



# A Healthy Start for Baby and Me

Newfoundland and Labrador's easy-to-read guide about pregnancy and birth

Adapted and reprinted with permission from Best Start by Health Nexus

# Who I Can Call for Help

## My Personal Help

### Name and Title

(partner, family, friends, neighbours, peer support, community drop-ins, blogs, etc.)

### Contact Information

(phone numbers, emails, web links, and addresses)

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## My Health Care Providers

### Name and Title

(doctor, midwife, doula, nurse, nurse practitioner, lactation consultant/clinics, dietician, doula/labour support person, exercise coach, etc.)

### Contact Information

(office number, cell numbers, emails, web links, addresses)

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Emergency (Fire / Police / Ambulance): **911**

Baby Friendly NL: [www.babyfriendlynl.ca](http://www.babyfriendlynl.ca)

Regional Health Authorities in Newfoundland and Labrador:

- Eastern Health: [www.easternhealth.ca](http://www.easternhealth.ca)
- Central Health: [www.centralhealth.nl.ca](http://www.centralhealth.nl.ca)
- Western Health: [www.westernhealth.nl.ca](http://www.westernhealth.nl.ca)
- Labrador-Grenfell Health: [www.lghealth.ca](http://www.lghealth.ca)

HealthLine 811 / Dial-a-Dietitian: <https://www.811healthline.ca/>

See page 90 for more resources and services.

## A Message About Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a special time that can bring many questions. We hope that this book will help you learn about how to take care of yourself and your growing baby. We suggest that you read this book and talk with your health care provider, your family, your partner, and friends about what you have learned and questions you may have.



Note: If you are pregnant with more than one baby, have health problems or other special situations, you will probably need some additional advice beyond the information found in this guide. Talk with your health care provider as you may get different advice. You can find a list of reliable resources and websites at the end of this guide.

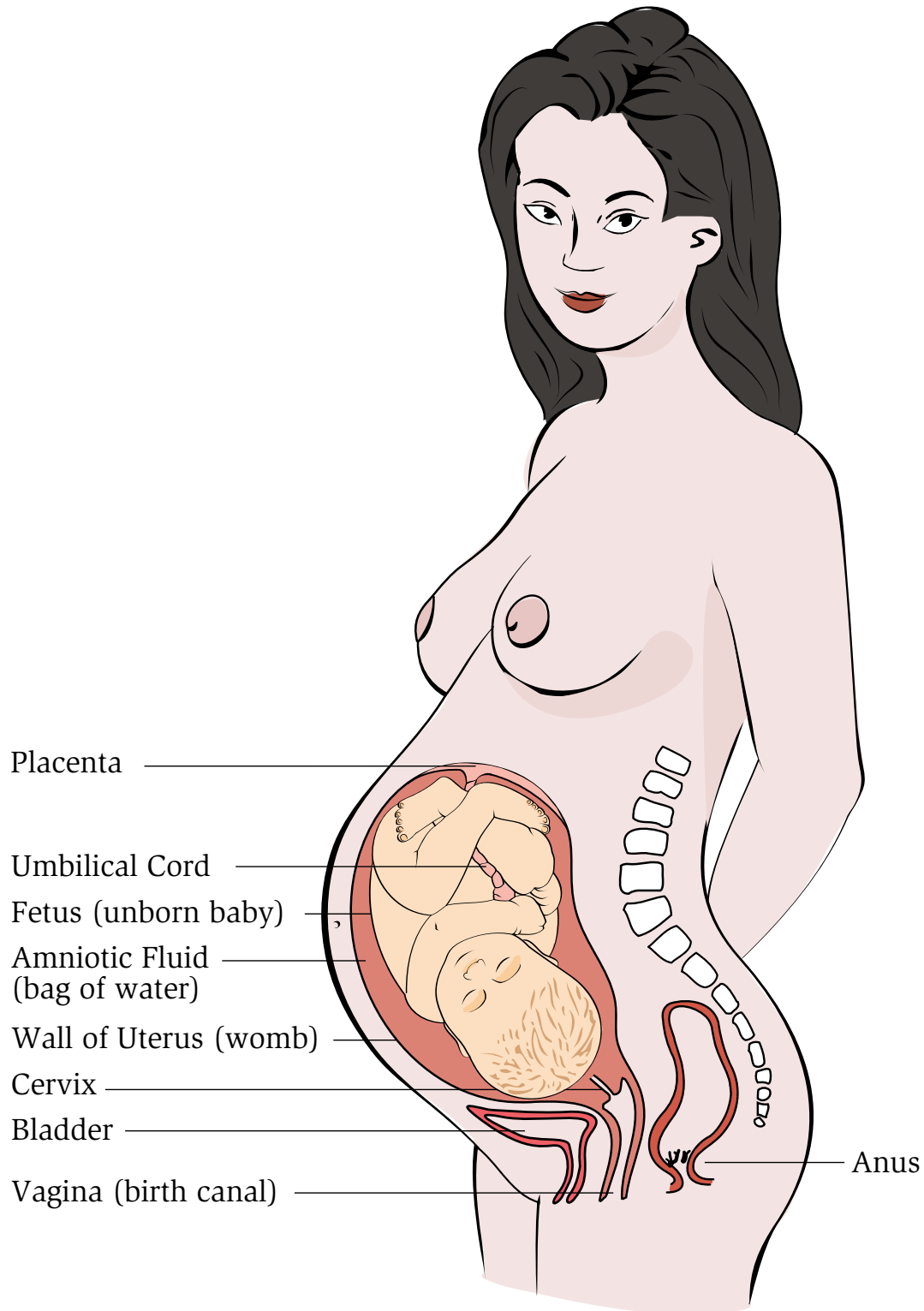


## For Fathers, Partners, Family and Friends

Learning to be a father/ life partner takes time.

Read this guide and share with your partner, family, friends, and health care provider questions you may have. This guide helps you learn how you can be supportive during and after pregnancy. It also provides information on caring for your baby. You can do a lot to help.

# You and Your Baby



# Table of Contents

|                                             |    |
|---------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Important Things to Know .....           | 1  |
| When to Get Help .....                      | 2  |
| Preterm Labour .....                        | 4  |
| 2. Prenatal Care .....                      | 7  |
| Choosing a Health Care Provider .....       | 8  |
| Prenatal Visits .....                       | 10 |
| Having Someone to Talk To .....             | 11 |
| Group Programs During Pregnancy .....       | 12 |
| Fathers, Partners, Family and Friends.....  | 13 |
| 3. Healthy Eating .....                     | 15 |
| Nutrients You Need .....                    | 16 |
| Tips for Healthy Eating .....               | 17 |
| Food Safety .....                           | 19 |
| Common Questions About Eating .....         | 20 |
| Healthy Pregnancy Weight Gain .....         | 21 |
| 4. Healthy Lifestyle and Risk Factors ..... | 23 |
| Vaccination and Pregnancy .....             | 24 |
| Physical Activity.....                      | 24 |
| Work .....                                  | 26 |
| Mental Health.....                          | 27 |
| Drugs .....                                 | 28 |
| Medications and Herbal Products .....       | 29 |
| Sexuality.....                              | 29 |
| Smoking .....                               | 29 |
| Alcohol .....                               | 31 |
| Things to Avoid .....                       | 31 |
| Abuse .....                                 | 32 |
| Infections.....                             | 34 |
| 5. The Three Trimesters of Pregnancy .....  | 36 |
| How Long Does Pregnancy Last? .....         | 37 |
| First Trimester (1 to 3 months)             |    |
| Your Growing Baby .....                     | 38 |
| Changes You May Feel .....                  | 39 |

|                                                     |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Getting Healthy for You and Your Baby .....         | 41        |
| Second Trimester (4 to 6 months)                    |           |
| Your Growing Baby .....                             | 42        |
| Changes You May Feel .....                          | 45        |
| Getting to Know Your Baby .....                     | 46        |
| Third Trimester (7 to 9 months)                     |           |
| Your Growing Baby .....                             | 46        |
| Changes You May Feel .....                          | 47        |
| Getting Ready for Your Baby .....                   | 50        |
| <b>6. Labour and Birth .....</b>                    | <b>52</b> |
| What is Labour? .....                               | 53        |
| Signs of Labour .....                               | 54        |
| How to Time Your Contractions? .....                | 56        |
| The Four Stages of Labour .....                     | 57        |
| Things to Help You in Labour .....                  | 58        |
| Positions .....                                     | 59        |
| Medical Procedures .....                            | 60        |
| <b>7. After the Baby is Born .....</b>              | <b>62</b> |
| Feeding Your Baby .....                             | 63        |
| Comforting Your Baby .....                          | 67        |
| Caring for Your Baby .....                          | 68        |
| Baby Safe Sleep Tips .....                          | 74        |
| Baby Safety Tips .....                              | 75        |
| Is Your Baby Equipment Safe?.....                   | 77        |
| When to Get Help for Your Baby .....                | 81        |
| <b>8. What You Can Expect After the Birth .....</b> | <b>82</b> |
| Changes to Your Body After Birth .....              | 83        |
| Your Changing Feelings .....                        | 85        |
| When to Get Help .....                              | 89        |
| <b>9. Resources and Services .....</b>              | <b>90</b> |



## Important Things to Know

Being pregnant brings many changes. Most of these changes are normal and some are not. You need to know the signs to report to your health care provider.

In this section you will learn:

- (1) The signs in pregnancy that are not normal.
- (2) The signs of preterm labour.
- (3) What to do if you have any of these signs.

# When to Get Help

Call your health care provider or go to the hospital if you notice any of these signs:

- Bleeding from your birth canal (vagina).

- Feeling dizzy or like you might faint.
- Loss of consciousness.

- Sharp pain in your tummy.



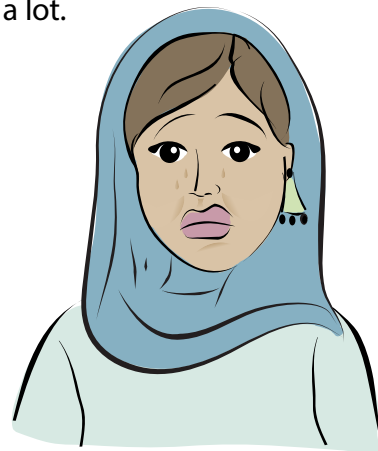
- High fever (temperature).
- Chills or rash after you have had a fever.



- Vomiting or throwing up a lot.



- Feeling more sad, worried, or angry than usual.
- Crying a lot.



- The baby stops moving or moves less often.

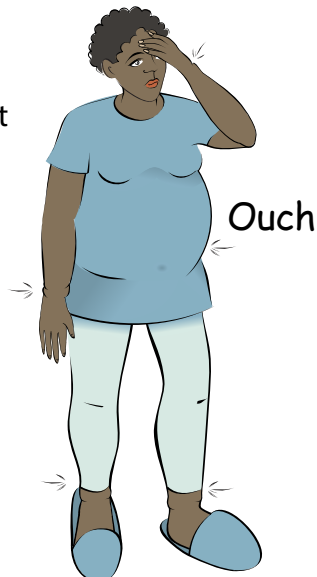


- Smelly fluid comes from your vagina and makes you feel itchy.

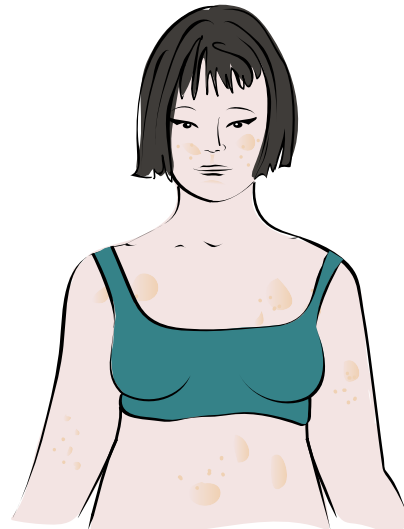
- It hurts or burns when you pass urine.
- Your urine becomes red or dark in colour.



- Lots of swelling in your face, hands, legs, ankles (especially if it gets worse or changes).
- Bad headaches that last for a long time.
- Gaining weight quickly.
- Blurry vision or spots in front of your eyes.
- Pain in your chest or stomach area.



- Spots on your face and body that are not normally there.



# Preterm Labour

## What is it?

Normally, pregnancy lasts between 37 and 42 weeks. Preterm labour is labour that starts too early (before 37 weeks). It can cause your baby to be born too soon.

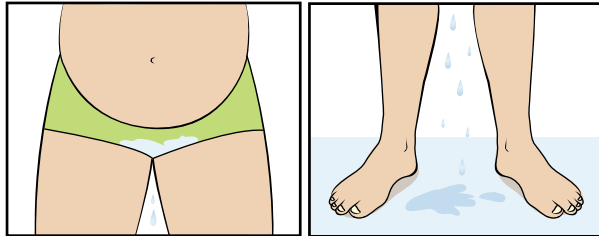
Babies who are born too soon may have health problems. They may need special care in the hospital.

## What are the signs of Preterm Labour?

- Bleeding from your vagina.

- Sudden increase in the amount of discharge from your vagina.
- Sudden change in the type of discharge (mucousy, watery, bloody).

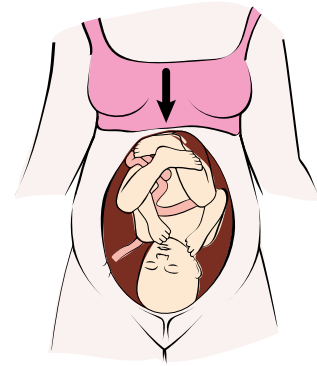
- Water leaking from your vagina.



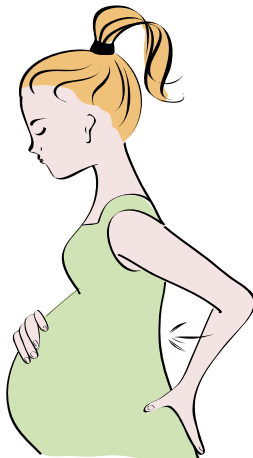
- Feeling that something is not right.

- Cramps like when you have your period.

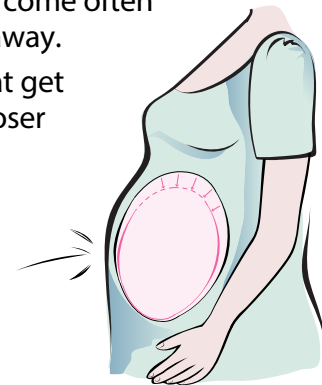
- Pressure that feels like the baby is pushing down.



- Low dull backache below the waist that feels different than usual.
- An urgent need to pass urine, or the need to pee often.



- Contractions (tightening of the uterus) that come often and do not go away.
- Contractions that get stronger and closer together.
- Stomach pains that do not go away (with or without diarrhea).



## What should I do if I have any of these signs?

Go to the hospital right away.

There are things that your health care provider can do to help.

It is not possible to prevent all preterm births, but there are things you can do to reduce the chances of preterm labour.

## What can you do to help your baby be born at the right time?

- Start seeing your health care provider as early as possible in your pregnancy.



- Try to stop smoking or smoke less often.
- Ask others to smoke outside.
- See [page 29](#) to learn more.



- Go to a group program early in your pregnancy (see [page 12](#)).



- Take time to rest every day.

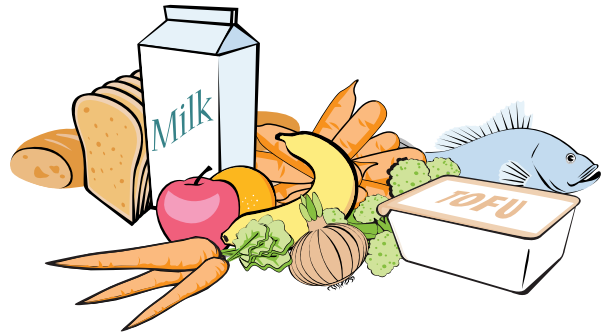


- See your health care provider if smelly fluid comes from your vagina and makes you itchy.

- See your health care provider if it hurts when you pass urine.



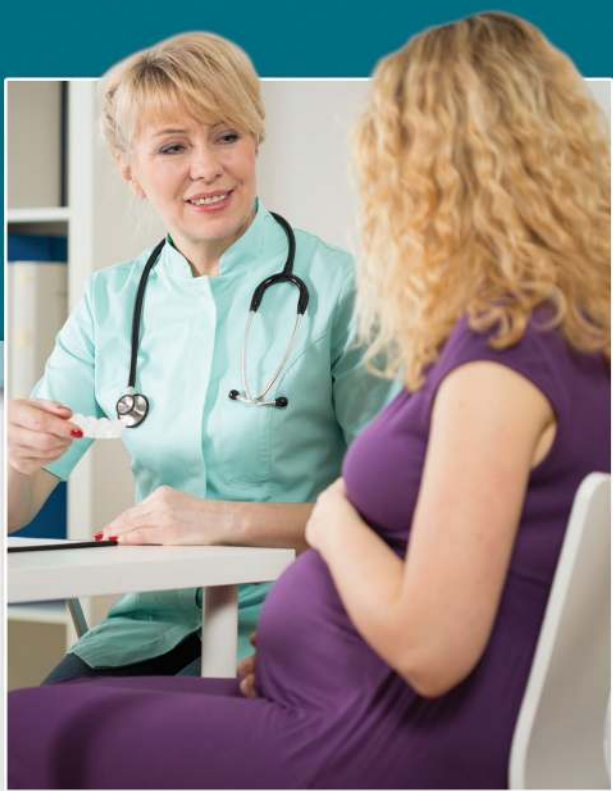
- Eat healthy foods (see [page 15](#)).



It is important that you:

- Learn the signs of preterm labour and what to do if you have them.
- Be aware of how your body changes with pregnancy.
- Find ways to manage stress in your life.
- Talk with your health care provider, midwife or a public health nurse, about any concerns you have. Tell them about anything that does not feel right. Tell your support person as well.

Find more information in the resource section on [page 90](#).



## Prenatal Care

It is important to see a health care provider to help you have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. Make an appointment as soon as you know you are pregnant.

In this section you will learn about:

- (1) The choices you have when looking for a health care provider.
- (2) What happens during prenatal visits.
- (3) Group programs.

# Choosing a Health Care Provider

A health care provider is someone who provides health services. In your community, you may find these kinds of health care providers.

## 1. Public Health Nurses

- Public Health Nurses provide support/care for people during pregnancy and after birth.

## 2. Obstetricians

- Doctors who care for people during their pregnancy, labour, and birth.
- They do not look after babies.

## 3. Family Doctors

- Doctors who care for pregnant people, babies, and families.
- Some deliver babies.



## 4. Midwives

- Midwives provide care for people with normal (low risk) pregnancies and births.
- With a midwife you may choose to give birth at home, at the hospital or at a birthing centre.
- Midwives provide care to mothers and their babies for the first few weeks after birth.

## 5. Nurse Practitioners

- Nurse Practitioners provide care for people with normal (low risk) pregnancies, babies, and families.
- They provide ongoing care to mothers and their babies.
- They usually do not provide care during labour and birth.

## 6. Doulas

- Doulas provide support and care to people (and partners) during and after the birth. They do not provide any medical care.
- There is a fee for this service.

## 7. Lactation Consultants

- Lactation consultants provide care to support the breastfeeding mother and baby.

To find a health care provider refer to [page 96](#).

When choosing a health care provider you may want to ask yourself these questions:

- Is the person easy to talk to and understand?
- Do they listen to you and answer your questions?
- Can you get to their office easily?
- How can you reach them?
- Can you have more than one person with you during your labour and birth?
- Do they speak your language well?
- Do you feel at ease with them?
- Will they be there for the birth?
- What medical procedures may this health care provider use during labour and birth?
- When would they recommend a cesarean and why?
- Where will the baby be born?
- Will they provide care for your baby?
- What percentage of their patient's births do they attend?
- Can you meet other health care providers who will you see at your labour and birth?
- What do other mothers say about their health care providers?



# Prenatal Visits

Your first health care provider appointment should be once the pregnancy is confirmed (usually through a home pregnancy test). Regular prenatal check-ups ensure that you and your baby receive the best possible care and follow-up during your pregnancy. Encourage your partner/support person to attend prenatal appointments to become familiar with the caregiver and to discuss their role in pregnancy, labour, and birth.

During the visit, your health care provider will:

- Ask you about your health before you got pregnant.
- Ask you about your health during your pregnancy.
- Give you a physical examination.
- Check your weight.
- Check your blood pressure.
- Discuss what you can do to have a healthy pregnancy.
- Discuss what you can do to have a healthy baby.
- Listen to your baby's heart rate.
- Measure the growth of your uterus.
- Talk to you about where you will give birth.
- Answer your questions.
- Discuss your concerns.
- Give you information on group programs and helpful community services.



Your health care provider will also talk to you about common tests and procedures offered during pregnancy. You and your partner/support person should get enough information about tests and procedures to make informed choices. Ask questions to know:

- The benefits of having the tests.
- The limitations.
- The risks for your baby and for you.
- The alternatives.
- What the tests cannot tell you.
- What happens if you do not have the tests.

It is up to you to decide if you want to have these tests and procedures. For more information, refer to: <https://www.pregnancyinfo.ca/your-pregnancy/routine-tests/>

After your first visit, you will usually see your health care provider:

- Once a month until 28 weeks of pregnancy.
- Every two weeks until 36 weeks of pregnancy.
- Every week until the baby arrives.

Remember to:

- Know whom to call if you have questions or concerns.
- Make your next appointment while you are at the health care provider's office.
- Write down any important information, including follow-up tests or procedures.

## Having Someone to Talk To

Being pregnant brings many changes to your life. It is important to have someone to talk with about your feelings. This person can help you make healthy changes.

Try to think of someone in your life that you feel comfortable with and can trust. It could be your partner, the father of your baby, a neighbour, a close friend, a colleague, or a family member. You may also get the support you need at a group program.

Group programs may offer information, food, and a chance to talk to other people. To find out more about programs you can attend in your community during your pregnancy and after the birth of your baby see Community Resources on [page 95](#).



# Group Programs During Pregnancy



## Prenatal Classes

Your local community health office, hospital, or health centre may offer classes for pregnant women and for their partners. Prenatal classes can be offered in person or online. Classes are free. The classes may provide information about a healthy pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, and becoming a parent.

Community health nurses also support the services offered through community partners such as [Healthy Baby Clubs](#). Healthy Baby Club is a nutrition support program offered by [Family Resource Centres](#) for eligible people who may need extra support during and after their pregnancy.

## Pregnancy Support Programs

There are many different types of drop-in programs for new parents and for pregnant people. All offer information and time to talk with other pregnant people or new parents. Some provide food. In most cases, they are free. See Community Resources on [page 95](#).

## Support at Home

Community Health Nurses offer the Healthy Beginnings Program that provides services to families, newborns, infants and young children from birth to five years of age.

With the birth of your baby, a community health nurse will call within a few days of your hospital discharge to see how you are doing and offer support.

# Fathers, Partners, Family and Friends

As a father, partner, family member, or friend there is a lot you can do to help during pregnancy:

- Ask how you can help.
- Go to the medical appointments and prenatal classes.
- Learn about pregnancy and birth.
- Talk about how you would like to parent your child.
- Talk about how you will feed your baby. Breastmilk is the healthiest food for your new baby.
- You can often help with the decision to quit smoking, encourage quit attempts, and help to stay smoke-free. Your family will be healthier if you also quit or smoke less. Your local community health office can help you with this.
- Talk about not drinking alcohol. The safest choice is to have alcohol-free drinks instead. If you also stop drinking, it may help your partner not to drink alcohol during the pregnancy and when breastfeeding.
- Be active. Decide together what you can do.
- Go for a walk and exercise every day.
- Understand that one may feel moody at times.
- Help with rest.



- Share household chores (e.g., meal preparation, cleaning, walking the dog, etc.)
- Change the cat litter box (see toxoplasmosis on [page 34](#)).
- Carry things that are too heavy.
- Understand that interest in sex may change. Talk about how you feel. Together explore ways to feel close.
- Learn how to take care of your new baby.
- Help prepare the stuff your baby will need at the hospital and once home. Get your home ready for the baby.
- Find out about groups for new parents or fathers in your community.
- Talk with others about what it is like for you to be expecting your baby.

During pregnancy is a good time to start bonding with your baby. Getting involved early with the pregnancy helps you to get ready to be a parent. You can:

- Ask your partner to tell you when the baby is moving. Place your hand on the belly so you can feel your baby's movements.
- Listen to your baby's heartbeat.
- Talk to your unborn child through the belly. You can read stories, sing songs, or just talk to your baby.

For more information for fathers, partners, family and friends, refer to [page 96](#). Find out how you can be involved and how important this is to you and your baby.





## Healthy Eating

When you are pregnant, the food you eat is important. Eating healthy foods helps you feel better and also helps your baby grow and develop.

In this section you will learn:

- (1) The importance of eating healthy foods for pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- (2) Which healthy foods to choose.
- (3) What is healthy pregnancy weight gain.
- (4) What is food safety.

# Nutrients You Need

Healthy foods provide the nutrients you and your baby need. In addition to eating healthy, pregnant women need a daily multivitamin with folate, iron and vitamin B12 in it.

| Name of nutrient      | Foods that contain this nutrient                                                    | Why this nutrient is important                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Folate (Folic Acid)   |    | <p>Folate is a vitamin that helps build healthy blood and tissues for you and your baby.</p> <p>Eat foods containing folic acid such as vegetables (especially dark green), grain products (whole grain or enriched), some fruits, dried peas, beans and lentils, peanuts, and other nuts and seeds. Also take a prenatal multivitamin containing folic acid every day. Some women need more folic acid. Talk to your health care provider.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Calcium and Vitamin D |   | <p>Calcium and vitamin D work together to keep your bones strong, and to build strong bones and teeth for your baby. Milk is the main source of calcium and vitamin D. Drinking milk (or fortified soy beverage) each day is the easiest way to help meet your calcium and vitamin D needs.</p> <p>If you do not drink milk, talk with a Registered Dietitian about how to meet your calcium and vitamin D needs. Other sources of calcium include yogurt, cheese, canned salmon or sardines with the bones mashed in, calcium-set tofu, almonds, and some types of dried beans. Fish provides some vitamin D, especially fatty fish like salmon.</p> |
| Iron and Vitamin C    |  | <p>Iron helps build the red blood cells that carry oxygen and iron to your baby. It is important that babies have a good supply of iron when they are born.</p> <p>Try to eat a food high in vitamin C at your meals, especially those that don't include meat. When you eat foods with vitamin C and foods with iron together, the vitamin C helps your body absorb the iron. Vitamin C is found in many vegetables and fruits, such as broccoli, cantaloupe, citrus fruits, kiwis, mangos, potatoes, strawberries, sweet peppers, and tomatoes.</p>                                                                                                 |
| Protein               |  | <p>Protein helps your uterus and placenta become strong and helps your baby grow. Protein foods include beans, lentils, dried peas, tofu, nuts, seeds, lean meats and poultry, fish, shellfish, eggs, and lower fat milk, yogurt and cheese.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Omega-3 Fats          |  | <p>Omega-3 fats are important for the growth of baby's brain and tissues. Foods high in omega-3 fats include fatty fish like salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines, herring and char. It is recommended for pregnant women to eat at least 150 g (5 oz.) of cooked fish each week (see <a href="#">page 19</a> for information on limiting mercury from fish). If you do not eat fish, omega-3 eggs can provide some omega-3 fats.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

# Tips For Healthy Eating

Enjoying healthy foods every day is very important for a healthy pregnancy. Healthy eating helps you feel better, gives you energy and helps your baby grow and develop.

People who are pregnant (in the second and third trimesters) or breastfeeding need a little more food to get the extra nutrients they need. Often, one extra healthy snack each day is enough. For example:

- Yogurt and canned peach slices
- Cereal with milk and frozen blueberries
- Whole grain crackers with carrot sticks and hummus
- Apple slices with peanut butter

Use [Canada's Food Guide](#) to make healthy food choices

**Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods. Choose protein foods that come from plants more often.**

- Fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruits are all healthy choices.
- Choose whole fruit rather than juice
- Choose foods with [healthy fats](#) instead of saturated fat

**Limit highly processed foods. If you choose these foods, eat them less often and in small amounts.**

- Prepare meals and snacks using ingredients that have little to no added sodium, sugars or saturated fat. Use food labels to help you make healthier choices.
- Choose healthier menu options when eating out

**Make water your drink of choice**

- Replace sugary drinks with water

[Canada's Food Guide](#) reminds us that healthy eating is more than the foods you eat. It is also about where, when, why and how you eat.

**Be mindful of your eating habits**

- Take time to eat
- Notice when you are hungry and when you are full

**Cook more often**

- Plan what you eat
- Involve others in planning and preparing meals

## Enjoy your food

- Culture and food traditions can be a part of healthy eating

## Eat meals with others

- Enjoy quality time together with family, friends, neighbours or co-workers

For more information on using Canada's Food Guide, visit the [mobile-friendly website](#).

If you cannot always afford to buy food, call your local Public Health Nurse or a Registered Dietitian. You can also contact your local Family Resource Centre/Healthy Baby Club or call the Mother Baby Nutrition Supplement program at 1-800-508-4788. They may be able to assist you with the extra costs of eating healthy during pregnancy and throughout your child's first year.

If you are having trouble eating (e.g. nausea, morning sickness or loss of appetite), talk to your health care provider. You can contact a Registered Dietitian through the [811 Health Line](#).



# Food Safety

Take extra care with food when you are pregnant. Food poisoning can be dangerous when you are pregnant.

- Wash your hands before, during, and after you handle food.
- Wash the skin of all raw vegetables and fruit well.
- Cook meat, poultry, seafood, fish, and eggs well.
- Reheat cooked food until steaming hot.
- Check “best before” dates on food packages. Do not eat the food after that date has passed.
- Eat leftovers stored in the refrigerator within 3 to 4 days.

## Avoid these foods when you are pregnant:

- Hot dogs and deli meats, unless they’re heated until steaming hot.
- Patés, meat spreads, smoked seafood, and fish products that are not in a can.
- Foods made with raw eggs, or that contain eggs that are not fully cooked.
- Unpasteurized milk and foods made from unpasteurized milk.
- Soft and semi-soft cheeses made from unpasteurized and pasteurized milk such as brie, camembert, feta, goat cheese, queso blanco, havarti, and blue cheese.
- Juices that are not pasteurized, such as unpasteurized apple cider.
- Raw sprouts, especially alfalfa sprouts and bean sprouts.
- More than 1 serving (75g) of liver or liver products per week.
- Undercooked meat, poultry, and seafood.
- Raw fish and food made with raw fish (for example, sushi).
- Fish liver oil.
- Raw seafood such as oysters and clams.
- Fish that is high in mercury. For more information go to [www.canada.ca](http://www.canada.ca) and search “mercury in fish”.



For more information refer to [Safe Food Handling for Pregnant Women November 2015](#) at [www.canada.ca/foodsafety](http://www.canada.ca/foodsafety).

If you have questions about healthy eating, talk to your health care provider or a Registered Dietitian. See Healthy Eating resources on [page 97](#).

Pasteurizing = when milk or juice is heated to kill bacteria  
Raw = not cooked

# Common Questions About Eating

## How much fluid should I drink a day?

Drink at least 9 ½ cups (1 cup = 250 mL) of fluids a day, mostly water.

## Is it okay to drink coffee, tea, or soda pop?

Coffee, tea, and pop may have caffeine in them. Too much caffeine is not good for your unborn baby. Limit caffeine to no more than 300 mg per day. You can find a chart with the amount of caffeine in different beverages and chocolate products at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/food-safety/food-additives/caffeine-foods/foods.html>.

Keep in mind that mugs and take-out cups are often larger than 8 ounces. Caffeine in tea increases the longer you steep it.



All energy drinks and most kinds of herbal teas are not safe to drink when you are pregnant or breastfeeding. The following herbal teas are generally considered safe if limited to 2-3 cups per day: bitter orange/orange peel, echinacea, peppermint, red raspberry leaf, rose hip, and rosemary.

## Do I need to stop eating salt?

Sodium, which is part of salt, should be limited. You and your baby will get enough sodium from a healthy diet. Many foods have sodium that naturally occurs in food. Limit adding extra salt to food.

Choose foods that don't have added sodium or are low in sodium more often than processed or fast foods.

## Will I need to take prenatal vitamins?

Yes, a prenatal multivitamin pill is recommended, but it cannot take the place of healthy eating. Eat healthy foods and take a prenatal multivitamin every day that contains folic acid, iron and vitamin B12. Some people need more folic acid or other vitamins. Talk to your health care provider.

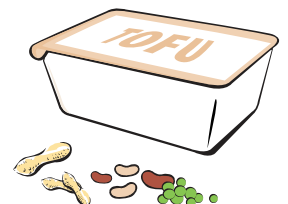


## What if I don't drink milk?

If you do not drink milk, you should drink fortified soy beverage every day to help meet your calcium and vitamin D needs. If you don't drink either of these, talk with a Registered Dietitian about how to get enough calcium and vitamin D.

## What if I do not eat meat or other animal products?

If you do not eat meat or other animal products, choose foods such as beans, lentils, dried peas, tofu, nuts, seeds and fortified soy beverage. Talk to a Registered Dietitian about vegetarian eating when you are pregnant, to be sure you are getting enough nutrients.



## Can I drink alcohol?

It is safest not to drink any alcohol when you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Choose an alcohol-free drink instead. This is the safest choice. See [page 31](#) for more information.

# Healthy Pregnancy Weight Gain

Healthy weight gain during pregnancy is important. It helps:

- Your baby to grow.
- Your uterus and placenta to grow.
- Your breasts to get ready for breastfeeding.
- Your blood volume increase so it carries nutrients and oxygen to your growing baby.

## What is a healthy pregnancy weight gain?

A healthy pregnancy weight gain depends on your height and your weight before you became pregnant. Visit the Pregnancy Weight Gain Calculator [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/prenatal/bmi/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/prenatal/bmi/index-eng.php) to know your recommended weight gain.

Most pregnant people should gain between 11.5 and 16 kilograms (25 to 35 pounds). If you were overweight before getting pregnant, your health care provider may recommend gaining only 7 to 9 kg (15-25 lbs) during pregnancy.

During your first trimester, your weight gain should be between 1 to 2 kg (about 2 to 4 lbs). Most of the weight gain happens in the second and third trimesters.

Talk about healthy weight gain during pregnancy with your health care provider before your pregnancy or very early in your pregnancy. Together you can decide what to expect for a healthy weight gain per trimester. Eat “twice as healthy”, not “twice as much”.

You and your baby will benefit if you choose healthy foods and are active during your pregnancy.

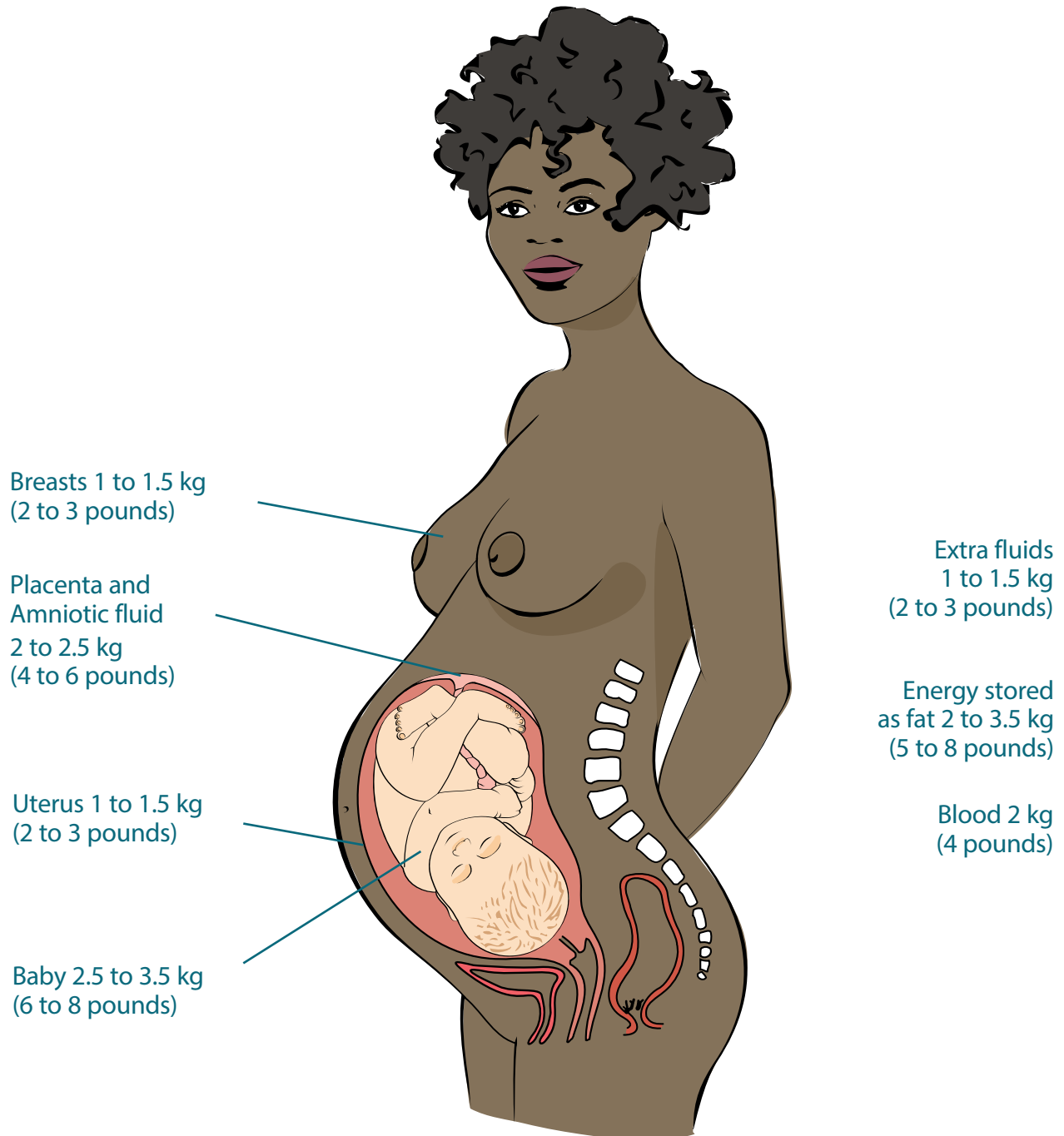
A healthy pregnancy weight gain helps you to:

- Have lower risk of complications in pregnancy and during delivery.
- Feel healthier and have more energy.
- Be at a healthier weight faster after the baby is born.

A healthy pregnancy weight gain helps your baby to:

- Have a better chance of being born at a healthy weight.
- Have lower risk of complications at birth.
- Spend less time in the hospital.
- Have a lower risk of diabetes and disease later in life.

## Where does the weight go?





## Healthy Lifestyle and Risk Factors

Being healthy and enjoying a healthy lifestyle is good for you and your baby.

In this section you will learn about:

- (1) Vaccination and Pregnancy
- (2) Physical Activity
- (3) Work
- (4) Mental Health
- (5) Drugs
- (6) Medication
- (7) Sexuality
- (8) Smoking
- (9) Alcohol
- (10) Things to Avoid
- (11) Abuse
- (12) Infections

# Vaccination and Pregnancy

Vaccines teach your immune system how to recognize and destroy germs if you are exposed to them. They protect you and your baby from certain infections if you are exposed to them.

Before pregnancy, it is also important for you and all members of your household to have up-to-date routine vaccinations. This is important because your newborn can catch infections easily. Newborns can get very sick from these infections, especially in the early months. Some vaccinations also cannot be given to babies until they are a year old, like the measles vaccine.

Some vaccines are recommended during pregnancy. These include:

- Flu vaccine (especially during flu season) This is because flu is more likely to cause severe illness in pregnant women than in women who are not pregnant. Vaccination with an inactivated flu vaccine lowers the risk for complications from flu during pregnancy and after your baby is born.
- Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap vaccine). This is because pertussis (whooping cough) in babies, can be severe, especially in those infants who have not started or completed their routine immunizations. After vaccination, pregnant women will develop antibodies to whooping cough, which help them fight off infection if they come into contact with the disease. These antibodies will pass to the baby through the placenta and provide the baby with the same protection. These antibodies will last for several months after the baby is born, until they can be vaccinated themselves.

Speak to your health care provider for up-to-date information on vaccination protection for you and your family.

## Physical Activity

Being active during pregnancy is important for you and your baby. It helps with healthy weight gain during pregnancy and helps you return to a healthy weight afterwards. Being active also helps with relaxation, leg cramps, feeling tired, constipation, sore back, and shortness of breath. It also helps improve mood, promotes better sleep, increases muscle tone, strength and endurance, and speeds up recovery after labour and delivery.

When you feel good it is also very good for the baby's health.



Speak to your health care provider before you increase your physical activity. Give your health care provider the PARmed-X for PREGNANCY. It is a guideline for health screening before you start a prenatal fitness class or other exercise. It gives people practical ideas for activities they can do when pregnant.

For more information visit [www.csep.ca/cmfiles/publications/parq/parmed-xpreg.pdf](http://www.csep.ca/cmfiles/publications/parq/parmed-xpreg.pdf).

## What kind of physical activity can I do?

During pregnancy you can do many physical activities like:

- Swimming (take pregnancy swimming classes).
- Yoga and relaxation techniques.
- Kegel exercises (see [page 39](#)).
- Cross-country skiing.
- Prenatal fitness classes.
- Weight training with low weights and high repetitions.
- Walking briskly
- Gardening.
- Kayaking or canoeing.
- Low impact aerobics.
- Stationary biking.
- Stretching.

If you are already active and doing light to moderate physical activity, you can continue to do your activities. If you are not active, try to do light to moderate physical activity.

If you have not been active before, start with 15 minutes at a time, 3 times a week and gradually increase to at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week.

Be cautious with activities that might put too much stress on your joints or cause you to lose your balance and fall such as ice hockey, cycling, downhill skiing or snowboarding, hiking in rough terrain etc. You should not scuba dive when pregnant.

After your fourth month of pregnancy you should not do activities where you are lying on your back.

If you have blurry vision, shortness of breath, feel a “gush” of fluid from your vagina, have new or increased back or neck pain, severe nausea or belly pain you should see your health care provider right away.

Talk to your health care provider about your plans to be active. Check your local community for physical activity programs in your area. Ask your friends, spouse and/or a partner to be physically active with you.

## When you exercise:

- Drink plenty of water (before, during, and after you are active).
- Try not to get too hot or too tired.
- You should be able to talk when you are active. If not, reduce the intensity of the activity.
- If it hurts or feels uncomfortable, slow down or stop the activity.

See [page 100](#) under Physical Activity for more information.

## Work

Most jobs are safe during pregnancy. A few small changes at work can add to your comfort and will help you to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

Some people must stop working or must change to a different type of work when they are pregnant. Talk to your health care provider about the type of work that you do.

You may need to make some changes or take extra care at work while you are pregnant if:

- You must stand up for long periods of time.
- You must lift, push, or pull heavy items.
- You are in contact with chemicals.
- You work with X-rays.
- You work in a noisy work place.
- Your work place is very hot or very cold.
- You work with animals, young children, or sick people.
- You work long hours or do shift work.



# Mental Health

For many people, being pregnant involves dealing with a lot of change. Your body is hanging. You may think differently. People may treat you in a different manner. You may be thinking about your new baby. You may be thinking more about your future. All of these changes and feelings are normal. If they begin to make you feel tense and anxious, you may need to seek help. Pregnancy can be a time when you may be at risk of becoming depressed.

It is important to take care of yourself especially when you are pregnant or have a new baby.



## What you can do:

- Eat well.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get enough sleep.
- Take a prenatal multivitamin.
- Be around people who make you happy. This can include your family, neighbours, co-workers, friends, partner and others.
- Take time to relax and laugh.
- See your health care provider regularly.
- Ask for help if you feel down, sad and/or overwhelmed.
- Talk to your partner. They may have similar feelings.
- Go for counseling. You can go alone or with your partner.
- Talk about your feelings.
- Accept help from others.
- Go to a group program for pregnancy. Talking to people who understand what you are going through is helpful.
- Do something you enjoy like listening to music, yoga or reading.
- Avoid using drugs or alcohol.

Following the above tips will help you have good mental health and help to prevent depression.

Ask yourself these questions:

For more than two weeks have I been feeling:

- Anxious?
- Worried more than usual?
- Less interested in my usual activities?
- Feeling down, sad, irritable or hopeless?

If you answered yes to any of the four questions, talk to your health care provider. Don't wait. There is help for you and your family.

See [page 98](#) for more information on mental health.

## Drugs

Drugs such as marijuana, heroin, crack/cocaine, LSD, and other street drugs are not safe to use when you are pregnant. They could harm both you and your baby.

**Babies born to mothers who take drugs may:**

- Be born too soon and too small.
- Have medical problems.
- Go through drug withdrawal.
- Have problems learning.

**What you can do:**

- Do not use street drugs during pregnancy.
- Talk to your health care provider and ask about programs to help you quit.



See the section on Alcohol and Drugs on [page 93](#).

# Medications and Herbal Products

It is important to let your health care provider know if you are taking any medications or herbal products during your pregnancy.

- Prescribed medications, over-the-counter medications and natural health products can affect your unborn baby.
- Herbal supplements (tablets, capsules or extracts) are not recommended due to possible harm to your baby. See [page 20](#) for information on herbal teas.
- Some products that are unsafe during pregnancy can be taken safely while breastfeeding.
- It is always important to let your health care provider know that you are breastfeeding. Your health care provider will then consider different medication options for you.



## Sexuality

It is safe to have sex when you are pregnant. There may be changes in your sexual needs and desires. Both of you need to discuss how you feel and discuss what you expect from one another. Explore comfortable activities that please both of you.

Your health care provider may advise you to avoid sex with certain health conditions. If you, or your partner are anxious about having sex during pregnancy, or if sex is painful, talk to your health care provider.

## Smoking

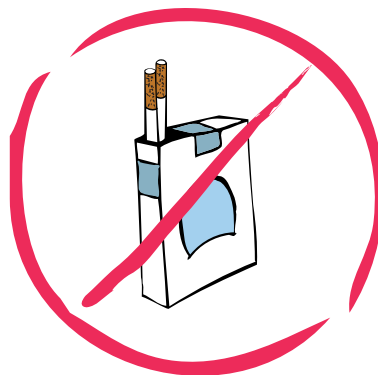
Smoking or being around people who smoke during your pregnancy and after your baby is born, can harm both you and your baby. Quitting smoking before or during your pregnancy is one of the best things you can do for you and for your baby. It is never too late to quit.

Smoking can cause problems during pregnancy. Your baby may:

- Not get enough food or oxygen.
- Be born too soon or too small.
- Die suddenly during pregnancy.
- Be more at risk to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Have health problems (such as ear and throat infections, asthma and allergies) and learning problems.

### What you can do:

- Ask friends and family who smoke to smoke outside while you are pregnant and after the baby is born.
- Make your home and car smoke-free areas.
- Once the baby is home, smoke outside and away from your baby.
- Ask for help to quit smoking or to smoke less.
- Join a stop-smoking program. You can contact Smoker's Helpline at 1-800-363-5864 or visit [smokershelp.net](http://smokershelp.net). They offer specialized services for pregnant people.
- Try smoking-cessation products (such as the patch). There are smoking-cessation products available for those eligible for the NL Prescription Drug Program.
- Contact your local community health office.



No smoking at all is best for you and your baby. Smoking less at any time will help you have a healthier pregnancy and a healthier baby.

See [page 102](#) for more information and resources to help you or your partner smoke less, quit or reduce exposure to second-hand smoke.

# Alcohol

There is no safe amount of alcohol during pregnancy. There is no safe kind of alcohol. There is no safe time to drink alcohol during pregnancy. It is best not to drink alcohol at all if you are pregnant.

Mothers who drink alcohol when they are pregnant may have a baby who has:

- Brain damage.
- Vision and hearing problems.
- Trouble walking and talking.
- Organs that do not work properly.
- Birth defects.
- Problems learning, remembering, and thinking things through.
- Problems getting along with others.



During pregnancy and breastfeeding, many people choose an alcohol-free drink instead. This is the safest choice. For more information, see Mocktails for Mom at [www.beststart.org/resources/alc\\_reduction/LCBO\\_recipe\\_cards\\_bro.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/resources/alc_reduction/LCBO_recipe_cards_bro.pdf). If you decide to drink while breastfeeding, limit the amount you drink to one standard drink. Breastfeed before you drink alcohol. Allow at least 2 hours for the alcohol from one standard drink to be eliminated from your body before breastfeeding your baby again.

Resources are available on [page 93](#) in the section Alcohol and Drugs.

## Things to Avoid

Some things at home and work can harm your unborn baby.

### What you can do:

Talk to your health care provider about:

- Pesticides (used for killing insects).
- Mercury (in some fish).
- Lead (in some paint).
- Asbestos (in some home insulation).
- Solvents (in some paints).
- Extreme heat (for example hot tubs and saunas).
- Plastics.
- X-rays.
- Some cleaning products.

For more information, see the video Creating Healthy Home Environments for Kids: Top 5 Tips at [www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/resources/creating-healthy-home-environments-kids-top-5-tips](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca/resources/creating-healthy-home-environments-kids-top-5-tips).

# Abuse

## Does your partner...

- Yell at you or call you names?
- Break your things?
- Threaten to hurt you?
- Always need to be in charge?
- Keep you from seeing your friends, family, doctor, or midwife?
- Control the money?
- Threaten to take the kids away?
- Hit or kick you?
- Force you to have sex?

If you answered YES to any of the above questions, this is abuse. Abuse usually gets worse over time. It will not stop when your baby is born.

## Abuse during pregnancy could cause you to:

- Feel anxious, sad and alone.
- Feel bad about yourself.
- Lose your baby.
- Not eat or sleep well.
- Have pain, injuries and die.

## Abuse may cause your baby to:

- Be born too small or too early.
- Have later health problems.
- Be abused after birth.
- Be hurt or die.

## What you can do:

- Tell someone you trust what is going on.
- Find people to help you.
- Get help to leave safely.

## Where to Get Help:

- If you are in immediate danger call 911.
- The Mental health Crisis Line is available to you 24 hours a day 7 days a week. 1-888-737-4668.
- To find a shelter in your area go to: <http://thanl.org/shelters/find-shelter/>, or see [page 33](#).

Remember, it is not your fault. Refer to [page 92](#) for more information.



## Shelter Information:

### Gander & Area

Cara Transition House

Local Crisis Line: 256-7707

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-877-800-2272

[www.carahouse.com](http://www.carahouse.com)

### Marystown & Area

Grace Sparkes House

Local Crisis Line: 279-3562

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-877-774-4957

[www.gracesparkeshouse.com](http://www.gracesparkeshouse.com)

### Carbonear & CBN Area

O'Shaughnessy House

Local Crisis Line: 596-8709

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-888-596-8709

### Happy Valley-Goose Bay

Libra House

Local Crisis Line: 896-3014 (voice/tdd)

Toll Free Crisis Line (NL only): 1-877-896-3014

[www.librahouse.ca](http://www.librahouse.ca)

### Rigolet

Kirkina House (Rigolet)

Crisis line: 709-947-3333

[rigoletsafehouse@bellaliant.com](mailto:rigoletsafehouse@bellaliant.com)

### Natuashish

Natuashish Safe House

Crisis Line: 709-478-2390

### Corner Brook & Area

Willow House

Local Crisis Line: 634-4198

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-866-634-4198

[www.transitionhouse.ca](http://www.transitionhouse.ca)

### St. John's & Area

Iris Kirby House

Local Crisis Line: 753-1492

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-877-753-1492

[www.iriskirbyhouse.ca](http://www.iriskirbyhouse.ca)

### Labrador City-Wabush

Hope Haven

Local Crisis Line: 944-6900

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-888-332-0000

[www.hopehaven.ca](http://www.hopehaven.ca)

### Nain

Nain Transition House

Local Crisis Line: 709-922-1229

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-866-922-1230

[nainsafehouse@nf.aibn.com](mailto:nainsafehouse@nf.aibn.com)

### Sheshatshiu

Nukum Munik Shelter

Crisis Line: 709-497-8869

[nainsafehouse@nf.aibn.com](mailto:nainsafehouse@nf.aibn.com)

### Hopedale

Selma Onalik Safe House

Phone: 933-3420

[hopedalewomensshelter@yahoo.ca](mailto:hopedalewomensshelter@yahoo.ca)

For more information, visit: <http://thanl.org/shelters/find-shelter/>

# Infections

There are certain health problems that can harm your unborn baby if you get them during pregnancy. If at any time during your pregnancy you think you may have any of the problems listed below, call your health care provider.

Early treatment of health problems is the best thing you can do for you and your baby.

## Bladder Infection

**What is it?** Your bladder holds urine. When you are pregnant, the baby may put more pressure on your bladder. A bladder infection is caused by germs called bacteria. These germs live outside the body and can move into the bladder.

**How do I know I have it?** You may:

- Feel the need to pass urine often and in a hurry.
- Have a burning feeling when you pass urine.
- Feel pain in your lower stomach or back area.
- Have a fever or feel sick to your stomach.
- Have bloody or cloudy urine.
- Notice a strange smell in your urine.

**Why is it a danger?** It can hurt your kidneys and cause your baby to be born too soon.

**What can I do to protect myself and my baby?**

- Drink lots of fluids (at least 9 ½ cups (1 cup = 250 mL) a day, mostly water).
- Wipe yourself from front to back after using the toilet.
- Go to the toilet as soon as you feel the urge to pass urine, before sex, and after sex.
- See your health care provider right away if you think you have a bladder infection.

## Toxoplasmosis

**What is it?** Toxoplasmosis is an infection that people can get from eating raw meat or meat that is not cooked well. It also comes from unwashed vegetables, and from touching cat feces.

**Why is it a danger?** It can make your baby very sick.

**What can I do to protect myself and my baby?**

- Cook meat well. Wash vegetables well.
- Ask someone else to change the cat litter.
- Wash your hands and any surfaces that you use to prepare food.
- Do not drink or eat unpasteurized milk products.
- Wear gloves when gardening or if you must change the cat litter box. When you are done, wash your hands.

## Streptococcus B (Strep B)

What is it?

- Strep B or Group B Streptococcus (GBS) is a common bacteria that is often found in the vagina, rectum or bladder. Often, there are no signs that you have Strep B. All pregnant people are tested for GBS bacteria.

Why is it a danger?

- After the delivery, it can make your baby sick.

What can I do to protect my baby and myself?

- If you tested positive for GBS bacteria, you will be treated with antibiotics when you go into labour and during birth.
- Talk with your health care provider if you have questions about GBS bacteria.

## Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

What are they? STIs are infections that can spread from person-to-person during sex. Examples of STIs are herpes, chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea, and hepatitis B. You can get an STI before, during, or after you are pregnant.

Why is it a danger? STIs can harm both you and your unborn baby.

What can I do to protect myself and my baby?

- Talk to your health care provider about getting tested for STIs.

## HIV/AIDS

What is it? – HIV is a virus that can lead to AIDS. You can get HIV by having unprotected sex with someone who has the virus. You can also get HIV from needles that have been used by someone who has the virus. If you have HIV, it may be passed on to your baby when you are pregnant, during birth, or during breastfeeding. If you have HIV, medications can help protect your unborn baby.

Why is it a danger? The virus can attack your immune system and your nervous system. It can do the same to your baby, making you both very sick.

What can I do to protect myself and my baby?

- Do not share needles with others.
- Ask your health care provider about having an HIV test early in pregnancy.
- Talk with your health care provider about how to protect yourself, or to treat HIV/AIDS.

For more information, talk with your health care provider.



## The Three Trimesters of Pregnancy

This section gives you information about each stage of pregnancy.

- (1) For the first trimester, it will tell you about:
  - Your Growing Baby
  - Changes You May Feel
  - Getting Healthy for You and Your Baby
- (2) For the second trimester, it will tell you about:
  - Your Growing Baby
  - Changes You May Feel
  - Getting to Know Your Baby
- (3) For the third trimester, it will tell you about:
  - Your Growing Baby
  - Changes You May Feel
  - Getting Ready for Your Baby
  - What to Take to the Hospital

# How Long Does Pregnancy Last?

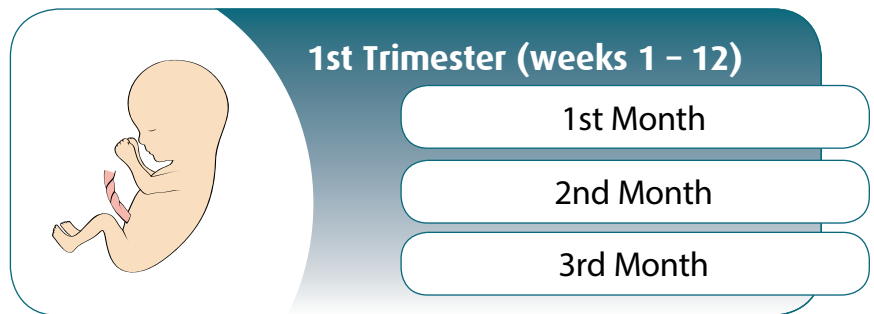
Pregnancy usually lasts 40 weeks (about 9 months). It takes this much time for a baby to develop.

Pregnancy has three parts. Each part is called a trimester. Each trimester is about 3 months long.

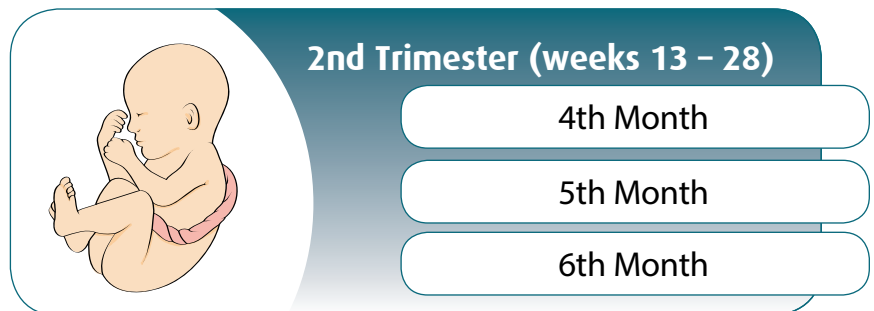
## Pregnancy Time Line

Use a coloured pencil or pen to colour in the months. Then you will know where you are in your pregnancy.

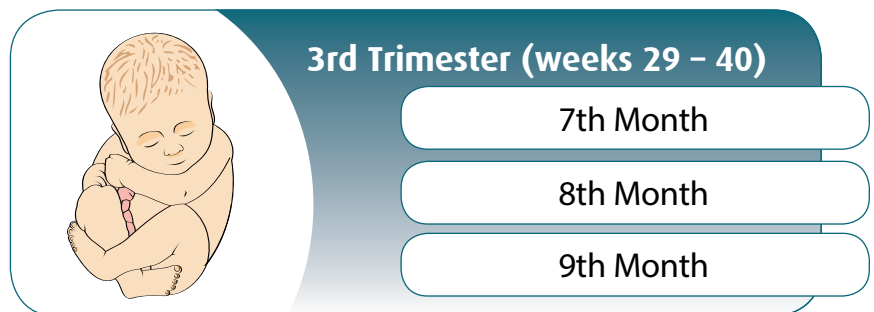
By the end of the 1st trimester your baby begins to look like a human baby.



By the end of the 2nd trimester your baby sucks their thumb, and opens and closes their eyes.

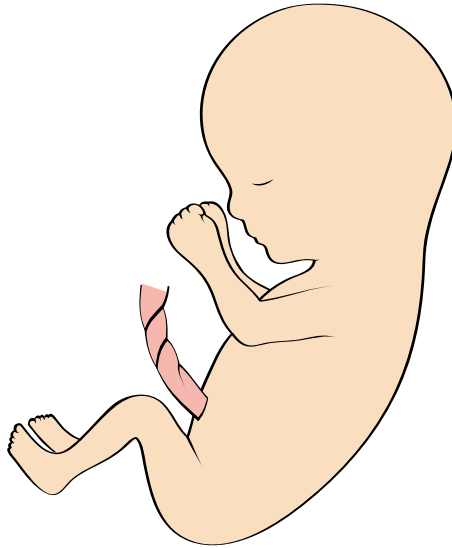


During the 3rd trimester your baby is well developed. Your baby still needs stronger lungs and other organs. Your baby needs to grow and put on weight.



# First Trimester (1 to 3 months of pregnancy)

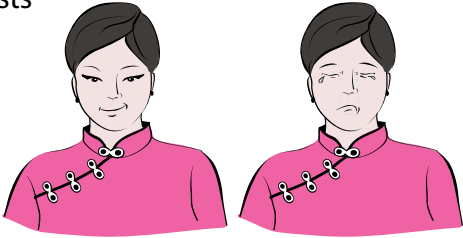
## Your Growing Baby

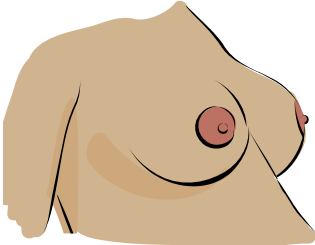


By the end of the first trimester:

- Your baby will be 7 to 10 cm long (3 to 4 inches) and weigh 28 grams (1 ounce).
- The heart is beating.
- The eyes, ears, and nose are forming.
- The arms, legs, fingers, and toes are forming.
- The fingernails and toenails are forming.
- The arms and legs move now but you cannot feel the kicks.
- The bones are forming.
- The brain is growing quickly.
- The spine is forming.
- The face is forming but the eyes are closed.
- The digestive tract is forming.
- Your baby is beginning to look like a real person.
- The sex of your baby is determined.

