

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Your Pregnancy (For Teens)

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Early prenatal medical care, proper nutrition, and healthy choices (e.g., not smoking, not drinking alcohol, not taking illegal drugs, exercising regularly) are important parts of a healthy pregnancy. If you are sexually active and think you might be pregnant, ask a parent or another trusted adult (e.g., family member or friend, teacher, school counselor, clergy) to help you locate a physician, prenatal clinic, or social service organization for pregnant teens as soon as possible.

There are a number of resources available to help pregnant teens and their families decide the best option for their particular situation (e.g., adoption, raising the child). The earlier you obtain medical care, the better your chances for having a healthy pregnancy. An OB/GYN (obstetrician/gynecologist) is a physician specialist who has particular expertise in pregnancy, childbirth, and disorders of the reproductive system.

Ideally, women should visit a health care provider before becoming pregnant; however, because many pregnancies are unplanned and unexpected, this is not always possible. If you suspect you may be pregnant, it's important to see an OB/GYN as early as possible in your pregnancy. Although dealing with a teen pregnancy can be difficult, your OB/GYN is there to help and the primary importance is your health and the health of your unborn baby.

Early signs of pregnancy include the following:

- Abdominal bloating
- Breast sensitivity (e.g., tenderness, swelling)
- Fatigue
- Food cravings or aversions
- Frequent urination
- Light bleeding or spotting (called implantation bleeding)
- Missed menstrual period
- Nausea or queasiness

During your first appointment, your health care provider (e.g., physician, midwife, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner) will take a detailed personal and family medical history, perform a physical examination (including pelvic exam), and conduct laboratory tests (e.g., blood tests, urine tests, and tests to detect sexually transmitted diseases [STDs], including HIV). Make sure your health care provider knows about past or current medical conditions, such as diabetes, and about any prescription or over-the-counter medications you are taking, including herbal remedies and vitamin supplements.

Here are some questions to ask your health care provider. **Print this page** and take it with you to your appointment. Answers to these questions can help you achieve the best possible outcome for your pregnancy.

- How many weeks along is my pregnancy? What is my due date?

- Does my pregnancy appear to be healthy and progressing normally?
- Can you recommend resources for additional information about adoption, abortion, and raising a child?
- Can you recommend a class or program in the area or an online support group for pregnant teens? Is there a group that provides support to expectant teenage fathers?
- Should I begin taking a prenatal supplement? Which one(s)?
- In addition to cigarettes, alcohol, and illegal drugs, what other substances should I avoid while pregnant?
- How can I be sure to eat a healthy diet during pregnancy? Are there any foods that I should avoid?
- What types of exercise do you recommend during pregnancy? Are there activities that I should avoid?
- How can I make sure to get enough sleep during pregnancy?
- How often will I be seen in the office?
Next appointment: Date: Time:
- Will I see different members of the obstetric team (e.g., nurse practitioner, midwife, nurse-midwife)?
- What types of tests (e.g., ultrasound, blood tests) may be used to monitor my pregnancy?
- Is my pregnancy considered high risk? Am I at increased risk for pregnancy complications, such as anemia, high blood pressure, or premature delivery?
- Does my baby have a higher-than-normal risk for medical problems?
- What are some warning signs that may indicate a problem with my baby?

Emergency telephone number to call:

- Should I attend special childbirth classes for teens?

- At which hospital or childbirth center will I deliver?

- What is the cesarean rate for your practice?

- If complications develop during delivery, might I or my baby be transferred to another facility?

How do I select a pediatrician for my child?

- Can you recommend sources for additional support if needed?

Notes: