, the contractions continued to be strong enough to induce labor. I was confined to a chair in the living room and we hired a nanny to care for our daughter while my husband was at work. Difficult yes, but we were going to do whatever it took for our son to be born healthy.

After 35 weeks, going somewhat stir crazy, my water broke in the middle of the night and our son was born perfectly healthy weighing 7 pounds and 2 ounces.

* Name changed to protect member privacy.



Stress Management

Your responses to stress have a direct impact on your health, the health of your baby and the health of your pregnancy. *How can you learn to manage this?* It is about learning how to create awareness.

Here is a process you can use to create awareness of your stress response. Feel free to make changes so that it works for you. You can use this process in the moment or reflect on a situation after the fact.

- ① **Take a deep breath.** Release any tension or expectations on what *should be* or how the situation *should be* handled.
- ② **Notice your feelings and how you are reacting.** Allow yourself to experience the moment. Don't judge it, try to fix it or make any assumptions about what is going on. *Just notice.*
- ③ **Keep breathing.** Clarify what you want and how you want to respond. Count to 10 before reacting or responding.

Where did you feel tension in your body? What emotions occurred while you were completing this exercise? What coping techniques do you need to deal with this situation? What beliefs are behind your response? What choices do you have? Is this something you can resolve? What do you need in order to let go of the situation?

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Mindfulness means being aware of your body

In pregnancy, being mindful and participating in relaxation exercises that create awareness allows us to develop the ability to know when our body needs attention, to know when to ask for help and to know when we need to accept a new challenge as part of the many changes or discomforts of pregnancy.

At the same time, we know that even when we do everything “right,” a pregnancy may not proceed as hoped. Developing the ability to stay grounded and centered can help you actively participate in the decision making process and make informed choices based on the guidance of your providers. You can begin to develop a state of mindfulness by practicing a state of relaxation. Remember, this is not easy, so be kind to yourself in the process! Any relaxation technique you try will have benefits, whether you notice it right away or not.

Relaxation ideas you may want to try

Relaxation puts us in a state of awareness. Sometimes all it takes to relax and get in touch with ourselves is taking the time. Even five minutes can have a lasting effect on your energy levels and your ability to deal with the most challenging situations (even labor and delivery). There are several ways to achieve a state of relaxation. Here are a few ideas you may want to try:

- Guided imagery
- Spending time in nature
- Journaling
- Artwork, hobbies or crafts
- Time with friends
- Meditation
- Listening to music
- Relaxing, breathing
- Mindful movement, such as yoga or tai chi (*remember to check with your provider beforehand*)
- Massage
- Forgiveness

What are some of your ideas for relaxing? Write them down:

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REFLECTION

It is the mind that makes the body.

—Sojourner Truth

I am part of the cycle of life, connected to nature and all women through the generations. I will keep these positive thoughts as my body changes.

When you feel stress or tension, try this mindful breathing technique:

- ① Find a space free of distractions and set the intention of relaxing.
- ② Sit with a comfortable and alert body posture.
- ③ Bring your attention to your breath. Place your hand on your belly to make sure you are breathing from the diaphragm (keep your shoulders still). Breathe slowly and deeply, emptying your lungs completely after each breath. Breathe at a pace that is comfortable for you.
- ④ When your mind wanders, don't judge. Label it as "wandering" and return to breathing.

What do you notice? Was this difficult or uncomfortable? What do you notice in your body? What do you notice about your emotional state? How was this exercise beneficial?

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It may be helpful to record your thoughts in a journal. Remember to be kind to yourself and seek additional support if you cannot resolve or let go of a situation on your own!

What inspires and energizes you? Sometimes deciding how you want to adjust your life so it is in alignment with your needs can make you feel better. Ask yourself: **What gives you energy? What takes away from your energy?**

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Consider: **What are some simple changes I can make so things are more manageable?**

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Weight gain

The reality is you are going to gain weight when you are pregnant. Every body is different and every body responds differently to pregnancy. Still, there are guidelines in place to assure you that your weight gain is within the norm. These guidelines are based on your pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI).

If you are:	Expect to gain:
Normal weight before pregnancy	25–30 pounds
Underweight before pregnancy	28–40 pounds
Overweight before pregnancy	15–25 pounds
Obese before pregnancy	11–20 pounds

This works out to be about 2–4 pounds in the first trimester and 3–4 pounds each month after that. But where does all the weight go?

- Baby: 6–8 pounds
- Placenta: 1½ pounds
- Amniotic fluid: 2 pounds
- Uterus growth: 2 pounds
- Breast growth: 2 pounds
- Blood and body fluids: 8 pounds
- Body protein and fat: 7 pounds

Source: www.womenshealth.gov



NURSE'S Comment

Body aches, breast changes, constipation, dizziness, fatigue/ difficulty sleeping, heartburn, leg cramps, morning sickness, nasal problems, numbness/ tingling... **What can you do?**

Your provider or your Medica Healthy Pregnancy Nurse can assist you with some ideas. There is a lot of amazing information out there and a lot of information that may or may not be reliable, whether it comes in the form of personal advice or information on the Internet.

Click on our program web page to locate sites that may be beneficial: member.medica.com/HealthyPregnancy

Think about the following questions: **How are you going to embrace your changing body? If you have an eating disorder or are uncomfortable with your weight, do you have the support you need to deal with this necessary weight gain?**

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Common pregnancy discomforts

Your body is going through an incredible amount of change and not all of it will feel comfortable. Balancing between accepting your changing body and discovering how to adjust and go with the flow is an art. However, in the end, you can choose how you are going to respond and if you need to take action or ask for additional support.

Hydration/fluids

Isn't it common sense to stay hydrated? You would think so; however, most people walk around in a chronic state of dehydration. **Your body needs six to eight 8-ounce glasses of fluid per day when you are pregnant.** Water is ideal, but anything that does not contain salt or caffeine can count. You may need to drink more in hot weather, when you are sick, or when you are physically active. Drinking water prevents all kinds of discomforts and complications, from swelling to urinary tract infections, to constipation and preterm labor. Overall, it is just a good idea—and a good habit to get into.

