Pregnancy Checklist - What to Do When Pregnant

What you need to do before you give birth, broken down by trimesters and weeks.



First Trimester

- [ ] Week 1: If you haven't started already, you should be taking a prenatal multivitamin with folic acid daily (bump it up to 600 micrograms folic acid once you know for sure you're pregnant).
- [ ] Week 2: You should be eating the healthiest diet possible for the next nine months. For some simple guidelines, check out "Tell Me What to Eat"
- [ ] Week 3: If you're at risk for having a baby with an inherited disorder, you may want to schedule a visit with a genetic counselor.
- [ ] Week 4: Positive test: You're pregnant! Invest in an extra supportive bra, especially if your breasts are expanding. Many women grow a full cup size within the first few weeks.
- [ ] Week 5: Call your doctor for an appointment as soon as you believe you are pregnant. Some will want to see you right away, others not until you are eight weeks pregnant.
- [ ] Week 6: While some women wait to tell people about their pregnancy until the risk of miscarriage drops markedly (at 14 weeks), others spill the beans right away. You may want to wait to tell your boss or coworkers you're pregnant until you've researched your maternity leave options.
- [ ] Week 7: Before the first trimester is over, visit your company's human resources department to find out how much maternity leave you'll have and whether it will be paid, unpaid or a combination of both.
- [ ] Week 8: Most obstetricians will perform an ultrasound at your first prenatal visit to confirm your pregnancy and to date it if you don't know when you conceived.
- [ ] Week 9: Women generally start taking childbirth-prep courses, such as Bradley or Lamaze, during the second trimester, but classes fill up quickly. Research the options in your area (your doctor or midwife and local hospitals probably have lists), and sign up early.
- [ ] Week 10: Look into breastfeeding and newborn-care classes, hospital tours and, if needed, big-sibling classes.

- [ ] Week 11: Chorionic Villus Sampling (CVS), the diagnostic test for chromosomal disorders such as Down syndrome, is usually performed between weeks 10 and 12.
- [ ] Week 12: A nuchal translucency exam may be done from weeks 11-13 to screen for Down Syndrome and other chromosomal abnormalities.
- [ ] Week 13: Now that you're entering your second trimester, you'll want to make the most of your renewed energy, mobility and good mood to prepare for giving birth and to get your home ready for your newborn.

Second Trimester

- [ ] Week 14: Sign up for a prenatal-yoga class. Yoga can build strength for labor and help improve your flexibility, agility, balance and posture. You're probably also ready to start shopping for maternity clothes.
- [ ] Week 15: Ask your doctor about the multiple marker test, which screens for chromosomal abnormalities, neural-tube and other defects; it's normally done between 15 and 20 weeks.
- [ ] Week 16: Begin to think seriously about how you want your labor and delivery to play out. To get started, and to set up a birth plan, visit our Labor & Delivery Guide.
- [ ] Week 17: Tell your employer you're pregnant if you haven't already done so. Be ready with a plan for your maternity leave as well as ideas about who will cover for you during your absence.
- [ ] Week 18: Between weeks 14-20, your doctor may order an amniocentesis if you're 35 or older to screen for chromosomal/genetic disorders including Down syndrome and spina bifida.
- [ ] Week 19: Decide whether or not you'd like to know your baby's sex. Many doctors do a detailed ultrasound between 16 and 20 weeks, at which time gender often can be determined.
- [ ] Week 20: You're halfway there! Time to take a tour of your hospital's maternity ward.
- [ ] Week 21: Though your due date sounds very far away, start reading up on baby care now. You won't have time after your newborn arrives.
- [ ] Week 22: Think about whom you want present at your baby's birth, and begin discussing it with family.
- [ ] Week 23: Sign up for a childbirth-education class, as they fill up quickly. Choose a session that you can complete before your 36th or 37th week.
- [ ] Week 24: Start shopping for baby furniture and nursery accessories. (Leave painting and furniture-refinishing to others; fumes can pose a hazard.)
- [ ] Week 25: Craving a babymoon? Do it now.
- [ ] Week 26: Between weeks 26-28, a glucose screening is offered to all women to test for gestational diabetes.
- [ ] Week 27: Look into child care if you'll be returning to work. Day care centers fill up fast, and nannies can be hard to come by.
- [ ] Week 28: Your doctor or midwife will want to see you every two to three weeks starting at around week 28. Right now, you may want to think about getting a life insurance policy and a with a guardianship agreement.

Third Trimester

- [ ] Week 29: Start shopping for items you'll need in the hospital (nursing bras, nightgown, baby clothes, car seat) and at home (diapers, wipes, etc.).

- [ ] Week 30: Attend childbirth classes. The sessions should end by week 36. You'll also want to call your health insurance company and alert them to your due date. Find out any requirements they may have about adding a baby to your policy.
- [ ] Week 31: Interview doulas or labor coaches—they book up quickly.
- [ ] Week 32: Have your baby shower about two months before your due date so you'll have time to shop for items you didn't receive as gifts. Register for your shower if you haven't already done so.
- [ ] Week 33: Interview baby nurses or postpartum doulas; locate a lactation specialist in case you need one later. Organize a support system of friends/family to help out when you're home with your new baby.
- [ ] Week 34: Wash, fold, and put away all your baby clothes and install your infant car seat.
- [ ] Week 35: Consider cooking and freezing some food for when you bring the baby home. Do some general safeguarding in your home: install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in all rooms; lower your water heater to 120° F max.
- [ ] Week 36: Meet with several pediatricians and choose one. Your baby will need to be checked immediately after birth. Consider whether you'll circumcise if there's a possibility you're having a boy. Research cord-blood-banking options.
- [ ] Week 37: Pack your bag for the hospital (don't forget your phone book). A baby is considered at term three weeks before your due date, so be prepared. Your doctor will want to see you every two weeks starting at weeks 36 and 37, then every week starting at week 38. At 36 or 37 weeks, your doctor will order a culture for Group B strep, an infection that can affect the baby. (If you do have Group B strep, you will likely be treated with antibiotics during labor.)
- [ ] Week 38: If you plan to breastfeed, read up on techniques and gather resources to have at your fingertips when you come home. Join a local La Leche League group to meet the leader and other moms; you don't want to be a stranger if you need to call them for help. Buy nursing pads and bras.
- [ ] Week 39: Many women begin maternity leave weeks before their due date. If you plan to work up until the end, post an "If I go into labor tonight" memo at work. If you'll be returning to work and plan to breastfeed, find or create a suitable place to pump.
- [ ] Week 40: Relish these last days of feeling that little being moving and grooving inside your body. You won't believe how much you'll miss it.

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