Your Pregnancy Checklist

Our step-by-step guide to preparing for baby's debut.



Months 1-3

- [ ] Month 1: Take your vitamins. As soon as you know you're pregnant, start taking a prenatal supplement with 400mcg of folic acid if you aren't already. This reduces the risk of neural-tube defects, such as spina bifida. It should also contain 27mg of iron and 1,000mg of calcium, says Caren Stalburg, M.D., an ob-gyn at the University of Michigan Health System, in Ann Arbor.

- [ ] Month 2: Schedule a checkup. In addition to a physical around Week 10, you'll have an ultrasound to detect the baby's heartbeat and verify the due date. After this, you'll go in every four weeks through Week 28, and then every three weeks. After 36 weeks, you'll go weekly.

- [ ] Month 3: Start taking tests. Between Weeks 11 and 14 first-trimester screenings are given, including pregnancy-associated plasma protein-A (PAPP-A) and human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG), blood tests that determine the risk of Down syndrome and trisomy 18. You may also be given a nuchal translucency screening, an ultrasound that measures the back of the fetus's neck (its thickness can indicate chromosomal problems). Results from the screenings will determine if you need further diagnostic tests, such as chorionic villus sampling (CVS) or an amniocentesis. No matter what, women age 35 and over should talk to their doctor about having one of these two genetic tests, which are performed around ten to 12 weeks and 15 to 20 weeks, respectively.

Months 4-5

- [ ] Month 4: Have a second-trimester screening. Also known as multiple marker screening, this blood test typically performed between 15 and 20 weeks looks for hCG, alpha-fetoprotein (AFP), estriol, and inhibin-A. It screens for elevated risk of various defects in the fetus, such as Down syndrome, spina bi-fida, and anencephaly. If your results are abnormal, you'll need additional testing, possibly including an amniocentesis or CVS.

- [ ] Month 5: Take a look at your baby. Around 20 weeks, you'll have an ultrasound, so the doctor can assess your baby's growth and make sure all the organs are developing properly. This is likely when you can find out the sex of your little one as well.

Months 6-7

- [ ] Month 6: Get tested for gestational diabetes. Most doctors recommend a glucose challenge screening around Week 26 (unless you're overweight or have a history of diabetes, in which case you should have one earlier). If your test is positive, you'll undergo a glucose tolerance test. If you're diagnosed with gestational diabetes, which can cause overgrowth of the fetus and other complications, you may have to take oral medication or use insulin, though some women manage the condition with nutritional changes and exercise alone.

- [ ] Month 7: Start the search for a pediatrician by 28 weeks, says Parents advisor Jennifer Shu, M.D., coauthor of Heading Home With Your Newborn. Some factors to consider: location, whether you prefer a group or solo practice, and the availability of weekend and evening hours.

Months 8-9

- [ ] Month 8: Get screened for Group B strep, bacteria that is harmless to you but can be lethal if passed to the baby. Your doctor will take an external vaginal culture around 35 weeks; if Group B strep bacteria are present, you'll be given medication during labor to prevent transmission to the baby.

- [ ] Month 9: Sit back and relax. By now, you should be done with most of your preparation and ready if you go into labor early. As your baby's due date approaches, find a comfy chair, put your hand on your stomach, and enjoy the calm before the storm.

Make and Share Free Checklists
checkli.com