- *What signs do you experience when you need to hydrate?*
- *How are you going to attend to your body's needs?*

Tip: Don't wait until you are thirsty, because by the time you feel thirsty, you are probably already dehydrated.



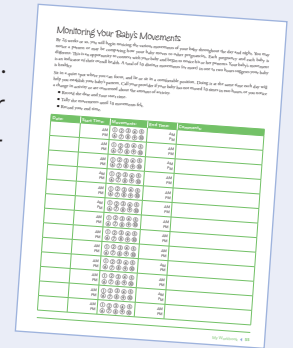
Getting in Touch With Your Baby

At your 26-week call, your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse will discuss with you how you can continue to move forward with your pregnancy, stay in touch with your body, get in touch with your baby and prepare for the future. You will discuss topics such as fetal movement and activity, continued pregnancy changes and prenatal classes.

Monitoring fetal movement

You may notice a pattern or may be comparing how your baby moves to other pregnancies. Each pregnancy and each baby is different. This is an opportunity to connect with your baby and begin to notice his or her patterns. Your baby's movement is an indicator of their overall health. Your provider may ask you to keep a record. Find a form on page 55 of this workbook to copy and use to track your baby's patterns.

Your nurse will be happy to answer any questions you may have. It may be helpful to reflect on a few things before your 26-week call. Here are a few things to think about:



How are you getting to know your baby? What have you noticed about his or her movement, habits, preferences and cycles?

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What do you need to know about the changes happening in your body?

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Do you have any anxiety or fear surrounding the birth process? What can best support you at this time? Who can be your support person during the labor process?

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Prenatal classes

You may know all about it, you may have done it before or you may consider yourself clueless when it comes to pregnancy, labor and delivery. But one gift you can give yourself is the chance to connect, experience support and create a deeper awareness of your needs surrounding your pregnancy. Prenatal classes come in all forms, from strictly medical information, to support groups, to alternative methods of dealing with the discomfort of labor and delivery.

Prenatal classes may cover some or all of the following topics:

- Physical, emotional, mental, spiritual changes throughout pregnancy.
- The process of pregnancy, labor and delivery.
- Self-care throughout pregnancy and delivery.
- Techniques for dealing with labor pain.
- What to expect.
- Caring for your newborn.
- Support for unique situations (such as multiples or complications).

Classes are offered at a variety of locations. Check with your hospital or birth center for listings. Contact Medica Customer Service to check if the class registration fee is a covered benefit for you. And remember, all types of classes are offered. It is possible to find a class that reflects your personal value system and your unique needs.

As you consider prenatal classes, think about these questions:

- *Are there any gaps in knowledge, or anything that you feel would be important to learn?*
- *How do you learn best—by viewing, reading or discussion?*
- *Are there any special techniques for dealing with labor and delivery that you are drawn to?*
- *How can a class support your learning needs?*

Contact your provider or hospitals in your area for further information on prenatal classes.

1st trimester
see page 4

2nd trimester
see page 16

3rd
trimester



An inside look at your growing baby and changing body:

7
Month

Your baby

- Your baby is about 15 to 16 inches long and weighs about 2½ to 3 pounds.
- They can open and close their eyes and suck their thumb.
- They kick and stretch and now respond to light and sound.

Your body

- Ankles and feet may swell and you may start to sweat more than usual.
- You may get stretch marks and your breasts will continue to get bigger.
- You may have contractions. However, call your healthcare provider if you have more than 5 contractions in 1 hour.
- Balance may be a challenge. Be careful so you don't fall.
- Sleeping may be difficult due to your baby's movement.

8
Month

Your baby

- At the end of the eighth month, your baby is about 18 to 19 inches long and weighs about 4 or 5 pounds.
- They are getting bigger and their kicks are getting stronger. You may see an elbow or heel stick out of your belly.
- They now have fingernails but the brain and lungs are still developing.

Your body

- You may feel stronger contractions. The baby may be pushing on your lungs and you have trouble breathing. Slowing down and taking it easier is necessary.
- Colostrum (the fluid that comes out of your breasts before breast milk comes in) may start to leak out of your breasts.
- Your stomach may be crowded and smaller; more frequent meals are necessary.
- Your weight gain will be about 1 pound per week this month.

9
Month

Your baby

- Your baby will now be 19–21 inches long and weigh 6–9 pounds by the end of the month.
- Your baby's lungs are ready to work on their own.
- He or she will now gain ½ pound per week throughout the last 6 weeks.
- They are now moving to a head down position and resting lower in your belly.

Your body

- Your breathing may be easier once the baby has dropped; however, you may have to use the restroom more often because your baby is pressing on your bladder.
- You may not gain weight this month or even lose a couple of pounds. Your belly button may stick out.
- It is normal to feel uncomfortable at this time. It is possible your feet and ankles may swell.
- Your cervix begins to open (dilate) and thin out (efface) in preparation for birth.



Preparing for Birth

The hospital

What does my insurance cover?

It may be helpful to determine the extent of your insurance coverage before you go into labor and deliver your baby. This is especially helpful because it frees you to focus on caring for yourself and your baby, rather than making phone calls. Medica has several different insurance plans, all with different benefits and types of coverage. A Medica Customer Service representative will be happy to assist you in finding out what is covered and what you need to do before your due date. Simply call the number on the back of your Medica ID card.

Here are some topics you may wish to ask about:

- Pre-approving a hospital stay.
- Length of a hospital stay for normal birth, cesarean birth and how the length of stay is measured, from admission or time of birth.
- Coverage for different birth scenarios (normal, cesarean, complications).
- Coverage for your chosen provider and any additional providers.
- Coverage for other things, such as family planning and tubal ligation, circumcision, hearing tests, breast pumps or home visits by a registered nurse.
- Coverage for your baby's newborn care and screenings.
- How to add your newborn to your insurance policy.