# Changes You May Feel

| What to expect                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | What to do                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>You may have mood swings (happy for a while and then sad). This is caused by changes in your hormones as your body adjusts to being pregnant.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your partner, close friends, or family about your feelings.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care provider if these feelings do not go away or if you always feel sad.</li> <li>• Eat healthy, be active and find time to relax and rest when you can.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>"Morning Sickness" (feeling sick and throwing up). It usually stops by the fourth month. You may feel sick in the morning, or all day.</p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat dry toast or crackers before you get out of bed in the morning.</li> <li>• Get out of bed slowly.</li> <li>• Eat small amounts of food every 1 to 2 hours, before you feel hungry.</li> <li>• Avoid spicy, fried, or fatty foods.</li> <li>• Drink fluids between meals. Do not drink fluids with meals.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care provider if the vomiting continues.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>You will pass urine more often. This is caused by your uterus pressing against your bladder and by changes in your hormones.</p>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink less in the evening.</li> <li>• Try Kegel exercises. Kegel exercises help to strengthen the muscles and can decrease the chance of urine leaking:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tighten the muscles around your vagina and anus and hold for several seconds. These are the same muscles you that you use when you are urinating.</li> <li>– Try to tighten your muscles 25 times each day. It is important to repeat this exercise several times during the day.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Make sure that your bladder empties each time you pass urine.</li> </ul> |

| What to expect                                                                                                                                                                                          | What to do                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>You may feel tired.</p>                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rest.</li> <li>• Eat small amounts of food many times during the day.</li> <li>• Drink lots of fluids.</li> <li>• Try to work less.</li> <li>• Accept help from others.</li> <li>• Ask for help from your partner.</li> </ul>                                                    |
| <p>Thin milky fluid may flow from your birth canal (vagina).</p>                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear small liners in your underwear or change your underwear often.</li> <li>• Keep the area clean and dry.</li> <li>• Avoiding douching (pushing fluid into your vagina).</li> <li>• Call your health care provider if the fluid smells bad or makes you feel itchy.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Your breasts may become larger. This is to prepare for breastfeeding your baby.</p>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear a bra that provides good support.</li> <li>• Wear your bra at night if your breasts are uncomfortable.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p>You may feel like you are going to faint. This is caused by demands on your blood system.</p>                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get up slowly.</li> <li>• When you change position, move slowly.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p>Your interest in having sex or in other activities may change. This may be caused by feeling tired and sick.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your partner or a close friend about your feelings.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

# Getting Healthy for You and Your Baby

During this time you may have many different feelings and questions.

## What you and your partner can do:

- Think of healthy things you can do for yourself and your growing baby.
- Choose your health care provider.
- Ask your health care provider what you can do to have a healthy pregnancy.
- Sign up for a prenatal program.
- Make healthy changes as early as you can.
- Learn about pregnancy. You can read books or information on the web. See the suggestions on [page 101](#).
- Talk to friends and family members who are pregnant or have had a baby.
- Think about how you were raised and how you want to raise your baby.
- Think about how you want to feed your baby. For more information, read “Feeding Your Baby: So... You Have a Decision to Make”: [https://babyfriendlynl.ca/app/uploads/2018/07/Feeding-your-baby\\_2015.pdf](https://babyfriendlynl.ca/app/uploads/2018/07/Feeding-your-baby_2015.pdf)
- Talk to your partner or support person about your feelings.
- Talk to your partner or support person about the kind of parent that you both want to be.
- Find out about supports and services in your community.



# Second Trimester (4 to 6 months of pregnancy)

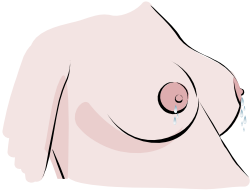
## Your Growing Baby

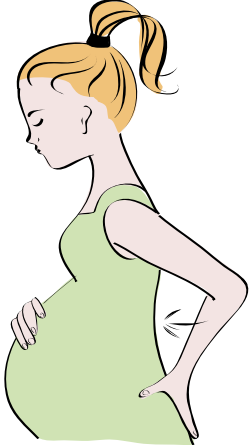
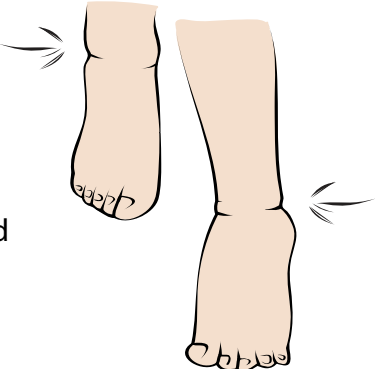


By the end of the second trimester:

- Your baby will be about 36 cm long (14 inches) and weigh 1 kilogram (2 pounds).
- The eyes can open and the eyebrows and lashes appear.
- The heartbeat is stronger and can be heard by your health care provider.
- You can feel your baby moving.
- Your baby can suck their thumbs and hiccup.
- The teeth develop inside the gums.
- Soft, fine hair is growing on the body.
- A white coating (vernix) begins to cover your baby's body.

# Changes You May Feel

| What to expect                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | What to do                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>You begin to feel closer to your baby and more interested in what the baby is doing.</p> <p>You feel the baby move inside you.</p> <p>It may feel like fluttering, bubbles, or like the baby is gently poking you.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get to know your baby.</li> <li>• Enjoy the feeling.</li> <li>• Take note of the first day you felt your baby move. Tell your health care provider.</li> <li>• Tell your partner when the baby is moving. Place your partner's hand on your belly to also feel your baby's movements.</li> <li>• Both you and your partner can talk to your unborn child through your belly. You can also read stories and sing songs.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Fluid may leak from your breasts.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear breast pads in your bra.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p>The colour of your cheeks on your face may change. This is caused by the hormones of pregnancy. These changes will slowly fade after the baby is born.</p>                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear a hat.</li> <li>• Use a sunblock with at least SPF 15 when you go outside.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>You may have throbbing legs and swollen veins. This is caused by the pressure of the growing baby.</p>                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk to help the blood flow in your legs. Do not cross your legs when you are sitting down.</li> <li>• Put your feet up when you can.</li> <li>• Use support stockings.</li> <li>• Do not wear knee high socks or stockings.</li> <li>• Avoid tight clothing.</li> <li>• Tell your health care provider.</li> </ul>                                                                                                               |
| <p>You may feel less sick and less tired. Your body is getting used to being pregnant. You may have to pass urine less often. Your growing baby is moving off your bladder.</p>                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy this time.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

| What to expect                                                                                                                                                                                             | What to do                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Your gums bleed more easily.</p>                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brush and floss your teeth every day. See a dentist at least once during your pregnancy. Remember to tell the dentist that you are pregnant.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p>You may feel low back pain. This is caused by your growing tummy and loose joints.</p>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flatten your lower back by pulling in your stomach and buttocks. This is called the pelvic tilt.</li> <li>• Wear shoes with low heels.</li> <li>• Avoid standing for long periods of time.</li> <li>• Use correct posture to lift and carry objects.</li> <li>• Have a massage if you enjoy it.</li> <li>• Do some stretching exercises.</li> </ul> |
| <p>You may have hard dry bowel movements. This is called constipation. This is caused by hormones and by pressure of the growing baby on the bowels.</p>                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink at least 9 ½ cups (1 cup = 250 mL) of fluids a day, mostly water.</li> <li>• Eat more foods that are high in fibre such as – whole grain foods, prunes, bran, etc.</li> <li>• Do activities such as walking or swimming.</li> <li>• Tell your health care provider.</li> </ul>                                                                |
| <p>You may have swollen ankles and hands. This is caused by extra fluid in your body and slower blood circulation.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put your feet up.</li> <li>• Sleep on your left side.</li> <li>• Do not lie on your back.</li> <li>• Avoid long periods of sitting or standing.</li> <li>• Do not cross your legs at the knee.</li> <li>• Avoid tight clothing.</li> <li>• Tell your health care provider.</li> </ul>                                                               |
| <p>Your interest in sex may change because you are feeling less tired and less sick.</p>                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your partner about your feelings.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

# Getting to Know Your Baby

This is the time for you and your partner to get to know your growing baby. At the start of your pregnancy, your baby may not seem real to you. For most people, this changes when they feel the baby move or hear the heartbeat. Enjoy this special time!

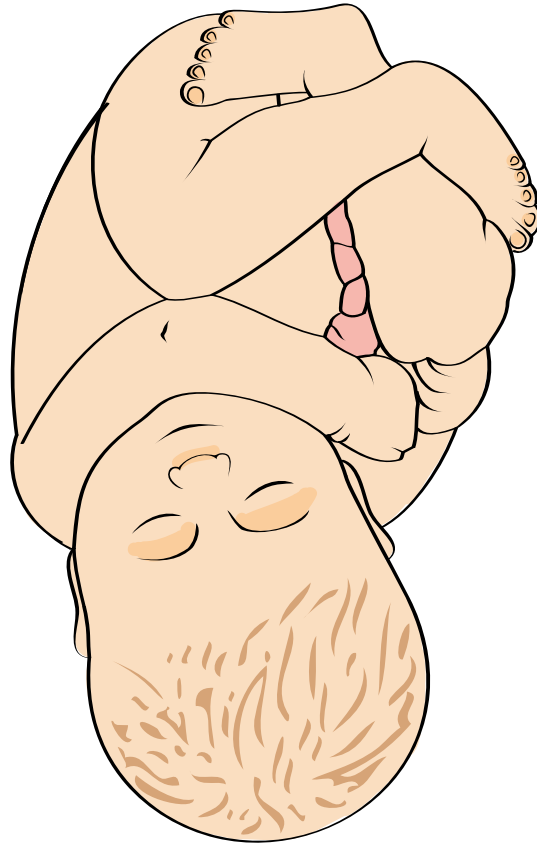
## What you and your partner can do:

- Place your hands on your belly when you can feel your baby's movements.
- Talk to your unborn child. You can read stories, sing songs, or just talk to your baby. As early as 21 weeks of the pregnancy, your baby can hear your voice.
- Think about what your baby may be doing. Is your baby moving their arms and legs, or sucking a thumb?
- Notice when your baby moves and what you are doing at that time.
- Think about names for your baby.
- Start thinking about the things that you will need for your baby.
- Go to your prenatal appointments and any tests for you or your baby.
- Think about how you want to feed your baby. For more information, read "Feeding Your Baby: So... You Have a Decision to Make": [https://babyfriendlynl.ca/app/uploads/2018/07/Feeding-your-baby\\_2015.pdf](https://babyfriendlynl.ca/app/uploads/2018/07/Feeding-your-baby_2015.pdf)
- Sign up and go to prenatal classes.
- Prepare the stuff the baby will need at the hospital and once home.
- Talk with others about what it is like for you to be expecting your baby.



# Third Trimester (7 to 9 months of pregnancy)

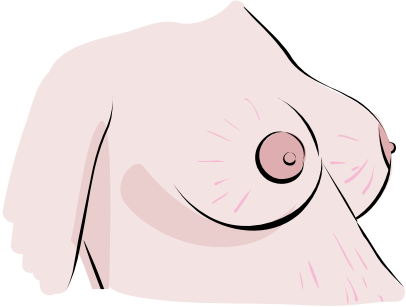
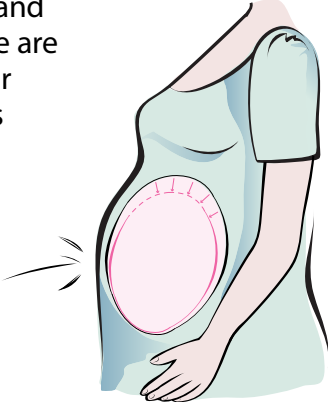
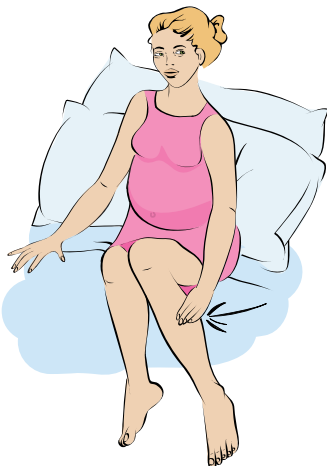
## Your Growing Baby

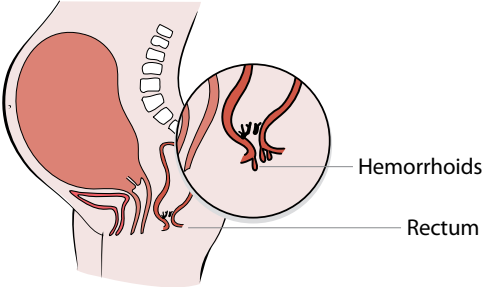


By the end of the third trimester:

- Your baby will be about 51 cm long (20 inches) and weigh 3.5 kilograms (7.5 pounds).
- The skin becomes less wrinkled as the baby gains weight.
- Your baby hears sounds, such as your voice.
- Your baby may not be as active, but will still kick and wiggle often.
- Your baby may move into a head-down position, getting ready to be born.
- Your baby's head has hair.
- Your baby's brain, lungs, and other organs continue to develop.
- Your baby responds to light.
- The sex organs are developed.

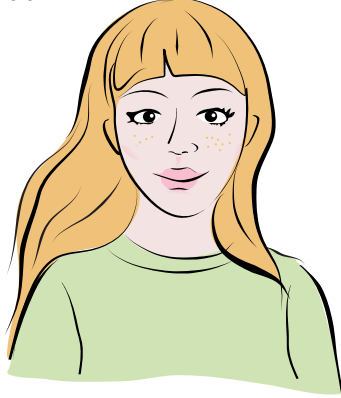
# Changes You May Feel

| What to expect                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | What to do                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>You may have stretch marks on your tummy and breasts. They may feel itchy. This is caused by stretching of your skin.</p>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a lotion or skin cream to help with the itching.</li> <li>• Do not use lotion or skin cream on the nipple area unless recommended by your health care provider.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>You may feel your uterus tighten all over and then relax. These are called pre-labour or Braxton-Hicks contractions (see <a href="#">page 55</a>)</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk around.</li> <li>• Relax and take deep breaths.</li> <li>• If they do not go away, call your health care provider.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p>You may feel pain in your legs (leg cramps).</p>                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put your feet up.</li> <li>• Stretch your leg by bending your ankle and pointing your toes towards your nose.</li> <li>• Make sure you get enough calcium. Eat foods that are high in calcium, such as cheese, tofu, and yogurt.</li> <li>• If your leg is swollen or the pain does not go away, see your health care provider right away.</li> </ul> |

| What to expect                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | What to do                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>You may have a burning feeling in your chest and throat (heartburn). This is caused by the growing baby pressing on your stomach.</p>                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat foods that are less spicy and not fried.</li> <li>• Drink fluids between meals instead of with meals.</li> <li>• Eat smaller amounts of food. Eat more often.</li> <li>• Stay upright after eating.</li> <li>• Rest or sleep with lots of pillows under your head and upper body.</li> <li>• If the pain does not go away, call your health care provider.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care provider before taking any medication.</li> </ul>                                           |
| <p>You may get hemorrhoids (swelling in or around your anus) and have hard dry bowel movements. This is called constipation. Hemorrhoids and constipation are caused by the growing baby pressing on your bowels.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat more foods that are high in fibre, such as whole grain breads, prunes, bran, etc.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Walk around.</li> <li>• Do not sit or stand for a long time.</li> <li>• Sleep on your left side.</li> <li>• Put your feet up when you are sitting.</li> <li>• Do your Kegel exercises. See <a href="#">page 39</a>.</li> <li>• Avoid straining or pushing hard when you are having a bowel movement.</li> <li>• Tell your health care provider.</li> </ul> |
| <p>You may feel shortness of breath. This is caused by the pressure of the growing baby against your lungs. Toward the end of the third trimester, your baby will move lower and your breathing will get easier.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sleep with your head propped on 2 or more pillows.</li> <li>• Wear clothing that is loose around your chest and tummy.</li> <li>• Stand up straight.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

## What to expect

You may begin to feel anxious about labour and birth. You may be tired of being pregnant. You may also be looking forward to giving birth and meeting your baby. You may be wondering what it will feel like to be holding your baby in your arms.



## What to do

- Distract yourself by getting things ready for the baby.
- Talk to your health care provider about your concerns.
- Talk to your partner about your feelings.

You may need to pass urine more often. This is caused by your baby pressing on your bladder.

You may notice that urine leaks when you sneeze, laugh, or cough.



- If it hurts or smells bad when you pass urine, call your health care provider.
- Try Kegel exercises. See [page 39](#)

Your interest in sex may change. Your interest in sex may not change. Both are ok. Talk with your partner.



- Talk to your partner or your support person about your feelings.
- If sex is painful, talk to your health care provider.

# Getting Ready for Your Baby

This is a good time to start getting ready for labour and birth and to bring your baby home.

## What you and your partner can do:

- Talk to other mothers about their labour and birth.
- Talk to other parents about how they got ready for their first few weeks at home.
- Talk to your health care provider about what your labour and birth may be like.
- Talk to your partner about their role in supporting you during labour.
- Go on a tour of the hospital or birth centre.
- Make a list of the things your baby will need. Ask friends or family if they have things you can borrow. Buy the things your baby will need, a few at a time.
- Prepare a safe place for your baby to sleep. For at least the first 6 months, share the same room with your baby. Place the crib, bassinet or cradle next to your bed.
- Arrange for family or friends to help out during the first few weeks at home.
- During pregnancy and after your baby's birth, keep a list of all the people who offered to help.
- Learn why babies cry and what can be done to soothe them. Refer to [Comforting Your Baby](#) on [page 67](#).
- Learn about breastfeeding. See [page 63](#) for more information.
- Find out about taking time off work.
- Prepare a budget for all the extra baby's expenses.
- Continue to be physically active and to eat healthy foods.
- Rest when you can. Ask for help if you need it.
- Learn about services and community programs in your area that help new parents (drops-ins, breastfeeding support, dads' group, food banks, community closets, etc.).



- Ask what the hospital or birth centre will provide and what you need to bring with you. Pack a small suitcase or bag 3 to 4 weeks before your due date.

## What to Pack Before Going to the Hospital/Birthing Centre

### For You

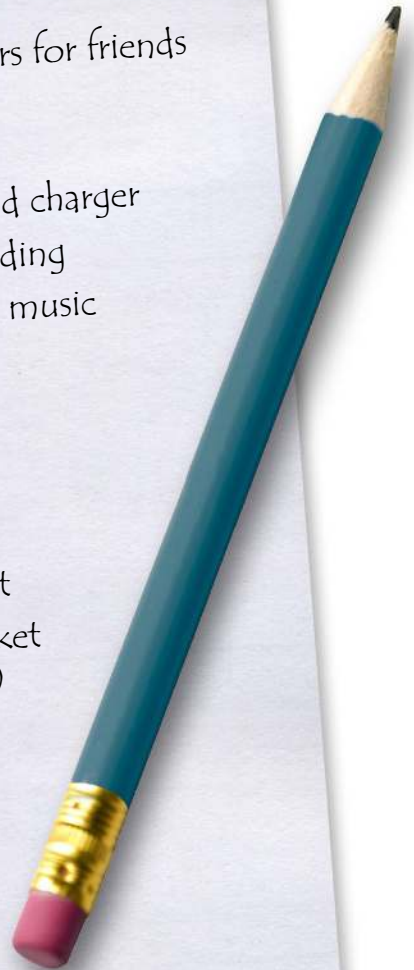
- ☐ Health card
- ☐ Pen and paper
- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ Nursing bra or good support bra
- ☐ Toiletries (toothbrush, hairbrush, lip balm, hairdryer etc.)
- ☐ Sanitary pads
- ☐ Nightgown, slippers and robe
- ☐ Loose fitting clothes for the trip home
- ☐ Plastic hospital registration card, if you have one
- ☐ Money for vending machines, hospital cafeteria or hospital parking
- ☐ Phone numbers for friends and family
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Cell phone and charger
- ☐ Very light reading
- ☐ Your favorite music

### For Your Baby's Trip Home

- ☐ Approved car seat
- ☐ Undershirt
- ☐ Diapers and wipes
- ☐ Sleeper
- ☐ Socks or booties
- ☐ Hat
- ☐ Sweater
- ☐ Thin blanket
- ☐ Warm blanket (for winter)

### For your partner or support person

- ☐ Pajamas or comfortable clothes
- ☐ Toiletries
- ☐ Money
- ☐ Cell phone and charger
- ☐ Book and music





## Labour and Birth

The way labour begins and what happens during labour is different for each person. It is normal to feel nervous, afraid, excited, happy, and sad all at once!

