

GREAT START TO PREGNANCY

YOUR “WHAT'S NEXT” GUIDE



AN EASY GUIDE TO CREATING AN INFORMED & HEALTHY PREGNANCY FROM THE START

HOW TO PICK
PRENATAL PROVIDER

ANSWERS TO
FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS

WAYS TO AVOID
PREMATURE LABOR

WELCOME!

Congratulations on your pregnancy!

My name is Angel Wauthier, and I'm so excited to join you on this exciting journey of baby planning.

At Fruit of the Womb Perinatal Services, my mission is to support and empower you with resources that make preparing for your little one easier and stress-free. I'm here to offer you expert advice, so you can approach the big day with excitement, confidence, and peace of mind as you step into both birth and parenting.



I equip parents with the tools they need to make informed decisions, drawing from the latest research and timeless parenting wisdom. The goal is to provide you with the best possible guidance, while surrounding you with encouragement and support every step of the way.

Wishing you joy and success in your beautiful parenting journey!

Angel Wauthier

DOULA | LACTATION COUNSELOR | EDUCATOR

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Fruit of the Womb
PERINATAL SERVICES



02

CHOOSING A BIRTH FACILITY

Which destination is right for you and your baby?

07

CHOOSING A PERINATAL PROVIDER

Learn more about 9 Types of Perinatal Providers

12

BREASTFEEDING & PREGNANCY

Discover 5 ways you can prepare for breastfeeding

17

WHICH PERINATAL CLASS?

A guide to help you choose the class that best meets your needs

18

6 Types of Childbirth Classes

What class is the best fit for your needs?