If you and your spouse have different insurance companies, it is important to decide which policy you will choose to cover your baby. You may want to speak to your benefits specialist about coverage and to find out how to add your child as a dependent on your insurance policy.

REFLECTION



“Every time you give a parent a sense of success or of empowerment, you’re offering it to the baby indirectly. Because every time a parent looks at that baby and says ‘Oh, you’re so wonderful’, that baby just bursts with feeling good about themselves.”

—T. Berry Brazelton,
M.D., Professor
Emeritus of Pediatrics,
Harvard Medical School

When I have a quiet moment, I will think about all of the wonderful things I can do as a parent. I will enjoy feeling confident and competent.

Envisioning yourself as a parent

You may have already wondered what you are going to be like as a parent or you may have already discovered your parent self. Parenting is an art. It is about learning to be open to the possibilities, trying new things and knowing you will make a few mistakes along the way. Remember to be kind to yourself, because it is not always easy. At the same time, there are endless opportunities for connection, fulfillment and personal growth. Take a moment to reflect on your new (or continuing) role as a parent.

How do you envision yourself as a parent?

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What values do you want to share with child (or children)?

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If you could share anything from your experience of pregnancy, what would you tell him or her?

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What steps do you need to take in order to live your vision of yourself as a parent? Is there anything you need to heal? Is there anything you want more of in your life?

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Preparing for labor—revisiting relaxation

This is an excellent time to revisit relaxation and stress management techniques.

Relaxing your mind, body and spirit during pregnancy is not only essential for your health and the health of your baby, but will also help prepare you for labor. During labor, being able to cope with distractions (inner and outer), center yourself and focus your mind will help you deal with discomfort and work with every contraction.

Progressive muscle relaxation

A tense body goes with a tense mind. Sometimes when we are tense, the whole idea of relaxing can make things worse. Using the progressive muscle relaxation technique is helpful when you are so tense you feel like squirming. You can teach your muscles to let go, and hopefully, your mind will follow.

- ① Find a comfortable position and begin focusing on your breathing.
- ② Start at the crown of your head, gently tense and then release the muscles of your forehead. As you let go, imagine the tension floating away.
- ③ Continue with each muscle group: your jaw, neck, shoulders, arms, chest and so on, going all the way down until you reach your toes. You can even add positive affirmations with each step—such as *“I will allow myself to release this tension”* or *“I am capable of allowing myself to release this stored up energy from...”*.
- ④ Slowly get up. You may want to reflect on your experience in a journal.

Using imagery

This relaxation technique can be helpful when you are having trouble sleeping, need a break from a busy day or would like to develop your point of focus to use during labor. There are several guided imagery tapes and CDs on the market that you may like, or you could use music to create a relaxing mood.

- ① Sit in a comfortable position and begin slow, even breaths to comfort.
- ② Imagine your favorite place or a place that has special meaning. Use each of your inner senses to imagine the sights, sounds, colors, textures of the ground, temperature and smell of these surroundings.
- ③ Explore your surroundings, simply noticing what is around you. Come back when you feel ready.

Try these techniques and find what works for you. On the next page, write down your experiences as a reminder of which techniques were most helpful.

What relaxation techniques work for you? Are there techniques that work better in certain situations or for certain stressors?

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Where do you hold your tension? What would it take to resolve that tension?

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What images or thoughts do find helpful for focusing on when relaxing?

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If you were to give yourself advice on how to relax, what would you tell yourself?

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Take a few minutes to write down how you feel about yourself and your upcoming labor and delivery. What are you thinking about that you want to explore, ask about or share with your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse or provider?

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Are You Ready?

Your 32-week call is about getting ready for labor and delivery, as well as preparing for your baby at home. Your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse can help walk you through the steps of gathering items for home and going to the hospital, finding a day care/childcare provider for your baby, creating a birth plan and how to know if you are going into labor. It may seem that there is a lot to think about at this point; remember to be kind to yourself and allow yourself to step back and enjoy your experience!

It may be helpful to think about a few things before your call:

How do you envision your labor and delivery?

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What fears do you have about giving birth? About becoming a parent?

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Do you have any questions for your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse?

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The hospital or birth center

Creating a birth plan

A birth plan is a document you create to communicate your preferences and choices during labor and delivery and moments after to your birth team. Think of a birth plan as a working document. At any time, you may change your mind, or your experience of labor may need additional interventions you had not planned on, so the information is meant to be fluid and not firm.

This form can be used as is or can be the starting place for your birth plan. Your providers, your hospital and your birth team will have a reference to assist you through labor and delivery. In the event of unplanned circumstances, they have the information to best support you in the decision making process. Carry a copy in your bag and share it with your birth team.

My Birth Plan

A birth plan is a document you create to communicate your preferences and choices during labor and delivery and moments after to your birth team. It is about setting an intention and gives you a chance to think through different scenarios and gather information to assist you in making decisions now and later. Think of a birth plan as a working document. At any time, you may change your mind, or your experience of labor may need additional interventions you had not planned on, so the information is meant to be fluid and not firm.

This form can be used as is or can be the starting place for your birth plan. Your providers, your hospital and your birth team will have a reference to assist you through labor and delivery. In the event of unplanned circumstances, they have the information to best support you in the decision making process. Carry a copy in your bag and share it with your birth team.

My name:	Birth partner(s) name:	Baby's name (if known):
What would you like your environment to be like (lighting, noise level, etc.)?		People present at birth:
How would you like incoming calls to be handled during labor and birth? Afterwards?		
Do you have any fears or concerns?		
What is your chosen relaxation method?		
Would your birth team like to assist in the birth (cutting the cord, helping with delivery)?		
Labor & Delivery	First baby? If no, is there anything you need to share about your first experience?	
	How would you like the nurses and staff to assist you during labor and delivery?	
	What are your feelings surrounding pain medications?	Would you like the nurses to suggest medications or do you want them to wait for you to ask?
	What is important for your birth team to know?	
If there is a medical problem with your baby, what is most important?		

continues on reverse...