In this section, you will learn:

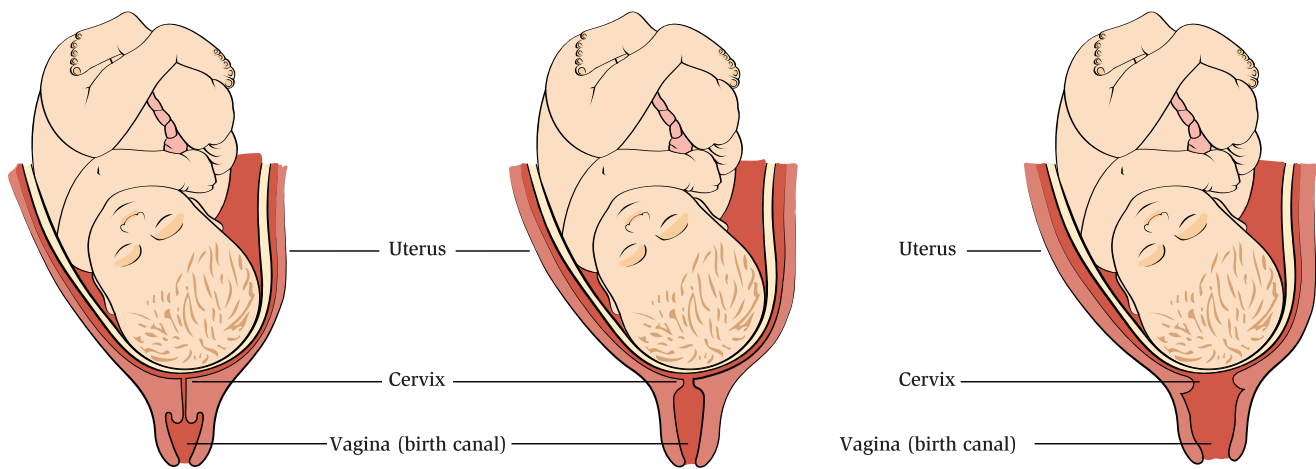
- (1) How to tell if you are in labour.  
When to go to the hospital.
- (2) The four stages of labour.  
Positions and tips to help you cope.
- (3) The medical procedures your health care provider may use.

# What is Labour?

Labour is the work your uterus does to help the baby come out. For many hours, your uterus will tighten (contract), rest, and then tighten (contract) again. This makes the opening of the uterus (cervix) get thinner (efface) and open (dilate).

A contraction occurs when the uterus gets tight, rests, and then gets tight again. You will feel many contractions when you are in labour. The “pain of childbirth” comes mainly from the contractions. When your cervix opens to 10 cm, your contractions and your pushing will move the baby down the birth canal (vagina) and out into the world.

## The Thinning and Opening of the Cervix



### Efface

Your cervix gets thinner (effaces) before it opens (dilates).

### Dilate

Your cervix will open (dilate) to about 10 cm (4 inches) before your baby comes out.

Labour and birth is a natural and important process for your body. Your hormones are preparing your body and your baby for the transition from the womb to the outside world. Trust the process.

## How long does labour last?

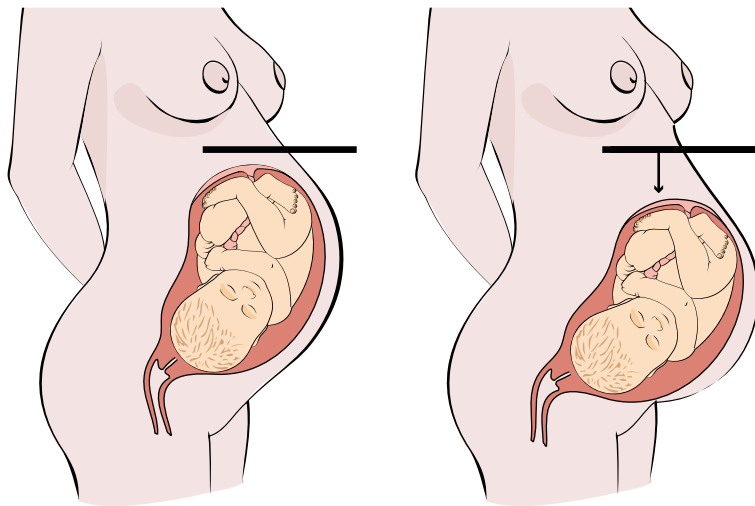
Prepare yourself for the work of labour and be flexible with your plans as it is also unpredictable. Every labour and birth is different. It is hard to know how long your labour will last. For a first baby, labour may last 12 to 20 hours. For more information, see Pathway to a Healthy Birth at <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/maternal-health/pathway-to-a-healthy-birth-booklet.pdf>.

# Signs of Labour

There are some normal signs that tell you that your labour may begin soon. Most people go into labour within a week of their due date. If you have signs of labour before you are 37 weeks pregnant, go to the hospital right away.

## (1) Lightening

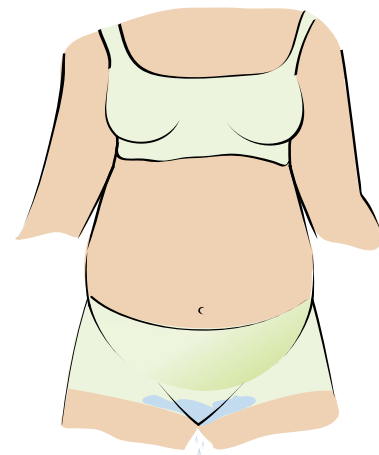
Near the end of your pregnancy, your baby will move down. When this happens you will be able to breathe better. You will feel less burning in your chest and throat after you eat. You will have to pass urine more often. If this is your first baby, this may happen 2 to 3 weeks before you go into labour. If this is not your first baby, this may not happen until closer to the time you will give birth.



Baby drops lower near the end of pregnancy.

## (2) Mucous Plug

While you are pregnant, you have a thick mucous plug in your cervix. As the baby's birth gets closer, your cervix begins to thin and open, and the plug may come out. If this happens you will notice thick mucous on your underwear, or in the toilet, or you may not notice it at all.



## (3) Bloody Show

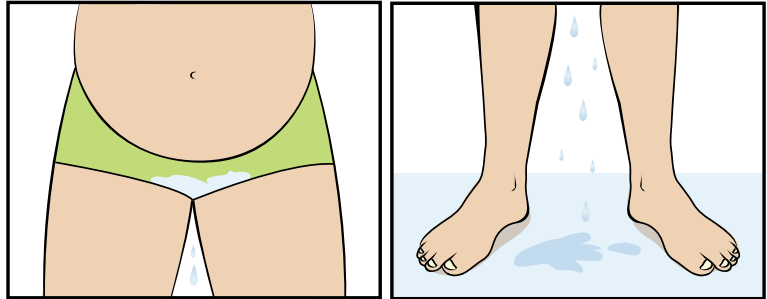
You may notice a pink, red, or brown discharge a few days before labour or during labour. This is called bloody show. It is a sign of your cervix changing shape and the mucous plug coming out. Tell your health care provider when this happens.

#### (4) Bag of Water Breaks

Your baby is inside a bag of water (amniotic sac) in your uterus. When the baby is ready to be born it is normal for the bag of water to break. This may happen before labour starts, early in labour or when the baby is almost ready to be born. When it happens, you may have a little or a lot of water leaking from your vagina. You may not know whether this is water from your uterus or urine. If you are not sure, call your health care provider.

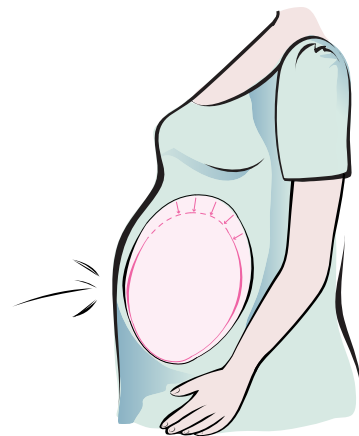
When your bag of water breaks:

- Write down the time that your bag of water broke.
- Look at the colour of the water (it should be clear).
- Notice if there is a smell (it should not smell).
- Do not use a tampon – use a pad in your underwear or towel if needed.
- Call your health care provider or hospital for instructions.



#### (5) Contractions

Late in your pregnancy you may have contractions (uterus tightens, rests, and tightens again) that are very strong. They may come and go for hours or days and then stop. These contractions are helping your womb (uterus) get ready for birth and are called pre-labour or Braxton-Hicks contractions. The chart below will help you know when you are really in labour.



| Pre-labour contractions    | True labour contractions             |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Do not get stronger.       | Get stronger.                        |
| Do not become regular.     | Become regular and closer together.  |
| Go away with walking.      | Get stronger when you walk.          |
| Feel strongest in front.   | May begin in back and move to front. |
| There is no bloody show.   | Bloody show is usually present.      |
| Tend to go away with rest. |                                      |

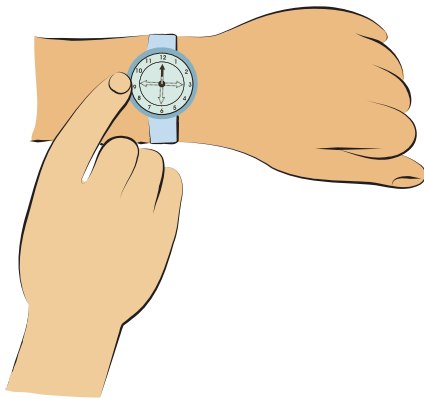
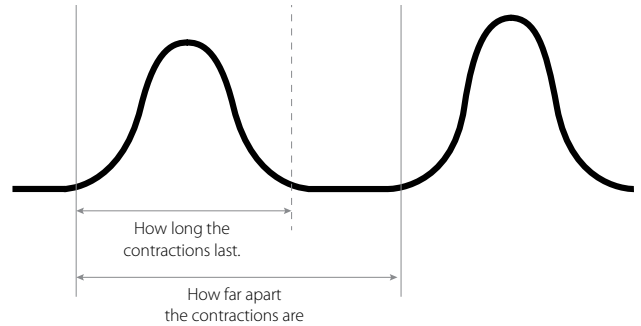
# How to Time Your Contractions?

By learning how to time your contractions, you will know when you are in true labour. Time your contractions when the contractions come closer together and/or the contractions get stronger or when your water breaks.

- It is also helpful to time for at least 3 contractions in a row to see what the pattern is.

Write down:

- When each contraction begins and ends.
- How far apart the contractions are.
- How long each contraction lasts.
- How strong the contractions feel.



Use a clock or watch with a second hand. To find out how long the contraction lasts, start timing from the beginning of the contraction to the end of the same contraction.

To find out how far apart contractions are, time the beginning of one contraction to the beginning of the NEXT contraction.

## Labour Record

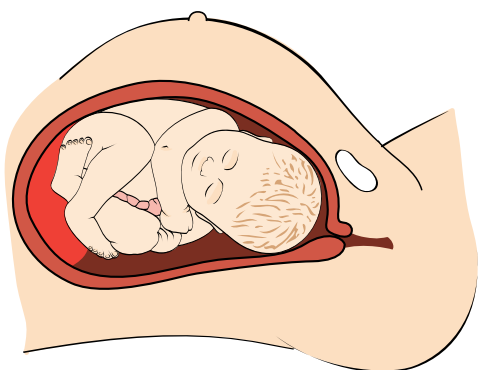
| Start Time | Stop Time | Length of Contraction | Frequency of Contractions |
|------------|-----------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
|            |           |                       |                           |
|            |           |                       |                           |
|            |           |                       |                           |
|            |           |                       |                           |
|            |           |                       |                           |
|            |           |                       |                           |
|            |           |                       |                           |
|            |           |                       |                           |
|            |           |                       |                           |

## When Should You Go to the Hospital?

- If you are bleeding from your vagina.
- Have a plan in place about when you need to leave for the hospital in your area. Timing your contractions will be important in making this plan. Talk to your health care provider.
- When your water breaks (if recommended by your health care provider).

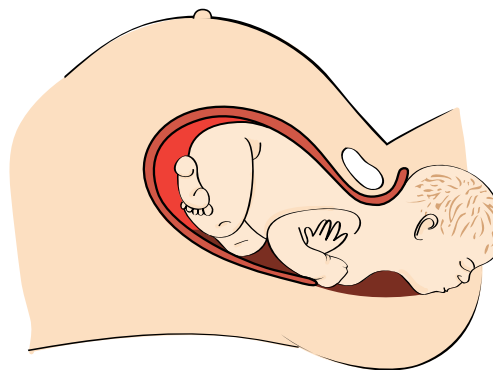
It's best to labour at home during early labour. Resting, taking a shower, going for a walk or watching a movie are all great ways to cope with early labour.

## The Four Stages of Labour



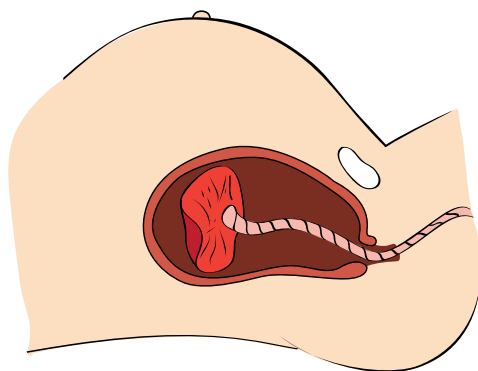
### Stage 1: Labour

Your contractions will slowly get stronger. They will happen more often and last longer. By the end of this stage your cervix will be thinner (effaced) and will open (dilate) to 10 cm. Your baby will move down into your pelvis.



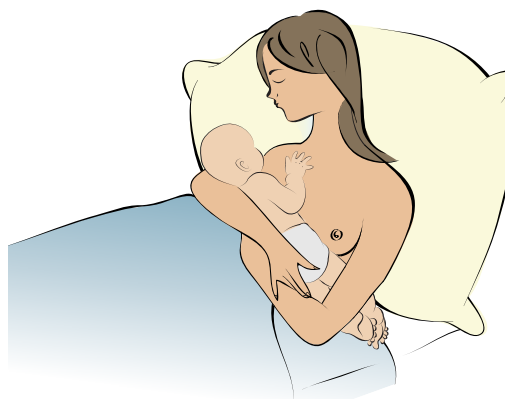
### Stage 2: Birth of Baby

You will have more contractions. They will be very strong. You will feel the need to push. Your baby will be born.



### Stage 3: Release of Placenta

During this stage you will be pushing your placenta out.



### Stage 4: Recovery

During this stage you will be resting after all your effort during labour and birth. You will be spending time with your baby. Skin-to-skin contact with your baby will help you bond with your baby and will keep your baby warm. It will help your baby find your breast and latch on to your nipple. This is a good time to start breastfeeding.

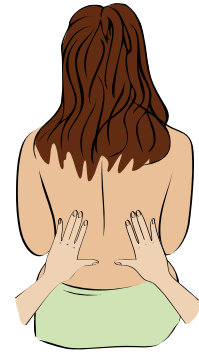
# Things to Help You During Labour

Here are some tips that you can use to stay comfortable during labour. By learning to relax, you will stay more comfortable. It helps your baby to move down into the birth canal.

Use the special breathing that you learned in prenatal class or ask someone to show you.



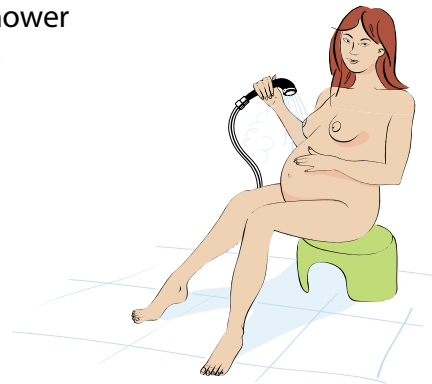
Ask your support person to massage different parts of your body. If your lower back hurts, ask your support person to apply steady pressure on your lower back.



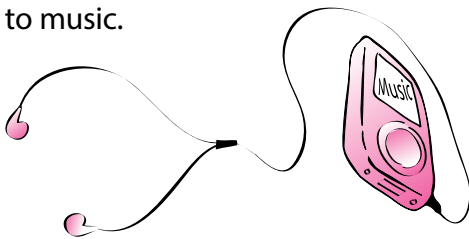
Try to find something to look at or think about during your contractions.



Have a shower or a bath.



Listen to music.



Go to the toilet to pass urine at least every hour.



Drink juice or water, or chew on ice chips.  
Eat small amounts of food.



Some people want medications to help reduce the pain. Talk to your health care provider about the kinds of pain medications that might help. Ask questions about the benefits and risks to you and your baby, as well as the alternatives, so that you can make an informed decision about using them or not.

# Positions

It is important to change positions during labour. Doing so will help you to stay comfortable and will help your baby move down. Try some of these positions to find the ones you like.

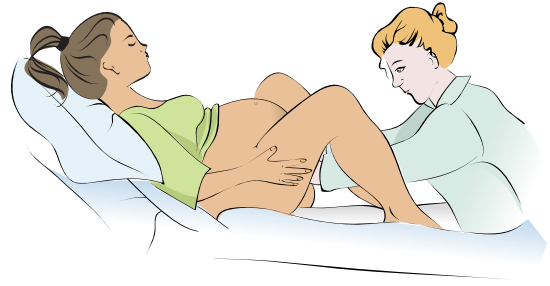


# Medical Procedures

Sometimes babies need some help to be born. Here are some medical procedures that your health care provider may use. Talk with your health care provider about these during your prenatal visits. This will help you to be aware of the risks and benefits, for you and your baby, of each procedure as well as the alternatives so you can make an informed decision during labour.

## Induction

- Ways to start your labour such as special medication.
- Labour may be induced because the baby is overdue, the bag of water breaks but there are no contractions, or for special health reasons.



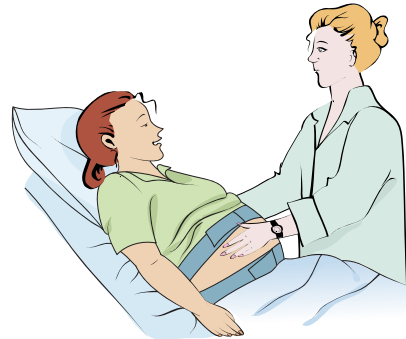
## Pain Medication

- Intravenous Infusion (IV) may be used to give you fluids, medication, or pain medication through your arm.
- An Epidural may be used to give you pain medication through your back.



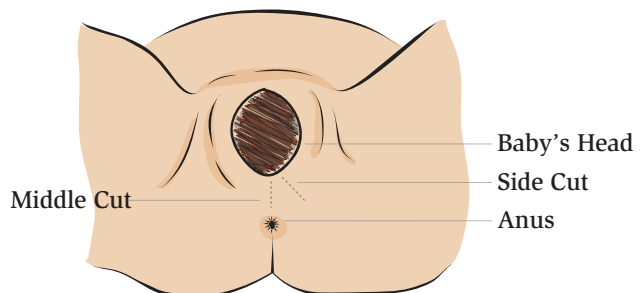
## Fetal Monitoring

- During labour, your baby's heart rate will be listened to.
- Your health care provider will use a hand-held stethoscope called a Doppler.
- A machine called a "fetal monitor" may be used to listen to the baby's heartbeat.
- Monitoring also includes recording and measuring the contractions.



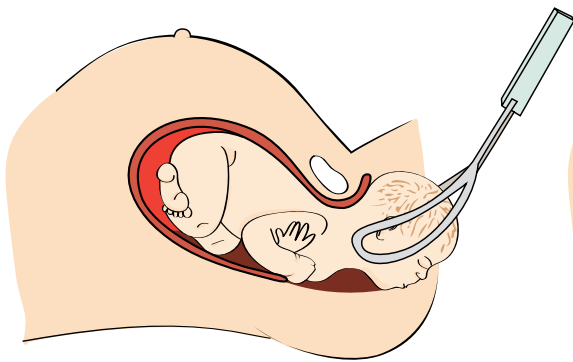
## Episiotomy

- This is a small cut to make the opening of the vagina bigger.
- An episiotomy is not a routine part of labour.
- Freezing is usually given first.
- You will need to have stitches.

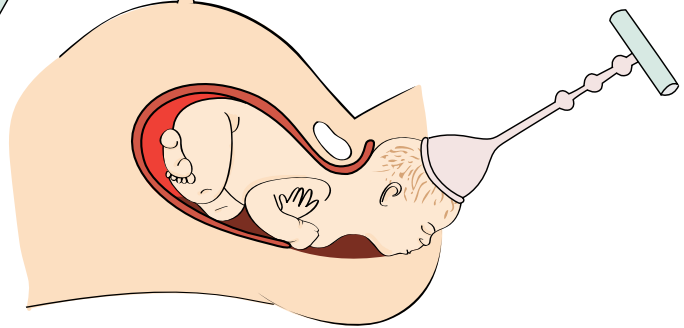


## Forceps and Vacuum Extraction

- Forceps are a spoon-like tool that fits around the baby's head.
- Vacuum extraction uses a soft cup that fits on top of the baby's head and is attached to a machine.
- They are used when:
  - The baby is not in a good position to be born.
  - The baby needs to be born quickly.
  - You are very tired and can't push any more.



Forceps



Vacuum Extraction

## Caesarean Birth (C-section)

- This involves the baby being born through a cut in your abdomen and uterus.
- There are many reasons why a C-section may be done:
  - The baby is very big.
  - The baby is lying with its legs down instead of its head.
  - Special health reasons.
  - Problems with the umbilical cord or placenta.
  - The baby needs to be born quickly.
  - Labour is not progressing normally.
- Having a caesarean birth may be unexpected. Your health care provider will let you know if a C-section is needed to help your baby be born safely.