22

PREMATURE LABOR

Preventing early labor and signs to look out for

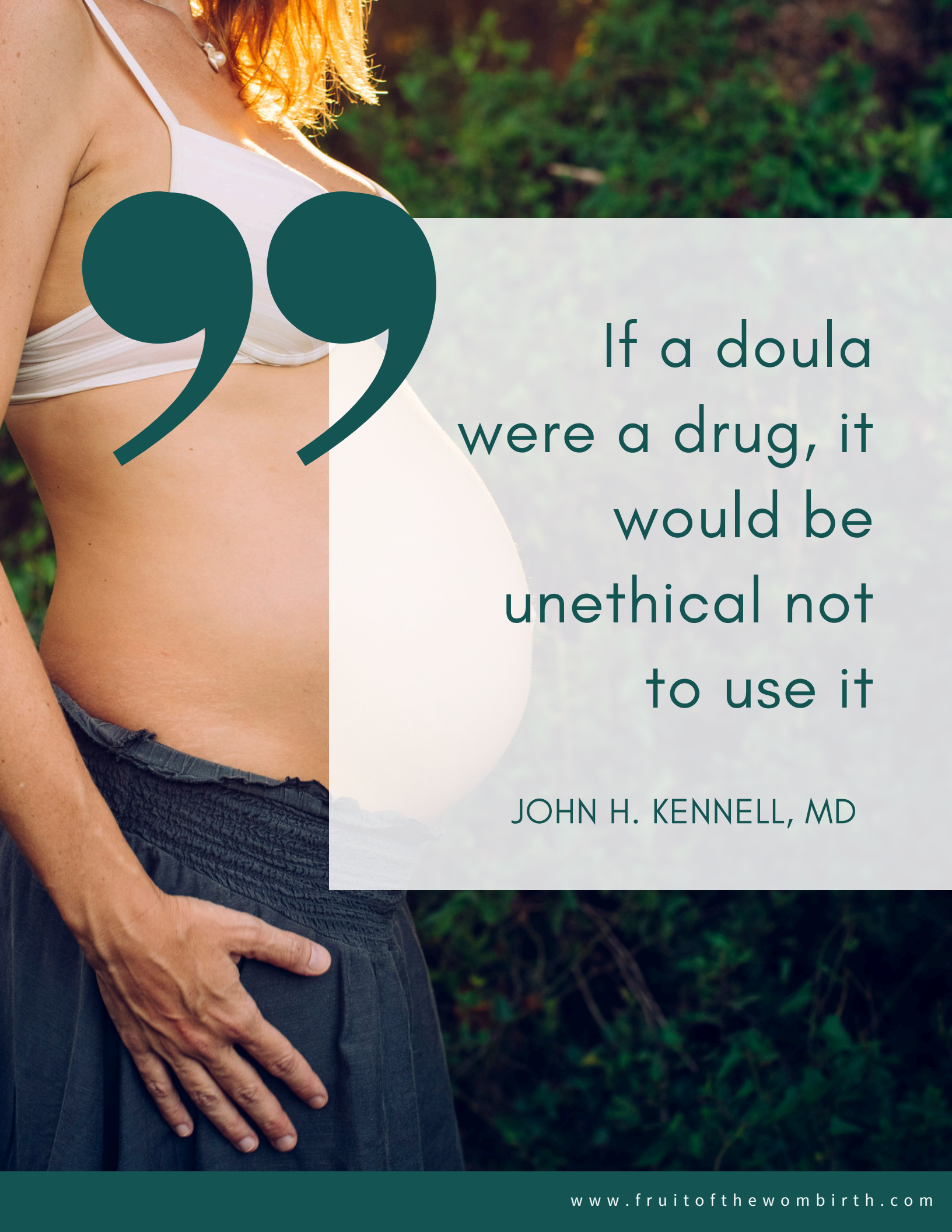
23

FAQs

24

Resources for Parents

Organizations and resources to help you throughout your pregnancy



If a doula
were a drug, it
would be
unethical not
to use it

JOHN H. KENNEL, MD

CHOOSING A BIRTH FACILITY

HOW DO I CHOOSE?

Choosing where you want to give birth is essential! You may be limited to what's available in your area, but this simple guide will help you choose the best one for you! This, coupled with picking your provider, will help you become more confident in your pregnancy and ability to give birth.





TYPES OF BIRTH FACILITIES:

HOSPITALS

Hospitals can be a great option for both low-risk and high-risk moms. They are well-equipped to manage emergencies and follow the medical model of care, with access to advanced medical devices and pain-relief options like epidurals. Many hospitals offer care from a team that may include midwives, OB/GYNs, and other specialists, ensuring comprehensive support. If the hospital has a baby-friendly designation, it likely provides specially trained staff to support breastfeeding and educate mothers on its benefits.

However, there are some trade-offs to consider. Hospital policies may limit your ability to eat, move, drink, or opt out of continuous monitoring during labor. If maintaining these freedoms is important to you, it might be worth exploring other birth options. Additionally, you may not deliver with the doctor who provided your prenatal care, and you could encounter unfamiliar staff, which might affect your comfort level.



TYPES OF BIRTH FACILITIES:

BIRTH CENTERS

Birth Centers are great for low-risk moms and are a safe place to deliver your baby. These centers follow a midwifery model of care. Birth centers usually have several midwives and may be overseen by an OB/GYN. You have more freedom to eat, move, drink, and wear fewer monitoring devices. You will meet the staff who will be assisting you during your labor beforehand. This environment is overall more relaxed and a great option for mothers who desire a natural and medication-free birth.

These birth centers don't have access to medical pain medications and do not perform cesarean deliveries. If you desire pain medication, such as an epidural, you would be transferred to a local hospital's labor and delivery center. States usually require birth centers to be within a certain distance of a hospital in case of emergencies. Moms may be concerned about possible emergency situations, but because fewer interventions are used, there are fewer complications. Staff at birth centers are able to provide emergency support if needed.



TYPES OF BIRTH FACILITIES:

AT HOME

Home births are typically a lower-cost investment than delivering at a hospital or birth center. They have all the benefits of a birth center but in the comfort of your own home. Prenatal visits, labor, delivery, and recovery can all be done in the home. Finding care for children can be hard for some parents, so giving birth at home may provide relief in finding a babysitter (ideal if both parents will be present at birth).

You will also have more control over your environment. As with birth centers, you will not have access to pain medication, such as an epidural, and will need to be transferred to a hospital if you require a cesarean delivery. Home births are a safe option, and due to fewer interventions, complications are less likely to happen. Home births are usually attended to by professional midwives.

IN CONCLUSION

Wherever you decide to give birth should make you feel comfortable. Schedule tours and talk to other mothers about their experiences with different birthing situations. The research will be worth it. Feeling safe in your birthing environment will help you have a stress-free birth.

Each patient ought to feel
somewhat the better after the
physician's visit, irrespective of the
nature of the illness.

WARFIELD THEOBALD



CHOOSING A PERINATAL PROVIDER

WHO DOES WHAT?

Choosing a healthcare provider is one of the first steps to take when you find out that you're pregnant. After you see your big fat positive, it's time to set up an appointment to get your pregnancy off to a healthy start!



9

TYPES OF PERINATAL

08

PROVIDERS

**OBSTETRICIANS**

Obstetricians are medical doctors who have specialized training in women's health and reproduction. They are surgeons trained to assist high-risk pregnancies. Prenatal visits with OBs are usually short. During labor, they show up to introduce themselves, and you'll see them again when you are ready to push or if issues or complications arise during labor.

**FAMILY PHYSICIAN**

Family physicians are medical doctors who have training in family medicine and provide care to babies through adulthood. Depending on the practice, some only see mothers during prenatal visits. Usually, they enter the room during active labor.