My Workbook ◀ 57

A copy of this form is available on pages 57–58 of this workbook so you can fill it out and take it with you.

How to be your own advocate

When you are pregnant, it is normal to feel a little out of control, to have fears, to have concerns and to feel a bit uncertain. But feel confident that you can manage this. *Relax and just let go of the notion that you need to or can control every aspect of your pregnancy.*

Releasing some control does not mean giving up your authority. It is about allowing the process to unfold as it unfolds, while knowing you still have choices along the way. Even when challenges occur, you can ask questions, consult and express to others how you would prefer things handled. Even if the options feel limited, you can choose how you respond. In any situation, you can be an important advocate for yourself and your baby. *Take a deep breath.*

**What do you need to consider regarding the final moments of your pregnancy?
What questions can you ask of your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse?**

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Breastfeeding your baby... a decision guide

There is no question; breast milk is the best food for your baby. At the same time, it is a personal choice and not every mother chooses to breastfeed or may be in a situation where breastfeeding is not possible. The decision is a personal one. When you are making your decision, it may be helpful to review the benefits of breastfeeding:

- Breast milk protects your baby from infections and allergies.
- Breastfed babies have fewer health problems.
- It is always ready when you need it.
- It is nutritionally perfect for your baby.
- Breast milk is free.
- Breastfeeding helps you recover from pregnancy, helps you lose your pregnancy weight and protects against postpartum depression.
- Breastfeeding offers another opportunity to connect with your baby.

At times, your personal situation may need to be considered. Factors such as work, length of maternity leave, you or your baby having a health condition and available support are things women often think about. Personal support, workplace laws and supportive feeding methods are available.

How are you going to make your decision?

- *What are your personal values surrounding breastfeeding? What cultural values do you have regarding breastfeeding?*
- *Do you have any conditions or situations that may affect your ability to breastfeed?*
- *Do you have the support you need to start breastfeeding?*
- *What information do you need to make your decision?*
- *If you are already planning to breastfeed your baby, what are your expectations?*
- *How can you find additional information to gain comfort with your personal situation?*

It is your choice. *What do you think is best for you and your baby?*

What you need to know about high blood pressure and preeclampsia

Preeclampsia (often thought of as high blood pressure during pregnancy) is a disorder that can affect women during and after pregnancy. It is serious and if not treated, can cause problems for you and your baby.

It is important to let your provider know if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Sudden swelling in hands, feet or face
- Severe headaches
- Changes in vision (blurry or seeing spots)
- Nausea or upper abdominal pain
- Sudden weight gain (more than 3 pounds in a week)

How do you know when something is not right with your body? Think about what feels normal for you and pay attention if anything feels strange.

Labor pain

One of the biggest concerns surrounding labor and delivery is pain management. Though the discomfort experienced during labor is a natural part of the process of birth, it can be difficult. Some women value natural childbirth. Depending on your personal preferences and values, you have many options to assist you through birth.

Medical interventions:

- Epidural
- Spinal block
- Narcotics

Non-medical interventions:

- Support
- Water therapy
- Position changes/movement
- Bio-field therapies (Healing Touch)
- Mind/body techniques (imagery, types of meditation, relaxation techniques, self hypnosis)
- Using focal points
- Breathing exercises

Some techniques can be learned during prenatal classes. Check with your chosen hospital or birth center to see what additional resources or methods they have available to you on-site. Your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse and your provider can answer any additional questions. Only you know what works for you.

What can best support you during labor and delivery? From what you know about yourself, what is important to you to have in place to manage discomforts during labor? How can you find additional information?

Going into labor—how do you know?

This is a question asked by many women. Here are some things to consider:

- Your due date is an estimate.
- It is normal for your baby to be born between 37 and 42 weeks gestation.
- Every labor starts differently, every labor has a different pattern and every labor has its own timing.

Signs and symptoms of labor may include, but are not limited to:

- Backache
- Feeling sick to your stomach/diarrhea
- Menstrual-like cramps
- Sudden burst of energy
- Red or pink tinged vaginal discharge (bloody show)
- Contractions becoming stronger or closer together
- Fluid leaking from vagina, sudden gush or slow leak (ruptured membranes)

Your healthcare provider will have certain criteria for when it is time for you to call and when it is time for you to go to your hospital or birth center. Knowing when you are in labor is about listening to your body and noticing how things are changing. If you are unsure, don't hesitate to call your provider.

Hospital checklist

What exactly do you need to bring to the hospital when you deliver your baby? The list, of course, is highly personal, but it is helpful to have some ideas. Each hospital has different rules about what is allowed and what can be brought in, so it might be helpful to have a conversation with your provider or chosen hospital (some have orientations for maternity care). Remember that your labor support person and partner will also need to make sure they have what they need while you are in labor.

Here are some suggestions:

- **During labor**

A focal point for concentration (picture or object); lip balm and something for a dry mouth, such as candy or gum; an MP3/CD player, book or cards for down time; massage lotion, a watch with a second hand and something for applying back pressure (tennis balls or rolling pin); a camera/video recorder.

- **Comfort items**

A robe, socks, slippers, gown, favorite pillow or blanket.

- **Personal care items**

For you and your labor support person.

- **Items for you and your baby when you go home**

A car seat; clothes for you (from when you were five months pregnant), nursing bras or support bras; going home clothes for your baby, baby blankets.

- **Items to make your stay easier**

Notebook and pen, money for the cafeteria, phone numbers for announcing news and phone cards, food and beverages.