## After Your Baby is Born

As a parent you need to create a loving, safe, and healthy home for your baby. In this section you will learn:

- (1) About feeding your baby.
- (2) How to comfort your baby.
- (3) About baby care.
- (4) When to get help for your baby.
- (5) How to keep your baby safe.

# Feeding Your Baby

Breastfeeding is an important thing you can do for your baby and yourself. For the first 6 months, breastmilk is all your baby needs. After 6 months, you can start adding other foods while breastfeeding to 2 years or more.

## Breastfeeding is healthy for your baby:

- Provides the best food that is always fresh and ready.
- Reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Helps prevent an upset tummy and constipation.
- Provides closeness and warm touch from mom.
- Promotes good health and brain development.
- Protects against illnesses (e.g., coughs and colds, ear infection, type 1 diabetes, etc.)
- Helps protect against allergies.
- Helps to promote proper jaw and tooth development.
- Protects from becoming overweight.



## Breastfeeding is healthy for you:

- Helps your uterus return to its normal size more quickly.
- Lowers your risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and diabetes.
- Saves you time and money.
- Helps you bond with your baby and make you feel happier.

## Start breastfeeding as soon as your baby is born

- Ask your health care provider to place your baby on your tummy as soon as baby is born.
- Baby will be naked, their back will be wiped dry and your health care provider may put a diaper on your baby and a blanket over both of you to keep you warm.
- Your baby will slowly adjust to where they are and will start moving towards your breast. It may take time (around 1 hour) and you may need to help your baby a little bit to reach your breast and find your nipple. Baby will try to latch on.

- Many babies are able to latch on and feed well soon after birth. Keep your baby skin-to-skin until finished the first feed, or as long as you wish.
- If you are not well enough to hold your baby skin-to-skin right away, your baby can be placed skin-to-skin with your partner or support person if you wish. If your baby is not well enough to be placed skin-to-skin the moment baby is born, begin as soon as you can.

Holding your baby skin-to-skin will help your baby:

- Feel less stress from being born.
- Adjust to life outside your womb.
- Be calmer.
- Breathe better.
- Have normal blood sugar.
- Stay warmer.



Enjoy your first moments together. Continue to hold your baby skin-to-skin as often and as long as you can even after you leave the hospital and go home. Skin-to-skin is a great way to bond with your baby, encourage your baby to breastfeed, soothe your baby when upset, and lessen their pain during vaccination or other painful procedures. Skin-to-skin also benefits your baby if you are not breastfeeding.



## Getting a good latch

Some mothers find that their nipples feel tender as mother and baby learn to breastfeed. The two most common reasons for sore nipples are poor positioning and/or poor latch. These problems can be solved. Find good breastfeeding support to help you.

There are many breastfeeding positions. Find the one that you and your baby prefer. Be sure that your baby is latched deeply onto your breast and not just taking your nipple into their mouth.

If you are feeling pain or if you feel your baby is not breastfeeding well, get some help right away. You can phone HealthLine 811 or check out [BabyFriendlyNL.ca](https://www.babyfriendlynl.ca) or the Le Leche League <https://www.lllc.ca/find-group-newfoundland-labrador>.

## Your newborn will need to feed often

Your newborn's stomach is very small. This is why you need to breastfeed often both day and night. Expect to feed your newborn 8 times or more in 24 hours. As your baby grows, they will be able to drink more breastmilk at a feeding.

You need to breastfeed your baby whenever they seem hungry. Watch for early feeding signs. Baby might:

- Move their lips as if they are sucking.
- Put their hands up to their mouth.
- Suck their fists or fingers.
- Turn their head from side to side while opening their mouth.
- Turn toward your breast.

Crying is a very late sign that your baby is hungry. Your baby may be too upset to feed well. You will have to calm your baby before breastfeeding.



## Most mothers make more than enough milk for their babies

The amount of milk depends on how often and how well your baby feeds on the breast. Your body will make more milk when your baby breastfeeds more often and has a good latch and suck. Start breastfeeding as soon as your baby is born. Learn your baby's hunger cues and feed as often as your baby wants.

## Breastfeeding gives you a lot of freedom

You can breastfeed your baby anywhere, and anytime. You have the right to breastfeed anywhere in public. This can be at a restaurant, in the park, on the bus, at a shopping mall etc. You do not have to cover-up with a blanket if you do not want to.

Breastfeeding saves you time. You do not spend time washing and sterilizing feeding equipment. Your milk is also at the perfect temperature for your baby.



## Breastfeeding mothers can eat all foods

There is no special diet while breastfeeding. Enjoy a variety of foods and follow Canada's Food Guide. Follow your thirst to know how much to drink. Water is the best choice.

See [page 20](#) for information on limiting herbal teas, energy drinks, and sources of caffeine. Foods you eat are rarely a cause of your babies crying and fussiness. For more information see the [Breastfeeding Handbook](#) at Baby Friendly NL.

## Breastfeeding mothers who smoke can breastfeed

Even if you smoke, breastfeeding is still the healthiest choice for your baby. If you can, try to cut down on smoking or quit. It is best to smoke after you breastfeed your baby. Smoke outdoors while the baby is left inside with family or friends. If you have smoked, wash your hands and change your outer clothing before holding your baby. For information, refer to [page 102](#) under Support to Quit Smoking.

## Fathers, partners, family and friends can help with breastfeeding

They can:

- Change the diaper before feeding.
- Bring the baby to be breastfed.
- Burp the baby afterwards.
- Offer you a glass of water while you are breastfeeding. Also, keep you company when you breastfeed.
- Encourage you to keep breastfeeding.
- Find breastfeeding help if needed.
- Attend breastfeeding support groups or drop-ins with you.
- Encourage you to rest when you need it.
- Reduce the distractions such as answering the phone or doorbell, entertain visitors, take care of sibling, etc.



For more information on breastfeeding, refer to the [Breastfeeding Handbook](#) from Baby Friendly NL.

If feeding your baby breastmilk substitute (infant formula) is medically indicated or you have made a decision to feed your baby formula, please contact your public health nurse/provider to help you learn how to prepare, store and transport formula, and to feed your baby safely.

# Comforting Your Baby

In the first year of life, parenting is about comforting your baby and making sure they are safe. Your baby will feel loved and safe if you comfort your baby when startled, scared, or upset. You will not spoil your baby by holding them. Your baby wants to be close to you. Being close to your baby may be enough to calm them.

Your baby may be happy one minute and then start crying the next minute. Crying means your baby needs something. Your baby may be hungry, tired, wet, cold, hot or just want to be held. Try to respond before your baby is crying loudly. If your baby has been crying a lot they will be harder to comfort. Learn the early signs that your baby needs something. For example, when baby is too tired they may rub their eyes, whine more, lose interest and yawn. See [page 65](#) for early feeding signs.



## When your baby is crying or fussy:

- Try breastfeeding your baby.
- Always respond kindly and gently.
- Place a fussy infant skin-to-skin on your chest. The warmth and close contact will likely help to calm the baby. Always be sure that the nose is clear and that the baby breathe easily.
- Check to see if your baby needs a clean diaper.
- Check to see if your baby is too hot or too cold.
- Try carrying or rocking the baby using very gentle movements.
- Take your baby to a quiet room and turn off the lights.
- Play soft music, talk, sing or stroke your baby's forehead.  
Avoid loud, sudden noises.
- Give your baby a warm bath or massage.
- Show your baby bright, colourful objects.
- Take your baby for a walk outside.

### If you are feeling upset because your baby is crying:

Some babies cry more than others. All babies have times in their first few months when they cry more often. Sometimes nothing you do will calm your baby. If you are feeling upset:

- Put your baby in a crib, cradle or bassinet and leave the room.
- Ask someone you trust to hold the baby for you while you take a break.
- Talk to a friend, family member, or someone you trust about your feelings.

Never shake a baby or child. It can cause brain damage or death.

It is important to know that sometimes it may take a long time to soothe your baby. This is normal. See more at [www.purplecrying.info/what-is-the-period-of-purple-crying.php](http://www.purplecrying.info/what-is-the-period-of-purple-crying.php). If you are worried about your baby's crying talk to your health care provider, call your local community health office or visit a drop in. For more resources see [page 99](#).

## Caring for Your Baby

### Bathing

Baby's first bath is delayed for 24 hours after birth to give them time to steady their body temperature and sugar levels.

Before you leave the hospital, ask for a bath demonstration. Once at home you can also ask someone to show you and your partner how to give a bath to your baby.

Your baby does not need to be bathed every day. However, it is important that every day your baby stays clean and dry.

Bath time is another time to bond together. Your baby will enjoy your gentle touch, your voice and your closeness. Choose a time that you are both relaxed and when your baby is not hungry.

Set the temperature of your hot water at 49°C (120°F). Anything warmer, you may scald the baby.

Follow these tips to bath your baby:

- Get everything you need ready before you undress your baby: a mild unscented soap, wash cloths, diaper and supplies, baby's clothing, and a soft towel opened up on a safe surface to lay the baby on after the bath.



- Test your baby's bath water before you put them in the bath. It should feel warm, not hot. Use the inside of your wrist or your elbow to test.
- Do not add oil or liquid soap in the bath to avoid a slippery baby.
- Use soap only for the dirtiest areas. You do not need to use soap every day.
- Use clear water and a soft washcloth for bathing your baby. Start by washing the eyes, face and then move down the body.
- Shampooing is only needed once or twice a week. Use mild shampoo, rinse well and rub dry.
- Always be within arm's reach when your baby is in the water. Never leave baby alone, even for a brief moment.
- Health Canada does not recommend the use of a bath seat.
- Take your baby with you if you have to leave the room. If you need to answer your phone during bath time, pick up your baby and take them with you.
- If your baby still has the stump of the umbilical cord, ensure it does not stay wet.
- To dry baby, place them on a towel and pat dry. Pay special attention to drying skin folds.



For more information on bathing and skin care, refer to <https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/your-babys-skin> and [page 99](#) under Newborn Care.

You may also consider bathing with your baby.

In a tub of warm water, you will both relax and enjoy the extra closeness. This bonding time can also soothe your crying baby.

Follow these extra steps to make your bath time safer:

- Place your baby in a bouncy seat beside the bath or on a comfortable towel on the floor before stepping in and out of the tub. It is safer not to hold your baby. If you have a partner, ask them to hold the baby when you step in and out of the tub.
- Hold with both hands at all times.
- Rest the baby against your thighs. Your baby will enjoy facing you.
- Keep the baby warm in the water. You can use a plastic cup or a face cloth to pour water over the baby from time to time.



You or your partner can share the experience of bathing your baby for many months to come.

## Immunize your baby

Starting at two months of age, your baby will need to start their immunization schedule. Breastfeeding provides protection for your baby and immunization adds to that protection. Immunization will help your baby fight off vaccine-preventable diseases and stay healthy. It is also important for your baby to receive these vaccines in order to enter daycare.

When your baby is being immunized, breastfeeding and holding your baby skin-to-skin can help lessen the pain of the injection. Your health care provider will give you information about the vaccines and a booklet to keep track of the vaccinations your baby has had. Make sure you keep this booklet in a safe place.

For more information on immunization, refer to A Parent's Guide to Immunization at [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/iyc-vve/pgi-gpv/assets/pdf/pgi-gpv-eng.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/iyc-vve/pgi-gpv/assets/pdf/pgi-gpv-eng.pdf). To learn more about Newfoundland and Labrador's free immunization program visit: <http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/immunizations.html#infants>.

## Provide Supervised Tummy Time

Tummy time helps to prevent flat spots on your baby's head (positional plagiocephaly). It is also important to develop healthy muscles.



Below are tummy time tips:

- Start tummy time right from birth.
- Place your baby on their tummy for short periods. You can try it after a diaper change.
- You can provide tummy time when baby is tummy-down on your tummy.
- Gradually increase the time on the tummy as your baby gets older.
- Always stay close and play with baby during tummy time.
- When baby is awake, give lots of cuddle time. You want to avoid long periods in sitting positions like in the car seat, a stroller, a bouncer, etc.

Consult your health care provider if your baby develops a flat spot on their head.

### Diapering your Baby

Most newborns need about 10 to 15 diaper changes per day. Your baby needs to be dry and clean to keep skin healthy and to help prevent diaper rash.

Changing a diaper is another time for you and your baby to bond together. Make that

time special by talking, laughing, singing, caressing and playing with your baby.

When changing the diaper:

- Get everything ready before you change the diaper (e.g., diaper, wipes and towel).
- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after each change.
- Follow the manufacturer instructions for the change table and use the safety straps.
- Never leave baby alone and never turn your head away even for a brief moment.
- Clean the area with an unscented baby wipe or a wet washcloth. To better reach all the dirty areas, gently lift your baby's legs by the ankles.
- For a baby girl, always wipe from front to back and gently clean the dirty areas.
- For a baby boy, clean the dirty area from front to back and do not pull the foreskin back. Place the penis in a downward position before fastening the diaper.



- Dry the area. You can pat dry or let it air dry. There is no need to use cream, powder or cornstarch.
- Slide the open diaper under the baby while gently lifting the legs and feet.
- For a newborn, keep the diaper folded below the cord so it can dry better.
- The diaper should be snug but not tight.

For more information on steps to change a diaper visit [www.caringforkids.cps.ca/uploads/wellbeings/diaper.pdf](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/uploads/wellbeings/diaper.pdf).

## Caring for Your Baby's Nails

Baby's fingernails grow fast. They are soft, pliable and sharp. You need to trim them to prevent your baby from scratching themselves. Follow these few tips:

- Make sure you have enough light to see what you are doing.
- Cut nails when the baby is sleeping.
- Use blunt scissors or clippers to cut nails.
- Press the finger pad away from the nail to avoid nicking the skin.
- Hold your baby's hand as you clip.
- To avoid infections or hurting the baby, do not peel off nails or nibble on nails to trim them.



# Baby Safe Sleep Tips

For the first 6 months of life, place your baby's crib, cradle or bassinet next to your bed. Place your baby in an appropriate crib, cradle or bassinet that meets current Canadian safety regulations.

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep related causes of infant death also follow these important steps:

- Place baby on their back to sleep, at naptime and nighttime.
- Provide a sleep surface that is firm and flat.
- Remove pillows, comforters, quilts, stuffed animals, bumper pads, positional devices or other loose or soft bedding materials that could suffocate or smother baby.
- Dress baby in comfortable fitted one-piece sleepwear.
- Ensure that the room temperature is comfortable for everyone.
- Use a baby seat, swing, car seat, bouncer, stroller, sling, and playpen only for what they are intended. None of them are a substitute for a crib, cradle or bassinet.
- Breastfeed your infant. Any amount of breastfeeding for any duration provides a protective effect against SIDS. Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months offers greater protection.
- Protect your baby from smoke and second-hand smoke. Smoke outside. Wash your hands after smoking. No smoking at all is best for your baby but decreasing the number of cigarettes you smoke can also lower the risk of SIDS.
- Alcohol use and substance use pose a risk for SIDS and other unintended injuries in infants. It is safer to ask your partner or someone you trust to care for your infant until you are completely sober and not under the influence of substances.
- At 2 months of age, start your baby's immunizations. Vaccines are important to protect your baby's health and safety.



# Baby Safety Tips

When your baby comes home, there are important safety tips you need to know. The following tips are to keep your baby safe.

## Remember:

- Injuries are preventable. The best way to keep your baby safe is to stay close to your baby.
- You and all who care for your baby need to ensure that your baby's environment is safe at all times.
- Prevention is the most important part of safety. As baby becomes more active, baby will explore and will develop new skills. Childproofing your house is necessary to keep baby safe as they grow.

## What you can do to make your environment safer for your baby:

The tips are mostly for a newborn to a 6 months old baby.

- Always support your baby's head. The head is bigger and heavier than the body.
- Keep one hand on your baby's body at all times when they are on a high surface. For example, when changing your baby on a change table, a counter or a bed.
- Always hold your baby during feedings.
- Be sure that toys are sturdy and washable with no small parts.
- Keep small objects out of your baby's reach.



- Prevent burns. Your baby may reach out unexpectedly and burn themselves. Avoid holding the baby when you smoke, cook or drink a hot drink. Avoid sitting too close to a fireplace.
- Check for strangulation or entanglement risks. Drawstrings on clothes, any object tied to baby's clothing, necklaces, head bands, cords on toys, strings, window blinds or curtain cords, etc. can pose a risk to your baby.
- Make sure you have working smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and a fire extinguisher in the house. Always ensure any gas appliances are properly functioning.
- Keep smoke alarms on each level of your home and in each bedroom. Find smoke alarm rules here: [https://www.gov.nl.ca/fes/forms/smoke\\_alarm\\_info\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.gov.nl.ca/fes/forms/smoke_alarm_info_sheet.pdf).
- Avoid loud noises. For example, listening to loud music or high pitch noises. If you can talk over the sound, the level of the noise should be ok.
- Keep emergency phone numbers close. You can post them in an area where you can reach them quickly or enter them in your cell phone.



# Is Your Baby Equipment Safe?

If you get second-hand items, check with the manufacturer and Health Canada to know if there are recalls on those items. Ideally check before buying or accepting them. See The Recalls and Safety Alerts Database at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/index-eng.php).

The following list is a guide to ensure the baby equipment you choose is safe for your baby.

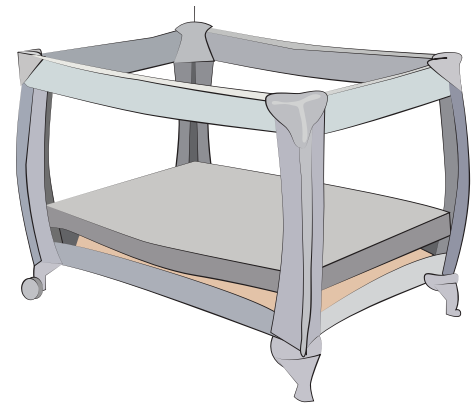
## Cribs, cradles and bassinets:

- Use a sturdy crib, cradle or bassinet that meets current Canadian safety regulations.
- Make sure it is built with screws and bolts, not hooks or clamps.
- It should have a firm flat mattress that fits snugly and a secure support system for the mattress. The mattress is too small if you can fit more than 2 fingers between the mattress and the side of the crib.
- Put it together carefully. Follow the instructions.
- Remove pillows, comforters, quilts, stuffed animals, bumper pads, positional devices or other loose or soft bedding materials that could suffocate or smother your baby.



## Playpens:

- Choose a playpen with a sturdy floor with a thin foam pad.
- Make sure it has secure hinges that cannot pinch your baby.
- It should have sides made of very fine mesh with no rips.
- Read the instructions that came with the playpen and follow any recommendations.
- Remove pillows, comforters, quilts, stuffed animals, positional devices or other loose or soft bedding materials that could suffocate or smother your baby.
- Supervise your baby at all times.



The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a crib, cradle or bassinet. Playpens are not safe substitutes for a crib.

## Strollers:

- Choose a sturdy stroller with brakes that work.
- Follow the instructions that came with the stroller.
- Do not carry an extra baby or child in a single stroller.
- Always buckle the straps.
- Remove pillows or blankets to avoid suffocation.
- Supervise your baby at all times.
- The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a crib, cradle or bassinet. Strollers are not safe substitutes for a crib.

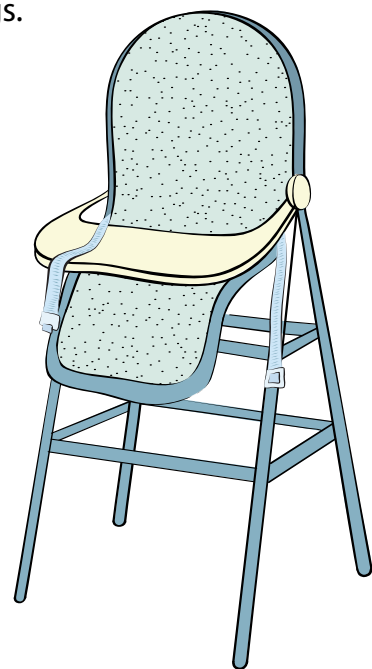


## Slings and carriers:

- Use the right size for your baby's age and size.
- Ensure you can see your baby's face at all times.
- Check your baby often.
- Avoid overheating and suffocating.  
Never zip up your coat over your baby in the sling.
- Choose a sling or carrier with safety straps and always use them.
- Make sure your baby cannot slip through the leg openings.
- Slings and carriers are not safe substitutes for a crib. The safest place in a crib, cradle or bassinet.

## High Chairs:

- Choose a high chair with a wide sturdy base and a safety belt.
- Make sure there are no sharp edges or parts on the tray that might pinch little fingers.
- Make sure there are no gaps between the tray and the back of the chair that might trap your baby's arm or head.
- Place the high chair far from the stove and kitchen counters.



## Baby Walkers:

No walkers are safe. They are banned in Canada.

## Pacifiers:

Many babies never use a pacifier. Pacifier use has risks. Talk to your health care provider so that you can make an informed decision. See [page 67](#) for strategies to soothe your baby.