- **Finally, bring anything that you feel is important for your comfort.**

Pack ahead

It is helpful to have your bag packed ahead of time. You never know where you will be when you go into labor (and need someone to pick it up for you) or if you need to go immediately to a hospital. This also means one less thing to think about when you are in labor.

What is essential for you to bring to the birth of your baby?

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Getting ready for baby

It is easy to go overboard when shopping for your baby. You may actually need less “stuff” than you might think. The basic categories of essential items are:

- A place for your baby to sleep.
- Clothes for the baby to wear.
- Personal care items for the baby.
- Supplies to feed your baby.
- Diapering and diaper supplies.
- A safe car seat and travel items.

Use these lists to help you prepare for your baby’s arrival:

- Getting around
 - Car seat
 - Stroller
 - Diaper bag
- Diapering
 - Diapers (disposable or cloth)
 - Wipes
 - Diaper disposal bin
 - Diaper cream
- Layette (clothing and bedding)
 - One piece undergarments or undershirts
 - Crib sheets and blankets
 - Receiving blankets
 - Booties or socks
 - Sleepwear outfits, gowns or sleepers
 - Sweaters (depending on season)
 - Blanket sleepers
 - Hats (depending on season)
 - Bunting or a snowsuit (depending on season)
- Personal care
 - Digital thermometer
 - Suction bulb for nose
 - Infant nail clippers
 - Infant hair brush
 - Unscented baby wash and lotion
 - Towels and wash cloths
 - Bath tub
 - Pacifier
- Feeding
 - Bibs
 - Burp cloths
 - High chair
- Breastfeeding
 - Nursing bras
 - Breast pads
 - Bottles/breast pump
- Bottle feeding
 - Bottles
 - Nipples
 - Formula
 - Bottle brush
- Furniture
 - Changing table/space to change your baby
 - Crib and mattress
 - Rocking chair
 - Bassinet
 - Storage chest
 - Infant seat and/or swing
- Safety equipment
 - Outlet covers
 - Door latches
 - Corner guards
 - Gates
 - Night lights
 - Nursery monitors



REFLECTION

“There is only one pretty child in the world, and every mother has it.”

—Chinese Proverb

Getting ready for my baby’s arrival can be hectic. I promise to take time to give myself frequent breaks to read, to rest and to dream.

Keep in mind:

- Some parents may find some items indispensable while others may barely use them.
- ***They will not let you leave the hospital without a properly installed car seat.***
- You may need different items, depending on the season.
- Babies grow out of clothing quickly.
- Items like corner guards and a high chair can wait a few months.
- If you are having trouble affording the necessary supplies, talk to your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse for ideas and see the resource section at the end of this workbook.

Choosing your day care/childcare provider

It is essential to start looking for your childcare provider as soon as possible. Finding someone who meets your needs, price range and personal values can be difficult, yet it is possible. When you are interviewing future childcare providers, bring a notebook, record your impressions, ask plenty of questions and trust your intuition.

Some helpful things you may want to check out are:

- Background, experience, training and licensing status of provider.
- Ages of children accepted and number of children currently in their care.
- The adults the children will see throughout the day.
- The typical day/schedule for the children.
- Types of meals.
- Philosophy on discipline.
- Policies surrounding payment, unannounced visits, sick days, late pick-ups and provider vacations or illness.
- How they accommodate breastfeeding, special diets and special needs.
- Environment—is it safe and clean? Does it look fun?

You know what is best for you child. Look around the day care area. *What do you notice? Are you comfortable with the surroundings? Do you feel your child will be emotionally and physically supported in this environment? Are you comfortable that this individual will provide your child with more than the essential care? How does the childcare provider interact with your child?* Trust any nagging or doubtful feelings. Trust that you will know when you have found the right care for your child.

Notes:

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Post-partum Care

Congratulations!

Now that your baby is born, you may be asking, what next? Your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse will be calling to answer any questions or concerns about your recovery after birth and the care of your child.

You may have questions about breastfeeding, changes in your body or mood, your newborn or resources available for additional support. It is your time to share your insights, experiences and concerns. We are excited to hear your birth story!

How do you feel everything is going?

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What challenges are you experiencing as a new parent?

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What questions do you have for your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse?

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Congratulations, Your Baby is Born!

Changes in your body after birth

You may feel like you have just run a marathon, and the fact of the matter is, you have. You have just completed an incredible amount of work and now it is time to rest, focus on recovery and connect with your new baby. Many changes are happening in your body as you recover from giving birth. If you have had a cesarean birth, you are recovering from surgery and need to take additional care.

Common experiences include:

- Perineum soreness
- Afterbirth pains (from your uterus contracting to its normal size)
- Vaginal discharge
- Swelling
- Hemorrhoids
- Constipation
- Urinary problems (such as discomfort or incontinence)
- Sweating
- Fatigue
- Changes in your body shape
- Hair loss
- Changes in your skin (such as stretch marks)

This is all part of recovery and will eventually balance out. If you are uncomfortable, your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse or your provider can help with suggestions. Though you may be feeling uncomfortable with your body size, take some time to recover before beginning an exercise routine. Your provider will want to see you six weeks (or sooner) after the birth to make sure you are recovering well.

What do you need to take care of yourself as you are recovering from giving birth?

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Always call your provider if you have any of the following:

- Pain, fever and/or chills
- Difficulty breathing
- Bad headache or blurry vision
- Redness or swelling in your legs
- Back, abdominal or pelvic pain
- Pain, redness or swelling in either breast
- Redness, separated stitches or unusual tenderness around a cesarean incision
- Foul smelling vaginal discharge
- Excessive vaginal bleeding or blood clots

How your moods may change

How are you feeling emotionally? It is normal to feel stressed, overwhelmed or experience “the baby blues.” You may feel tearful, irritable or anxious. There are many reasons this could happen, but lack of sleep, having a major life change and normal adjustment are likely culprits.

Ask for the help you need.