If you decide to use a pacifier:

- Do not tie the pacifier ribbon or cord to your baby's clothing.
- Inspect the pacifier frequently and throw it away when it starts to wear out.
- Keep it clean to lessen your baby's chances of getting sick from germs on the pacifier.



## Curtains and blinds:

- Consider having cordless curtains.
- Keep furniture, or anything else children can climb, away from windows.
- Never leave a child alone.
- Keep window cords and blinds out of the reach of a child.
- Test your window safety devices regularly. Make sure they are working the way they should and that the release lock can be opened in case of an emergency.



## Clothes:

- Remove cords, drawstrings and ribbons.
- Do not use scarves or neck warmers.
- Check for loose buttons, loose threads or any other small part that can be a choking or strangulation hazard.
- Dress your infant in comfortable fitted one-piece sleepwear.

## Car Seats:

A car seat used correctly can save your baby's life. Car crashes are the most common injury to children.

Follow these tips when choosing the right car seat for your baby:

- Check the car seat label for date of manufacture and expiry date. If expiry date is not on the seat, read the car seat manual to find the expiration date. Note that expiration dates change from seat to seat.
- Make sure the car seat has not been involved in a car crash or dropped from a height of one metre (3 feet) or more.
- You must have all its parts and the instructions on how to use it and install it.
- Make sure the car seat has not been recalled with a safety problem. To find out, call Transport Canada 1-800-333-0371 or visit <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/index-eng.php>.
- It must display a National Safety Mark.

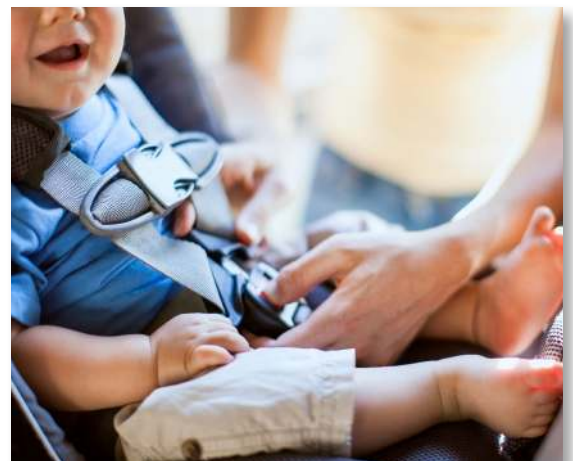
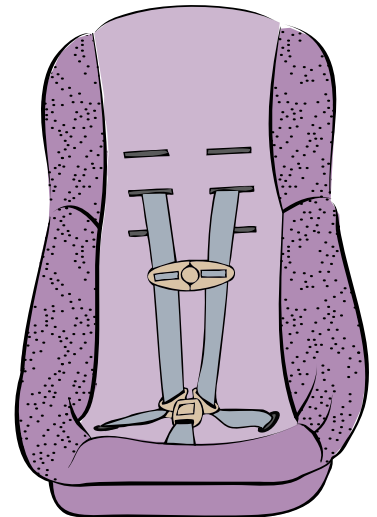


NSM sample – the unique number assigned to a company is to appear in the center of the NSM maple leaf shaped logo.

- Make sure the car seat is in good condition:
  - Free of cracks or chips in the molded plastic.
  - Free of warping, rust, or broken rivets in the frame.
  - Free of cuts, frayed edges, or broken stitches in the harness straps.
  - Free of rips in the seat's padding.
  - All the harness buckles work properly.

## Using a Car Seat:

- Place your baby in a rear-facing car seat ([https://www.cssd.gov.nl.ca/healthyiving/child\\_seats.html](https://www.cssd.gov.nl.ca/healthyiving/child_seats.html))
- Read the instructions to find out how to properly install your car seat.
- The safest place is in the back seat, but may not be the middle depending on the model of the vehicle. If the back middle seat does not have UAS clips, for example, it may be better to place the car seat behind the passenger or driver. Passenger side is recommended as it is curbside when car is parked along a street.



- The car seat's harness straps and buckles are supposed to be snug.
- Ensure that when secured, the harness strap cannot be pinched at the baby's collar bone.
- The chest clip should be at your baby's armpit level.
- Read the car seat manual to find out how the carry handle should be positioned in the vehicle for proper installation.
- Change the car seat when your baby has reached the limits as outlined in the car seat manual.

For more information, see [page 95](#) under Child Safety. To check for car seat recalls and more information contact Transport Canada at 1-800-333-0371 or visit <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/index-eng.php>.

Remember that your baby's car seat is not a safe substitute for a crib. The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a crib, cradle or bassinet.

## When to Get Help for Your Baby

If you feel something is not right, and/or if you are very worried see a health care provider right away. Do not wait. Call immediately if your baby:

- Is still having black stools at 4 days old.
- Is very sleepy and always has to be woken up to eat.
- Is hard to wake or seems very weak.
- Has a fever.
- Is breathing very quickly or has trouble breathing.
- Has lips or ear lobes that are blue or grey in color.
- Appears jaundiced or yellow in color.
- Is losing weight or not gaining weight.
- Has sunken eyes or the soft spot on top of the head is sunken.
- Has a dry mouth, lips, tongue, or nose.
- Has pale, cold, and moist skin.
- Is having a seizure (the whole body, arms, and legs are shaking).
- Vomits large quantities or forceful (projectile) vomiting twice or more per day (spit-up or bringing up small quantities of milk is normal, even at every feed).
- Has a high-pitched crying over prolonged periods and your baby has other symptoms like diarrhea or a fever. Note that babies can be extra-fussy late afternoon and evening hours. See the period of purple crying at [www.purplecrying.info](http://www.purplecrying.info).



## What You Can Expect After the Birth

The first 6 weeks after birth is known as the postpartum period. During this time, your uterus will return to almost its pre-pregnant size and shape, your milk supply is establishing to breastfeed, your body is physically healing, and your hormone levels are stabilizing.

In this section you will learn about:

- (1) Changes to your body after you had a baby.
- (2) Your changing feelings.
- (3) Having support.
- (4) When to get help.

# Changes to Your Body After Birth

There are many normal changes that will happen to your body after you have a baby.

## Afterpains

After your baby is born you may feel painful contractions as your uterus goes back to its normal size. This is normal. Your health care provider will check to make sure that this is happening. You may feel these pains the most when you breastfeed because your baby's sucking helps your uterus return to its normal size. Afterpains usually go away after a week. Call your health care provider if the afterpains do not go away or if they are very painful.

## Bleeding from your Vagina

You will have bleeding from your vagina for 2 to 6 weeks. At first, the bleeding will be heavy and dark red. In a few days the bleeding will slow down. The colour will change to brown, pink, and then to white. It is important to keep this area clean and to change your pad often. Do not use a tampon during this time.

Call your health care provider if your flow is heavier than normal, is heavier than a period, smells bad, or has large clots.

## Sore Perineum

The area between your legs may be sore or swollen. If you had stitches you may feel more pain. Try freezing a damp maxi pad and putting it in your underwear. Try sitting in a warm bath. Also, keep the area very clean by pouring warm water on the area between your legs after you pass urine or have a bowel movement. You should also do the Kegel exercises (see [page 39](#)) you learned when you were pregnant. Call your health care provider if the stitches open or if you notice smelly fluid.

## Constipation

You may find it hard to have a bowel movement after your baby is born. Eat foods high in fibre and drink lots of fluids to make the bowel movement softer and easier to pass. Call your health care provider if you are constipated for more than 3 days.

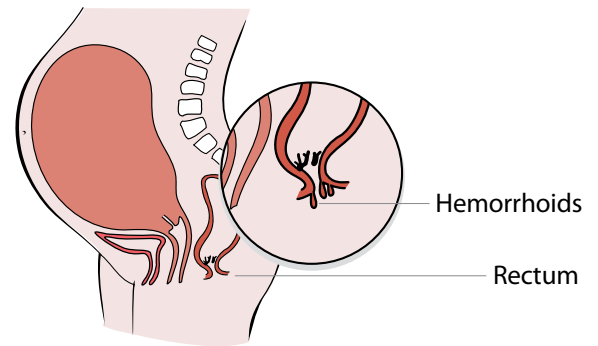
## Breasts

Your breasts will get firmer and bigger. Your breastmilk will be yellow at first (colostrum). Colostrum provides everything your baby needs. See [pages 63-66](#) for more information.



## Hemorrhoids

You can get hemorrhoids during pregnancy and after they have a baby. Eat foods high in fibre and drink lots of fluids to keep the bowel movement soft and easy to pass. Ask your health care provider about medicines that may help.



## Hard to Pass Urine

You may find it hard to pass urine for a couple of days after your baby is born. Drink lots of fluids and remind yourself to go to the toilet even if you do not feel like you have to go. If it burns or hurts when you pass urine or you really cannot pee, talk to your health care provider.



## Getting your Period

Many breastfeeders find that their period does not come back until they begin giving their baby solid foods at 6 months. Some find that their period does not return until after they stop breastfeeding. Those who do not breastfeed usually find that their period starts within 2 months after giving birth.

## Having Sex

It is safe to have sex when you feel ready. This can be after the bleeding from your vagina has stopped and the area between your legs has healed (tears or stitches have healed). The best thing is to talk to your partner about how you are feeling and what you would like. Choose activities that please both of you.

You need to see your health care provider 6 weeks after your baby is born for your check-up. Ask about birth control methods. If you are breastfeeding be sure to let your health care provider know because some birth control methods can affect breastfeeding. For more information about birth control, go to: <https://www.sexandu.ca/contraception/>

## Postnatal Physical Activity

Taking care of yourself helps you to take care of your baby. Being active after your baby is born will improve your blood flow and make you stronger. Ask your health care provider or public health nurse about activities to do after having your baby.

## If You had a Caesarean Birth

If you had a caesarean birth, you will need to take extra care and will need extra rest. Ask for help. Talk to your health care provider.

# Your Changing Feelings



The first few days and weeks after your baby is born are both exciting and tiring. You may have many new feelings.

## Baby Blues

Many new mothers feel sad or cry easily for a week or two after the baby is born. This should be better after 2 weeks. If not, talk to your health care provider. This is called having the baby blues. These feelings are normal and happen for many reasons, such as:

- Changing hormones.
- Lack of sleep.
- Not feeling sure how to care for the baby.
- Worrying about being a mother.
- Trying to do everything at once.
- Your changing relationship with your partner.

## Here are some tips to help you cope during the first few weeks:

- Learn how to care for your baby.
- Try to get as much rest as you can when you get home. Sleep when your baby sleeps.
- Limit the number of visitors and keep the visits short.
- Arrange for family and friends to help with cooking and cleaning.
- Give yourself time to adjust to your new life.
- Ask for help.
- Take time for yourself.

## Postpartum Depression

When the feelings of “baby blues” continue for a longer time and feel stronger or get worse, you may have postpartum depression.

You may be feeling:

Sad, alone, worried, or nervous. You may also feel overwhelmed, ashamed, guilty, angry, upset, or irritable. You may not enjoy being with other people (including your baby) or you may get angry very easily.

You may also:

- Be tired all the time.
- Want to sleep all the time.
- Have trouble sleeping or relaxing.
- Cry easily and for no reason.
- Have no appetite or want to eat all the time.
- Feel like your heart is beating too fast.
- Feel sweaty, numb, or tingling.
- Have a lump in your throat.
- Worry a lot about your baby.
- Feel rejected by your baby.

If these feelings last more than 2 weeks, get help right away. Talk with your health care provider or public health nurse. They will know how to help.

Some people think about hurting themselves or their baby. If you feel this way, get help right away. Go to the hospital or call your health care provider.

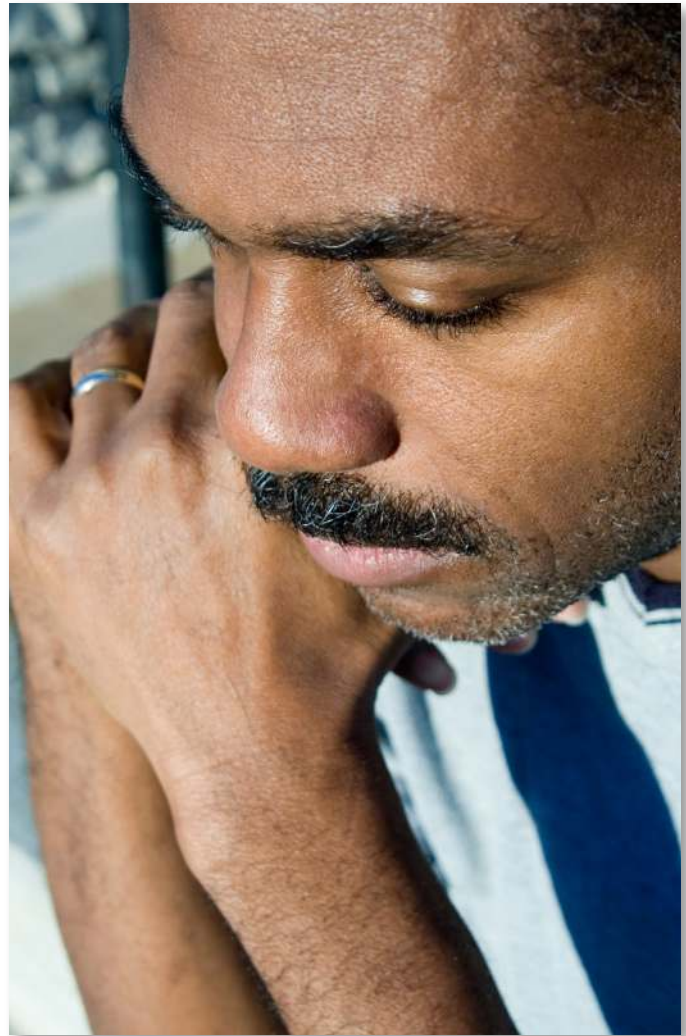
For more information, see the list of mental health resources on [page 98](#).

## Having Support

You can help a mother get the care and support they need. If you notice signs of postpartum depression, help them contact their health care provider right away.

To support the mother dealing with postpartum symptoms of depression you can:

- Know the signs and symptoms of postpartum depression.
- Offer encouragement and tell them the baby is doing great.
- Help with the care of the baby and household chores.
- Take the baby out to give them a break.
- Suggest they get outside for a walk. Go with them or have a friend join.
- Listen without judging or trying to fix the situation.
- Limit the number of visitors.
- Arrange for other people to make meals and to help in practical ways.
- Attend medical appointments and psychological follow-ups.



## What you can do for yourself

Life with a new baby is stressful for fathers/partners and other family members as well, especially if the mother becomes depressed.

It is important to take some time for yourself to do what you enjoy doing. You need a break too. Find someone to talk with. Here are some suggestions:

- Family, friends, other fathers.
- Your health care provider.
- 24-hour crisis line.
- Your local community health office.

- Community services in your area.
- Men's groups or fathers' groups in your area.

Remember that:

- Having symptoms of depression is not a weakness of character.
- It is a treatable mental condition that does not go away by itself.
- Getting help is the best thing you can do.
- You need to look after yourself.

For more information, see the section Fathers, Partners, Family and Friends on [page 96](#) and section Mental Health on [page 98](#).



## When to Get Help

See a health care provider right away if:

- There is a bad smell coming from your vagina.
- Large blood clots come from your vagina.
- The amount of blood coming from your vagina is heavier than normal.
- Blood is still coming from your vagina after 6 weeks.
- Your stitches open.
- You have a fever.
- You have signs of postpartum depression (see [page 86](#)).
- You think something is not right.





## Resources and Services

The following section provides you with helpful websites, phone numbers and services to help you answer questions you may have during your pregnancy or after the birth of your baby. The links and resources provide information on a number of topics.

# Resources List

The resources list is organized into the following topics:

- Indigenous Resources
- Abuse
- Alcohol and Drugs
- Breastfeeding
- Child Safety
- Community Resources
- Fathers, Partners, Family and Friends
- Growth and Development
- Health Care Providers
- Healthy Eating
- Labour and Birth
- Mental Health
- Mother's Health
- Newborn Care
- Newcomers to Canada
- Physical Activity
- Pregnancy
- Support to Quit Smoking

The information in this booklet, including the resources and links in this booklet, does not replace medical advice from your health care provider. Everyone is different. Consult with your health care provider to give you the medical advice and care you need.

## Indigenous Resources

---

### Indigenous Pregnancy and Alcohol Brochure

Information on alcohol and pregnancy. It includes the effects of drinking, traditional teachings about pregnancy and where to get help in Ontario.

[www.beststart.org/resources/alc\\_reduction/FASD\\_Brochure\\_A20A.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/resources/alc_reduction/FASD_Brochure_A20A.pdf)

### Be Safe: Have an Alcohol-free Pregnancy – Printer-ready Handouts

Find information and tips for expectant parents about alcohol use in pregnancy.

Available in English, French, Cree and Ojibway.

[www.en.beststart.org/for\\_parents/are-you-looking-aboriginal-parenting-resources](http://www.en.beststart.org/for_parents/are-you-looking-aboriginal-parenting-resources)

### Sacred Tobacco, Sacred Children – Video

It offers real stories from Aboriginal families who have smoke-free homes.

[www.en.beststart.org/for\\_parents/are-you-looking-aboriginal-parenting-resources](http://www.en.beststart.org/for_parents/are-you-looking-aboriginal-parenting-resources)

### You and your Baby...

Provides information on abuse and pregnancy. Available in Cree – N Dialect and Severn Ojibwe.

[www.en.beststart.org/for\\_parents/are-you-looking-aboriginal-parenting-resources](http://www.en.beststart.org/for_parents/are-you-looking-aboriginal-parenting-resources)

## Abuse

---

HRLE program for Victims of Violence: <http://www.court.nl.ca/supreme/family/violence.html>

The Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment offers support to victims of violence in Newfoundland and Labrador in the form of:

- Transportation to a shelter or other safe place
- Accommodations
- Personal allowance for the period of time spent in a shelter (based on your financial circumstances and delivered by the Department of Health and Community Services).

If you would like additional information, or would like to speak to an HRLE representative, call 1-877-729-7888 (any time of day or night).

### Family Violence Contacts

Police - 911

- RNC
  - St. John's - 709-729-8333
  - Torbay - 709-437-6782
  - Corner Brook - 709-637-4100
  - Labrador City - 709 944-7602
  - Churchill Falls - 709-925-3524
- RCMP
  - 1-800-709-7267 for province wide emergencies

Shelters (for more information, see [page 33](#) or visit <http://thanl.org/shelters/find-shelter/>)

- Iris Kirby House (St. John's) – 753-1492
- Naomi Centre (St. John's) – 579-8432
- Grace Sparks House (Marystown) -1-877-774-4957
- Cara Transition House (Gander) - 1-877-800-2272
- Corner Brook Transition House - 634-4198
- Libra House (Happy Valley-Goose Bay) – 896-3014
- Hope Haven (Labrador City) – 944-6900
- Nain Safe House – 922-1230
- Sheshatshiu Nukum Munik Shelter – 497-8869

- Natuashish Safe House – 478-2390

#### Help Lines

- Parent Help Line – 1-888-603-9100
- Kids Help Phone – 1-800-668-6868
- Mental Health Services Crisis Line – 1-888-737-4668
- Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre – 1-800-726-2743

#### Miscellaneous

- Seniors Resource Centre – 1-800-563-5599
- Victim Services – 729-7970 (provincial office)
- Public Legal Information Association of NL – 1-888-660-7788
- Labrador Aboriginal Legal Services – 896-2919
- Office of the Child and Youth Advocate – 1-877-753-3388

#### Publications and Resources

The Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador has prepared a publication entitled [Information for Victims of Family Violence](#) which may be of assistance to persons who are dealing with family violence.

#### You and Your Baby Deserve to Be Safe

Provides a self-assessment questionnaire, strategies and contact information for seeking and getting help.

[www.beststart.org/resources/anti-violence/abuse\\_bro\\_rev\\_2013.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/resources/anti-violence/abuse_bro_rev_2013.pdf)

## Alcohol and Drugs

---

#### Alcohol and Pregnancy

[http://pregnancy.sogc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/PDF\\_alcoholandpregnancy\\_ENG.pdf](http://pregnancy.sogc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/PDF_alcoholandpregnancy_ENG.pdf)

#### Be Safe: Have an Alcohol-free Pregnancy

Information and tips for expectant parents about alcohol use in pregnancy.

Available in several languages.

[www.en.beststart.org/for\\_parents/are-you-or-your-partner-pregnant](http://www.en.beststart.org/for_parents/are-you-or-your-partner-pregnant)

#### Bilingual Recipe Cards: Mocktails for Mom

Set of recipe cards for delicious non-alcoholic drinks.

[www.beststart.org/resources/alc\\_reduction/LCBO\\_recipe\\_cards\\_bro.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/resources/alc_reduction/LCBO_recipe_cards_bro.pdf)

## Crisis Support

Anyone experiencing crisis as a result of substance use and/or gambling problems may contact the Mental Health Crisis Line at 1-888-737-4668 or the Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-888-899-4357 (HELP).