- Ask for help and seek out support.
- Remember to breathe—maybe it is time to revisit relaxation.
- Rest when you can—it is challenging with a newborn, but take the time when you have it.
- Set boundaries—you can ask people to let you rest.
- Remember to continue your healthy diet and drink plenty of water.
- If you have a significant other around, take some time to figure out what needs to be accomplished. Take some time with each other.
- Trust in yourself.

What you need to know about postpartum depression

What if my blues don't go away? Some women may feel persistently depressed or be unable to shake “the blues.” It can be difficult to notice when you are experiencing postpartum depression, especially when you are right in the middle of it. Sometimes, other people in your life may be able to share their insights or let you know. Other times, you may have this feeling that something is wrong—and you are not sure what it is or what to do about it. Postpartum depression can happen at any time after your baby's birth and sometimes may not show up until months after.

Here are some questions you can ask yourself to determine if you are experiencing postpartum depression.

- *Are you experiencing sadness, guilt, doubt or depression?*
- *Do you no longer enjoy the things you usually enjoy?*
- *Are you having trouble sleeping?*
- *Are you having changes in your appetite?*
- *Do you feel like you can't do anything right?*
- *Are you anxious all the time or having panic attacks?*
- *Are you having any trouble taking care of yourself and your baby?*
- *Do you have thoughts of harming yourself or your baby?*

If you are having any signs of postpartum depression, take action to get some help. If you are unable, ask your spouse, a friend or a family member to call your provider, your Healthy Pregnancy Nurse or Medica Behavioral Health. They can get you in touch with a counselor, a support group or the appropriate medical treatment. *If you are experiencing postpartum depression, what is your next step?*



JANET'S Story*

Breastfeeding my babies has been a wonderful way to bond with my children.

I successfully breastfed my first child for 15 months and my second child is 16 months old and still nursing. Without having developed a support network before hand, I may not have had the same outcome.

I made sure my doctor, the labor nurses and my family knew I planned to breastfeed. I also spent time with the lactation consultant while in the hospital with my first child, since we were having such difficulty with latching.

When things got tough at home, I relied on the support of a neighbor and I kept my lactation consultant's number close by. I also utilized Le Leche League for tips and advice. This support network helped me get though any bumps in the road.

continues on page 48...

Baby Care Basics

You may be surprised to see that your baby did not come with instructions. You may also be surprised that you may not know what to do! Taking care of a baby is like everything else—it has to be learned and practiced, and we get better with experience. Here is a basic primer on what you need to know.

Feeding

If you have chosen to breastfeed, your baby will need to eat 8–12 times per day (about once every 2–3 hours). A lactation specialist or nurse can get you started. It may take some time for you and your baby to figure out how to work together, so ask for support when needed.

10 steps for successful breastfeeding:

- ① Read about breastfeeding and discuss breastfeeding with your providers while you are pregnant so you will be prepared once your baby is born. Let your provider know if you had any breast surgery, injuries or flat or inverted nipples. This will give you the opportunity to explore what will work for you.
- ② Breastfeed your baby within the first hour of your baby's life. The sucking instinct is strong, and it will give you both a chance to learn about each other.
- ③ Try to avoid pacifiers and supplementation with water and/or formula.
- ④ Room-in with your baby in the hospital so you can breastfeed often and get to know each other. If your baby is in the nursery ask them to bring your baby to you for feedings.
- ⑤ Breastfeeding should not hurt. Be sure the baby is properly positioned at your breast with the correct latch. If your nipples are sore, this means you need help with the latch.
- ⑥ Breastfeed according to your baby's cues, which is usually about 8–12 times per 24 hours.

...continued from page 47.

I am glad I stuck with it and take pride in knowing that by breastfeeding my babies, I gave them a healthy start and that the health benefits will be with them throughout their lives.

* Name changed to protect member privacy.

- ⑦ Talk to your friends or attend a breastfeeding support group (such as the La Leche League) for additional support and connection.
- ⑧ If you are wondering if your baby is getting enough milk, keep a log for the first week of your baby's life tracking how often you nurse and how often the baby wets or poops.
- ⑨ Colostrum is all your baby needs for the first few days of life. Expect your milk to increase a few days after a normal, uncomplicated birth.
- ⑩ Remember to be kind to yourself! Breastfeeding is a learned process. It will take time for you and your baby to learn how to breastfeed.

Source: These steps are adapted from an "Easy Guide to Breastfeeding" from womenshealth.gov.

Tip: You will know your baby is getting enough milk if he or she is making 6–8 wet diapers per day. For the first couple of days, his or her bowel movements will be tarry and black (this is called meconium), then change to a seedy, watery mustard consistency. This will happen until your baby starts solid foods or you discontinue breastfeeding.

- If you develop a fever, pain, bleeding, rashes, lumps or redness in your breast, talk to your provider. This may mean you have a problem that needs to be treated.
- If your nipples are sore, check your latch and make sure your baby is in the proper position. Avoid pacifiers and supplemental feeding until you and your baby have figured out how to work together.
- You are going to need extra calories and fluids while breastfeeding to keep up your milk supply and assist your healing process.
- It is possible to breastfeed after returning to work. Talk to your place of employment about a private room and place to store your milk and ask a lactation consultant about using a breast pump.

NURSE'S Comment



Burp!

After your baby drinks breast milk or formula, always burp your baby. This will get rid of any air they swallowed while eating. Gently pat or rub circles on the baby's back while holding the baby in an upright position.

Enjoy this time with your baby!

Formula feeding

In the first few weeks, formula fed babies eat 2–3 ounces of formula every 3–4 hours. The directions for preparing your chosen formula will be on the back of the can. Formula or stored breast milk should never be heated in the microwave, since it may burn your child. Babies should never be left with the bottle. Make sure all bottles are appropriately cleaned.

Your baby won't start solid foods until he or she is about 5 or 6 months of age. This is important to avoid food allergies. Your pediatrician can give you additional information. Make sure to consult your child's provider if there are any feeding problems, such as gas or colic.

Feeding and diaper chart

If you are concerned your baby is not eating enough or you want to make sure you are making enough milk for your baby, take a few moments to record feedings, wet diapers and bowel moments. This will give you the information to know if your baby is eating enough or if you have to add an additional feeding.

Feeding and Diaper Chart
If you are concerned your baby is not eating enough or you want to make sure you are making enough milk for your baby, take a few moments to record feedings, wet diapers and bowel moments. Output will be equal to input. This will give you the information to know if your baby is eating enough or if you have to add an additional feeding.

Date:

Feeding Times:		Diaper Changing Times:	
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
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My Workbook ◀ 59

Find a tear-out copy of this chart on pages 59–60 of this workbook.

Keeping your baby safe

Your part in keeping your baby safe is simple: never shake a baby, support his or her head, use the car seat when driving. Put babies to sleep on their backs and never leave them alone around pets, small children, in the tub, outside, or on a changing table, counter or anywhere else they could fall. The next step is creating an environment that is safe to explore.

Tips on baby-proofing your house

When is the time to start baby-proofing your house? Even though your baby is not ready to investigate the house at this time, it will happen before you know it. This may sound ridiculous, but it helps to get down on all fours on the floor, look around and see what grabs your attention. If you were young and curious about everything, what would you notice? Whatever grabs your attention is most certain to grab your baby's attention.

Use this form to write down notes for each room of the house. *What changes do you have to make in your home in order to keep your baby safe?*

Living room	Kitchen
Bedroom(s)	Dining room
Bathroom(s)	Family/rec room
Laundry/utility room	Other

Other helpful things to know:

- Always place your baby on his or her back when sleeping to prevent SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).
- Remember to never shake a baby!
- The umbilical cord will drop off in about 10 days. Keep it clean and dry and prevent friction surrounding the area. Call your baby's provider if you notice signs of infection.
- Clean your baby thoroughly while diapering. Wipe from front to back. Use diaper rash cream/ointment as needed.
- If using something other than wipes to clean your baby during diaper changes, rinse out the cloth before you use it. Keep in mind that many soaps can irritate your baby's skin.



NURSE'S Comment

- Give your baby a bath (sponge bath until umbilical cord falls off) with a mild, unscented soap every 2–3 days. Make sure to rinse well and avoid the eyes. Gently pat them dry.
- A baby has a stomach that is the size of a walnut. Your baby is going to need to wake often to fill it in order to take in enough calories to grow.
- Tummy time is essential for development, so make sure your baby spends time each day on their belly. Make sure there is plenty of space to move around and try to limit the use of bouncers, car seats, etc.
- Babies will sleep through the night when they are developmentally ready. It is different for each baby.

When your child is sick

Babies do get sick. As a parent, it can be distressing to see your baby struggle with a cold or an ear infection, but know that this part of life. The best thing you can do is keep your baby as comfortable as possible and provide extra attention.

Call your provider if your baby has any of the following:

- Vomiting lasting more than 24 hours or more than 2–3 times in one day.
- Diarrhea or a swollen stomach.
- Seems to be in pain or is extremely fussy, tired or irritable.
- Is less than 2 months old and has a fever over 100.4° F rectally.
- Has a fever lasting over 24 hours.
- Is more than 2 months old with a fever of 101° F or higher for more than 12–24 hours.
- Fewer than 4 wet diapers in 24 hours or no stools (just wet diapers).
- Yellow skin.
- No appetite.

The important thing for you is to be calm and to give your baby comfort. Call your provider with concerns.

Parenting

Your baby will have his or her own personality, moods and ways of expressing himself or herself. And your baby will cry. As a parent, part of your job will be to determine what is needed to the best of your ability. This will take time and practice. Check to see if your baby is hungry, wet, uncomfortable or lonely, and go from there. Consider the following:

- *When you are unable to soothe your baby, how are you feeling?*
- *How is your mood affecting your baby?*
- *How can you be kind to yourself and your baby?*

Remember, you are allowed to take a break and ask for help. Your body will heal, your baby will eventually sleep through the night and you will find your new normal. Trust in that process, give yourself time, know you will make mistakes and you may discover just how gifted you are at this job.

How do I know when my baby is coming down with an illness? How will I be able to tell if my baby's mood change means he or she is getting sick? How can I get time take care of myself when all of my attention is focused on the baby?

Try not to stress on the "What if." Instead, know that you can trust your instincts as a mother and call upon your resources for help when you need it.

NURSE'S
Comment



Your pregnancy may not have ended as you planned.

If you need additional support or resources, you do not have to handle these feelings alone. Help is available. *What do you need to heal? What supports do you need? Please ask for whatever help you need.*

Your next pregnancy... when you're ready

You may already be thinking about family planning. Here are some things you may want to consider if you are planning another child:

- Give your body time to recover. Most providers recommend 18 months.
- Take care of yourself—reduce stress, eat well, exercise, manage health conditions.
- Start a prenatal vitamin routine before you are pregnant.
- See your provider for regular care.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Review prescription medications with your provider.
- Stay away from toxic chemicals.
- Seek assistance for any emotional health issues.
- Keep in mind, if you are breastfeeding you can still become pregnant.

We can help! Medica has many programs that can help you prepare for a healthy pregnancy or manage your health, including Health & Wellness Coaching and a Tobacco Cessation Program.

Your birth story... take time to reflect and honor your experience

You have just had an incredible experience. It may not have been what you expected. It may have turned out to be more than you expected. It is your unique story. Some parts may have had intense learning for you and other times may have forced you to look at who you really are. Some of your beliefs may be shattered and new values put in place.

What is your birth story? Write down the important things you want to remember here.

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We wish you well on your parenting journey!