## Medications and drugs before and during pregnancy

Information to know before taking any prescription or non-prescription medication, herbal remedy or drug.

[http://pregnancy.sogc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/PDF\\_medicationsanddrugsinpregnancy\\_ENG.pdf](http://pregnancy.sogc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/PDF_medicationsanddrugsinpregnancy_ENG.pdf)

## Medications and drugs while breastfeeding

Information on what you need to know before taking any prescription or non-prescription medication, natural or herbal remedy, or drug.

[http://pregnancy.sogc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/PDF\\_medicationsanddrugswhilebreastfeeding\\_ENG.pdf](http://pregnancy.sogc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/PDF_medicationsanddrugswhilebreastfeeding_ENG.pdf)

## Mixing Alcohol and Breastfeeding

To help make an informed choice when it comes to drinking alcohol while breastfeeding.

<https://resources.beststart.org/product/a21e-mixing-alcohol-and-breastfeeding-brochure/>

# Breastfeeding

---

## Baby-Friendly NL Facebook :

<https://www.facebook.com/babyfriendlynl>

## Breastfeeding Support in NL Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/breastfeedingmomsinnl/>

## Feeding Your Baby: So You Have a Decision to Make:

[https://babyfriendlynl.ca/app/uploads/2018/07/Feeding-your-baby\\_2015.pdf](https://babyfriendlynl.ca/app/uploads/2018/07/Feeding-your-baby_2015.pdf)

## Skin-to-Skin- Our First Cuddle

Explains the benefits of holding your baby skin-to-skin for at least an hour after birth:

[https://www.cssd.gov.nl.ca/publications/pdf/healthyliving/our\\_first\\_cuddle.pdf](https://www.cssd.gov.nl.ca/publications/pdf/healthyliving/our_first_cuddle.pdf)

## Get to Know Your Baby and Let your Baby get to know you

Explains how to get off to a great start with your baby:

[https://babyfriendlynl.ca/app/uploads/2018/06/Get-to-know-your-baby\\_2015.pdf](https://babyfriendlynl.ca/app/uploads/2018/06/Get-to-know-your-baby_2015.pdf)

## 10 Great Reasons To Breastfeed (Public Health Agency of Canada):

[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/stages-etapes/childhood-enfance\\_0-2/nutrition/pdf/reasons-raisons-eng.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/stages-etapes/childhood-enfance_0-2/nutrition/pdf/reasons-raisons-eng.pdf)

10 Valuable Tips For Successful Breastfeeding (Public Health Agency of Canada):

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/childhood-adolescence/stages-childhood/infancy-birth-two-years/breastfeeding-infant-nutrition/valuable-tips-successful-breastfeeding.html>

Breastfeeding Handbook 2016

An in-depth guide to help the new mother prepare for and start breastfeeding:

<https://babyfriendlynl.ca/news/breastfeeding-handbook-2016/>

How Do I Know if My Baby's Getting Enough Breastmilk?

<https://babyfriendlynl.ca/app/uploads/2018/06/How-Do-I-Know-if-My-Babys-Getting-Enough-Breastmilk.pdf>

La Leche League Canada

Breastfeeding support.

1-800-665-4324 or [www.lllc.ca](http://www.lllc.ca)

## Child Safety

---

Child Safety Link

<http://childsafetylink.ca/child-passenger-safety/car-seat-safety-resources/>

Family Resource Centres

Family Resource Centre staff may be able to provide information on car seat installation clinics or technicians in your area. For a list of centres, visit <http://www.childcare.gov.nl.ca/public/ccr/centres>

Is Your Child Safe? Series

Health Canada information on keeping young children safe from health and safety hazards.

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/child-enfant/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/child-enfant/index-eng.php)

Keep Kids Safe

Transport Canada information to keep your kids as safe as possible in your car, mini-van or pickup truck.

1-800-333-0371 or <https://www.tc.gc.ca/en/services/road/child-car-seat-safety.html>

Parachute

Parachute provides a number of injury prevention resources available free to download.

[www.parachutecanada.org/](http://www.parachutecanada.org/)

## Community Resources

---

Health Line NL: 811 (TTY: 1-888-709-3555)

Family Resource Centres

Family Resource Centre staff may be able to provide information on car seat installation clinics or technicians in your area. For a list of centres, visit: [www.childcare.gov.nl.ca/public/ccr/centres](http://www.childcare.gov.nl.ca/public/ccr/centres)

Regional Health Authorities in Newfoundland and Labrador

- Eastern Health: [www.easternhealth.ca](http://www.easternhealth.ca)
- Central Health: [www.centralhealth.nl.ca](http://www.centralhealth.nl.ca)
- Western Health: [www.westernhealth.nl.ca](http://www.westernhealth.nl.ca)
- Labrador-Grenfell Health: [www.lghealth.ca](http://www.lghealth.ca)

## Fathers, Partners, Family and Friends

---

Men's Depression

This website shares the things most commonly said in conversations and the content here can help to recognize men's depression.

[www.mensdepressionhelpyourself.ubc.ca](http://www.mensdepressionhelpyourself.ubc.ca)

Mothers Advocate, Tips for Labor Support People

<http://mothersadvocate.org/pdf/hbyw-SupportTips.pdf>

## Growth and Development

---

Baby Wants

A booklet to encourage parents to do simple things to help develop their young child: playing, reading, singing, etc. Available in several languages.

[https://www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy\\_chld\\_dev/babywant/Babywant\\_ENGLISH\\_2010.pdf](https://www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/babywant/Babywant_ENGLISH_2010.pdf)

Is my Child Growing Well?

Information on child's growth.

<https://www.dietitians.ca/Downloads/Public/Is-my-child-growing-well-Factsheet.aspx>

My Child and I – Attachment for Life

To help you understand the principles of attachment and learn ways to promote it.

Available in several languages.

[www.en.beststart.org/for\\_parents/do-you-have-baby-0-12-months](http://www.en.beststart.org/for_parents/do-you-have-baby-0-12-months)

## Health Care Providers

---

Regional Health Authorities in Newfoundland and Labrador

- Eastern Health: [www.easternhealth.ca](http://www.easternhealth.ca)
- Central Health: [www.centralhealth.nl.ca](http://www.centralhealth.nl.ca)
- Western Health: [www.westernhealth.nl.ca](http://www.westernhealth.nl.ca)
- Labrador-Grenfell Health: [www.lghealth.ca](http://www.lghealth.ca)

Find a family doctor or nurse practitioner

To find or change a family doctor or nurse practitioner visit <https://findadoctor.nl.ca/>.

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Line: 811 (TTY: 1-888-709-3555)

## Healthy Eating

---

### Canada's Food Guide

Get information on healthy eating.

[www.canada.ca/foodguide](http://www.canada.ca/foodguide)

### Dial-a-Dietitian

If you have questions about healthy eating contact Dial-a-Dietitian. This is a free service connecting the people of NL with a Registered Dietitian.

Call 811 or email through [www.811healthline.ca](http://www.811healthline.ca)

### Healthy Baby Clubs

These community-based programs are offered through Family Resource Centres. The services they provide include food, nutrition information, support, prenatal education, and referrals.

[www.childcare.gov.nl.ca/public/ccr/centres](http://www.childcare.gov.nl.ca/public/ccr/centres)

### How to Survive Morning Sickness Successfully

[https://www.beststart.org/resources/rep\\_health/2013\\_pdfs/BSRC\\_morning\\_sickness\\_online.pdf](https://www.beststart.org/resources/rep_health/2013_pdfs/BSRC_morning_sickness_online.pdf)

### Mother Baby Nutrition Supplement

Get information on how to apply for this financial benefit if you are eligible.

[www.aesl.gov.nl.ca/income-support/nutritionssupplement.html](http://www.aesl.gov.nl.ca/income-support/nutritionssupplement.html)

### Natural and Non-prescription Health Products

Information about the safe use of natural and non-prescription health products.

[www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/natural-non-prescription/regulation/about-products.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/natural-non-prescription/regulation/about-products.html)

### Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Following Canada's Food Guide can help people eat the amount and type of food that is right for them and their baby.

[www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/canada-food-guide/choosing-foods/advice-different-ages-stages/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/canada-food-guide/choosing-foods/advice-different-ages-stages/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html)

### Safe Food Handling for Pregnant Women - November 2015

Offers helpful advice on how to reduce your risk of food poisoning.

[www.canada.ca/foodsafety](http://www.canada.ca/foodsafety)

## Labour and Birth

---

### Healthy Birth Practices

The Lamaze Healthy Birth Practices are designed to help simplify your birth process with a natural approach that helps alleviate your fears and manage pain.

[www.lamaze.org/healthybirthpractices](http://www.lamaze.org/healthybirthpractices)

### Pathway to a Healthy Birth

Information about birth hormones and their job of guiding you and your baby on the path to a healthy birth.

<http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/maternal-health/pathway-to-a-healthy-birth-booklet.pdf>

### Preterm Labour Signs & Symptoms Brochure

Provides critical information on how to recognize preterm labour signs and symptoms and when to seek help. Available in several languages.

[www.en.beststart.org/for\\_parents/are-you-or-your-partner-pregnant](http://www.en.beststart.org/for_parents/are-you-or-your-partner-pregnant)

### YouTube - The Penny Simkin Channel

This will connect you to a number of videos on birth related topics.

[www.youtube.com/PSfromPenny](http://www.youtube.com/PSfromPenny)

## Mental Health

---

### Bridge the GAPP

An innovative on-line mental health resource available from a computer, tablet or phone that instantly connects people to self-help information and local supports through a searchable service directory.

[www.bridgethegapp.ca](http://www.bridgethegapp.ca)

### Canadian Mental Health Association, Newfoundland and Labrador Division (CMHA-NL)

A provincial division of the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health.

[www.cmhanl.ca](http://www.cmhanl.ca)

### Consumers' Health Awareness Network Newfoundland And Labrador (CHANNAL)

The only consumer-led mental health organization in the province. A provincial non-profit organization that exists to build and strengthen a self-help network among individuals who live with mental health issues.

[www.channal.ca](http://www.channal.ca)

### Managing Depression – A Self-help Skills Resource for Women Living With Depression During Pregnancy, After Delivery and Beyond

A workbook with information about depression and tips for a healthy lifestyle and for managing depression.

[https://www.beststart.org/resources/ppmd/DepressionWorkbookFinal\\_15APR30.pdf](https://www.beststart.org/resources/ppmd/DepressionWorkbookFinal_15APR30.pdf)

### Mental Health Crisis Line

Toll Free: 1-888-737-4668

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Line: 811 (TTY: 1-888-709-3555), or call Toll Free: 1-888-709-2929

#### Pregnancy Is Not Always What You Expect

A booklet about strategies to help women take care of their mental health before and during pregnancy.

[www.beststart.org/resources/ppmd/TakeCareMentalHealth\\_EN\\_rev.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/resources/ppmd/TakeCareMentalHealth_EN_rev.pdf)

#### Postpartum Depression

Offers information on understanding postpartum depression.

[www.cmha.ca/mental\\_health/postpartum-depression/](http://www.cmha.ca/mental_health/postpartum-depression/)

## Mother's Health

---

#### Sexual Health

Learn about what to expect the first time after baby and birth control options.

<https://www.pregnancyinfo.ca/postpartum/postpartum/contraception/>

## Newborn Care

---

#### Your Developing Baby Series

[www.cssd.gov.nl.ca/publications/printed.html#1childhealth](http://www.cssd.gov.nl.ca/publications/printed.html#1childhealth)

#### Keeping Baby's Teeth Healthy

[http://www.cssd.gov.nl.ca/publications/pdf/healthyliving/babys\\_teeth.pdf](http://www.cssd.gov.nl.ca/publications/pdf/healthyliving/babys_teeth.pdf)

#### OMama

A website and mobile app for women and families. Information about pregnancy, birth and early parenting.

[www.omama.com](http://www.omama.com)

#### Parents

For more information on parenting

<http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/parents/>

[www.easternhealth.ca/URaParent](http://www.easternhealth.ca/URaParent)

<http://www.parents2parents.ca/ages-stages>

<http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/information-sheets>

#### Sleep Well, Sleep Safe

Information on healthy sleep tips for infants and for parents. It also provides information on how to reduce the risks of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep related causes of infant death.

[http://www.cssd.gov.nl.ca/publications/pdf/healthyliving/sleep\\_well.pdf](http://www.cssd.gov.nl.ca/publications/pdf/healthyliving/sleep_well.pdf)

#### Safe Sleep

Information about SIDS and safe infant sleep environments.

[www.publichealth.gc.ca/safesleep](http://www.publichealth.gc.ca/safesleep)

The Period of Purple Crying (National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome)  
Find information on preventing shaken baby syndrome and how to calm an infant.  
[www.purplecrying.info/#sthash.DPDZ1Gpo.dpuf](http://www.purplecrying.info/#sthash.DPDZ1Gpo.dpuf)

Sleep for Babies  
Canadian Paediatric Society: Caring For Kids  
[www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/safe\\_sleep\\_for\\_babies](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/safe_sleep_for_babies)

Never Shake a Baby  
Canadian Paediatric Society: Caring For Kids  
[www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/never\\_shake\\_a\\_baby](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/never_shake_a_baby)

## Newcomers to Canada

---

Association for New Canadians  
<http://www.ancnl.ca/>  
General Inquiries: (709) 722-9680 or 1-833-222-0921 (Toll-Free)  
Main Office: 144 Military Road, St. John's, NL A1C 5R6  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2031, Station C, St. John's, NL A1C 5R6

Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs  
Offers resources, information and links for immigrant families.  
[www.welcomehere.ca](http://www.welcomehere.ca)

## Physical Activity

---

Active Pregnancy – booklet  
Guidelines to ensure pregnant women are exercising safely.  
[www.niagararegion.ca/living/health\\_wellness/workplace/pdf/PARC-ActivePregnancy.pdf](http://www.niagararegion.ca/living/health_wellness/workplace/pdf/PARC-ActivePregnancy.pdf)

PARmed-X for PREGNANCY  
A guideline for health screening prior to participation in a prenatal fitness class or other exercise.  
[www.csep.ca/cmfiles/publications/parq/parmed-xpreg.pdf](http://www.csep.ca/cmfiles/publications/parq/parmed-xpreg.pdf)

Exercise During Pregnancy  
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/hw194995>

Health Canada – The Sensible Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy  
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-gs/pdf/hpguide-eng.pdf>

Beginner Walking Program (ParticipACTION)  
<http://www.recreationnl.com/findyourfit/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/PA-How-to-Guide-Beginner-Walking.pdf>

## Pregnancy

---

### Due Date Calculator

To know when your baby will be born.

<https://www.pregnancyinfo.ca/your-pregnancy/healthy-pregnancy/due-date-calculator/>

### Healthy Pregnancy

The Public Health Agency of Canada's website provides information about healthy pregnancy.

[www.healthykanadians.gc.ca/hp-gs/index\\_e.html](http://www.healthykanadians.gc.ca/hp-gs/index_e.html)

### How to Survive Morning Sickness Successfully

Information about morning sickness for those who are planning a pregnancy and or are currently pregnant.

[www.beststart.org/resources/rep\\_health/2013\\_pdfs/BSRC\\_morning\\_sickness\\_online.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/resources/rep_health/2013_pdfs/BSRC_morning_sickness_online.pdf)

### Maternity and Parenting Leaves

Information on length of maternity, parental, and adoption leave.

[www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/benefits/maternalparental.shtml](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/benefits/maternalparental.shtml)

### Multiple Births Canada

Support, education, research, and advocacy about multiple births.

1-866-228-8824 or [www.multiplebirthscanada.org](http://www.multiplebirthscanada.org)

### OMama

A website and mobile app for women and families. Information about pregnancy, birth and early parenting.

[www.omama.com](http://www.omama.com)

### Preterm Labour Signs & Symptoms

[https://www.beststart.org/resources/rep\\_health/preterm/Preterm\\_English\\_2012.pdf](https://www.beststart.org/resources/rep_health/preterm/Preterm_English_2012.pdf)

Available in several languages: [www.en.beststart.org/for\\_parents/are-you-or-your-partner-pregnant](http://www.en.beststart.org/for_parents/are-you-or-your-partner-pregnant)

### The Sensible Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy

A guide to help you to make good decisions about how to take care of yourself before, during and after your pregnancy.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/healthy-pregnancy/healthy-pregnancy-guide.html>

Your journey starts here – The facts on pregnancy and childbirth from Canada's experts.

Information about pregnancy and childbirth from The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC).

[www.pregnancyinfo.ca](http://www.pregnancyinfo.ca)

### Waiting for Baby: Pregnancy After Age 35 Booklet

Information for women aged 35 or older who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy.

[www.beststart.org/resources/rep\\_health/pdf/pregnancy35plus\\_12pg\\_book.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/resources/rep_health/pdf/pregnancy35plus_12pg_book.pdf)

### Work & Pregnancy Do Mix!

Provides information on workplace risks, ways to reduce risks and sources of additional information. Available in several languages.

[www.en.beststart.org/for\\_parents/are-you-or-your-partner-pregnant](http://www.en.beststart.org/for_parents/are-you-or-your-partner-pregnant)

## Support to Quit Smoking

---

### The NL Lung Association's Smoker's Helpline

Provides free confidential one-on-one support and resources to help with quitting smoking. You can connect with trained counselors via phone, email, text and online.

1-800-363-5864 (LUNG) or [www.smokershelp.net](http://www.smokershelp.net)

[www.smokershelp.net/smoking-and-pregnancy/](http://www.smokershelp.net/smoking-and-pregnancy/)

### Couples and Smoking – What You Need to Know When You are Pregnant

[www.thiswaytoahealthybaby.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/CouplesAndSmoking1-2010-UBC.pdf](http://www.thiswaytoahealthybaby.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/CouplesAndSmoking1-2010-UBC.pdf)

### Expecting to Quit

<http://www.expectingtoquit.ca/resources/resources.htm>

### Smoke-Free Women

<https://women.smokefree.gov/quitting-for-two/quit-smoking-for-mom-baby.aspx>

### Exposure to second-hand smoke during pregnancy

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/tobac-tabac/legislation/label-etiquette/preg-gross-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/tobac-tabac/legislation/label-etiquette/preg-gross-eng.php)

### Information on Second and Third-Hand Smoke

[www.beststart.org/resources/tobacco/pdf/tobacco\\_handout\\_eng\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/resources/tobacco/pdf/tobacco_handout_eng_FINAL.pdf)

Make your home and car smoke-free: A guide to protecting your family from second-hand smoke

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/pubs/tobac-tabac/second-guide/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/pubs/tobac-tabac/second-guide/index-eng.php)

### PREGNETS

Find several resources: Smoking During Pregnancy; Smoking After Giving Birth; Second Hand Smoke; Statistics and Facts; Stressors; Cues; Partner Support; Nutrition; Exercise Common Questions; Dealing with Cravings; How to Talk to your Health Care Provider.

[www.pregnets.org/mothers/DuringPregnancy.aspx](http://www.pregnets.org/mothers/DuringPregnancy.aspx)

- Pregnets Blog: <http://pregnetsblog.com>

### Smoker's Helpline

Offers specialized services for pregnant people

1-877-513-3333 or [www.smokershelpline.ca](http://www.smokershelpline.ca)

# Acknowledgements

The Best Start Resource Centre would like to thank Toronto Public Health for generously sharing its 2003 edition of Growing Healthy Together: Baby and Me. It became the model for this easy-to-read book about pregnancy and birth.

Thanks also to those who provided input during the development of this resource:

- Algoma Public Health
- Canadian Child Care Federation
- Canadian Public Health Association (provided the plain language review)
- Central Southwest Reproductive Health Working Group
- Centre for Addiction & Mental Health
- Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association of Canada
- Community Midwives of Thunder Bay
- Infant Mental Health Promotion The Hospital for Sick Children
- McMaster Children's Hospital
- Niagara Region Public Health
- Nutrition Resource Centre
- Ontario Breastfeeding Committee
- Ottawa Public Health
- Perinatal Partnership Program of Eastern and Southeastern Ontario
- Peterborough County-City Health Unit
- Registered Nurses Association of Ontario
- Safe Kids Canada
- St. Joseph's Healthcare
- Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada
- SportC.A.R.E., Women's College Hospital
- Toronto Public Health
- Windsor-Essex County Health Unit
- Women's College Hospital
- Interested nurses, family physicians, paediatricians and midwives

We would also like to thank the parents and the experts who provided input for this booklet.

Thank you also to those who provided input during 2016 review of this resource:

- Dad Central Ontario
- Heather Norris, Registered Nurse, Health Services, University of Waterloo
- Marg La Salle, RN., BScN., IBCLC., CCHN., and BFI lead assessor
- Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), Reproductive Health Work Group
- Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH) members
- Parachute



by/par health **nexus** santé  
[www.beststart.org](http://www.beststart.org)