My Food Diary

Try filling out this food diary for one week to gain some perspective. For most of us, becoming more aware of our food choices can offer some surprises... or it can give you peace of mind knowing that your eating habits are supporting good health. Be specific, such as writing down if your chicken is baked, fried, has skin or is skinless. Don't forget that some beverages have calories too! *Diary continues on reverse side.*

Day 1	Record all food and beverages consumed today
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	
Water	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Try to drink up to 8 glasses of water a day.
Other Beverages	

Day 2	Record all food and beverages consumed today
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	
Water	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Try to drink up to 8 glasses of water a day.
Other Beverages	

Day 3	Record all food and beverages consumed today
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	
Water	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Try to drink up to 8 glasses of water a day.
Other Beverages	

Day 4	Record all food and beverages consumed today
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	
Water	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Try to drink up to 8 glasses of water a day.
Other Beverages	

Day 5	Record all food and beverages consumed today
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	
Water	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Try to drink up to 8 glasses of water a day.
Other Beverages	

Day 6	Record all food and beverages consumed today
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	
Water	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Try to drink up to 8 glasses of water a day.
Other Beverages	

Day 7	Record all food and beverages consumed today
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	
Water	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Try to drink up to 8 glasses of water a day.
Other Beverages	

As you review your food diary, think about these questions:

What do you notice about your eating habits?

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What would you like to change?

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How can you create more balance in your diet?

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Monitoring Your Baby's Movements

By 26 weeks or so, you will begin noticing the various movements of your baby throughout the day and night. You may notice a pattern or may be comparing how your baby moves to other pregnancies. Each pregnancy and each baby is different. This is an opportunity to connect with your baby and begin to notice his or her patterns. Your baby's movement is an indicator of their overall health. A total of 10 distinct movements (or more) in one to two hours suggests your baby is healthy.

Sit in a quiet spot where you can focus, and lie or sit in a comfortable position. Doing it at the same time each day will help you establish your baby's pattern. Call your provider if your baby has not moved 10 times in two hours, or you notice a change in activity or are concerned about the amount of activity.

- Record the date and your start time.
- Tally the movements until 10 movements felt.
- Record your end time.

Date:	Start Time:	Movements:	End Time:	Comments:
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	

Date:	Start Time:	Movements:	End Time:	Comments:
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	
	AM PM	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	AM PM	

What do you notice about your baby's patterns?

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My Birth Plan

A birth plan is a document you create to communicate your preferences and choices during labor and delivery and moments after to your birth team. It is about setting an intention and gives you a chance to think through different scenarios and gather information to assist you in making decisions now and later. Think of a birth plan as a working document. At any time, you may change your mind, or your experience of labor may need additional interventions you had not planned on, so the information is meant to be fluid and not firm.

This form can be used as is or can be the starting place for your birth plan. Your providers, your hospital and your birth team will have a reference to assist you through labor and delivery. In the event of unplanned circumstances, they have the information to best support you in the decision making process. Carry a copy in your bag and share it with your birth team.

My name:	Birth partner(s) name:	Baby's name (if known):	
Labor & Delivery	What would you like your environment to be like (lighting, noise level, etc.)?		People present at birth:
	How would you like incoming calls to be handled during labor and birth? Afterwards?		
	Do you have any fears or concerns?		
	What is your chosen relaxation method?		
	Would your birth team like to assist in the birth (cutting the cord, helping with delivery)?		
	First baby? If no, is there anything you need to share about your first experience?		
	How would you like the nurses and staff to assist you during labor and delivery?		
	What are your feelings surrounding pain medications?	Would you like the nurses to suggest medications or do you want them to wait for you to ask?	
	What is important for your birth team to know?		
	If there is a medical problem with your baby, what is most important?		

continues on reverse...

If you are having a boy:

- Yes No Would you like him circumcised?
- Yes No Do you want to delay circumcising until breastfeeding is established?
- Yes No Would you like to be present for the circumcision?
- Yes No Is circumcision a covered benefit under your insurance plan?

Would you like to be present for your baby's newborn exam?

If you are breastfeeding, would you like to have skin-to-skin contact after birth and initiate breastfeeding when your baby is ready?

If you are formula feeding, what is your preferred brand of formula?

How can the staff help you with infant feeding?

Do you have any questions about infant care?

Is there anything else you would like your birth team to know?

Feeding and Diaper Chart

If you are concerned your baby is not eating enough or you want to make sure you are making enough milk for your baby, take a few moments to record feedings, wet diapers and bowel moments. Output will be equal to input. This will give you the information to know if your baby is eating enough or if you have to add an additional feeding.

Date:

Feeding Times:		Diaper Changing Times:	
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
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Date:

Feeding Times:		Diaper Changing Times:	
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
Time: AM PM	Comments:	Time: AM PM	Comments:
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Notes or concerns:

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Medica Resources

Medica.com – Visit the Medica website for hundreds of articles and trustworthy information on health and wellness topics or programs, such as:

- Medica Tobacco Cessation Program
- Medica Behavioral Health
- Medica’s Health & Wellness Coaching Program

Pregnancy Resources

Text4Baby: www.text4baby.org

United Way: <http://national.unitedway.org/myuw/> or call 211

Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/pregnancy_gateway

March of Dimes: www.marchofdimes.com

National Women’s Health Information: www.womenshealth.gov or call 1-800-994-9662

Taking Charge of Your Health: www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu

Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Breastfeeding Support and Nutrition Information

Le Leche League: Minnesota number: 612-922-4996 or www.llli.org

Breastfeeding Helpline (The National Women’s Health Information Center): 1-800-994-9662

WIC (Women, Infants & Children): Minnesota contact number/office: 1-800-657-3942 or visit www.fns.usda.gov/wic

Mypyramid.gov: www.mypyramid.gov/mypyramidmoms

High Blood Pressure and Pregnancy

Preeclampsia Foundation: www.preeclampsia.org