**NURSE-MIDWIFE**

Nurses have completed nursing school and additional training in midwifery. They work with the OBs in case of complications. They do prenatal care and usually have longer prenatal visits to get to know the mothers. They stay with mothers more during labor and through early recovery, popping in and out frequently.

PROVIDERS



LICENSED/PROFESSIONAL OR DEM MIDWIVES

These licensed professionals have training in midwifery school for maternity care. They serve low-risk pregnant mothers and sometimes work with local physicians. Most CPM/LMs will only deliver home births. Insurance may not cover home births, so be sure to check with your insurance company first.



MATERNAL-FETAL MEDICINE DOCTORS

These doctors specialize in high-risk pregnancies or babies who are at risk. You may be referred to one of these specialists if your OB is concerned about the health of you or your baby when it comes to your pregnancy. It is very common to meet one if you are having twins, placental concerns, or growth concerns.



MEDICAL VS. MIDWIFERY CARE

The medical model focuses on preventing and managing potential complications and intervention side effects. Doctors tend to lead care decisions and emphasize routine medical management, with birth viewed as a potential health risk. **The Midwifery Model** takes a more holistic approach, focusing on the mind, body, and spirit, with greater patient involvement and birth viewed as a normal process that typically requires minimal intervention.

PROVIDERS



POSTPARTUM DOULAS

Postpartum doulas assist mothers with postpartum recovery. They do not help with medical care, but they do help parents with newborn care, breastfeeding, and light housekeeping. They can also help with referrals and other community resources!



PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

These professionals are trained to support people who are in mental distress or with a variety of mental health disorders. Postpartum Support International offers a [list of providers](#) trained to provide support to pregnant and postpartum mothers and to support fathers, as well.



BIRTH DOULAS

Birth doulas are non-clinical professionals who support a mother emotionally and physically during the birth of her child. They support her partner during the birth, as well. Birth Doulas have knowledge of current hospital practices, physicians, and local resources. They provide insight on different medical procedures and help navigate hospital policies, reminding patients of their rights. Evidence shows that women who have doulas experience less pain, shorter labors, and an overall better birth!

Nursing does not diminish the beauty of a woman's breasts; it enhances their charm by making them look lived in and happy

ROBERT A. HEINLEIN



BREASTFEEDING & PREGNANCY

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

Many pregnant women worry about breastfeeding. They wonder if they will be able to produce enough breastmilk after delivery. If you're pregnant and looking for help with these concerns, then you're in luck!



5

WAYS TO PREPARE FOR

13

BREASTFEEDING



Many mothers want to breastfeed. One of the first steps for successful breastfeeding is having a firm resolve to breastfeed. It's not always easy, and you may need to make several appointments for breastfeeding support, but that's okay.

When there's an easier way to do something, many people choose to take the easier route. Breastfeeding, however, requires a lot of determination. You may encounter people who try to persuade you to stop nursing, whether they believe breastmilk is not enough for the baby or based on the age of your baby. Use your pregnancy to build your confidence to breastfeed and knock down these myths.

FIND A LACTATION CONSULTANT

Set an appointment for both before & after your delivery

Finding a lactation consultant you trust is important to your breastfeeding journey. They are there to help you get on the right track. It's helpful to schedule a lactation appointment before you leave the hospital, just as you schedule your pediatric appointment. Have your lactation consultant evaluate latch, positioning, and discuss your milk supply with you. This will help to correct breastfeeding issues quickly and avoid the snowball effect that breastfeeding problems sometimes lead to.

5

WAYS TO PREPARE FOR

14

BREASTFEEDING



FIND A PEDIATRICIAN

Choose a pediatrician who supports breastfeeding & shedule an appointment

Lactation is a specialty field that requires special training and education. Pediatricians usually have a general knowledge of lactation and a more detailed knowledge of formula-feeding.

If your pediatrician has a concern, they should refer you to a lactation consultant unless they have specific training and education about breastfeeding themselves. Ask your pediatrician their thoughts on breastfeeding, if they have received breastfeeding training from a lactation organization, and how they support breastfeeding babies. This should give you an idea of whether or not the pediatrician is right for your breastfeeding journey.

CHOOSE A BABY-FREINDLY HOSPITAL

Selecting the right hospital will make a huge difference in your experience

Baby-friendly hospitals create an environment to encourage breastfeeding. They follow the **10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding** to help mothers get the best start to breastfeeding. Find a **Baby-Friendly Hospital** in your area. Birth centers are also very well versed in creating a successful breastfeeding environment, so this may be another option for you.

5

WAYS TO PREPARE FOR

15

BREASTFEEDING



TAKE A BREASTFEEDING CLASS

A breastfeeding class can help you feel more confident

A breastfeeding class can help you feel more confident about breastfeeding, as well as prepare you on how to breastfeed, the red flags of breastfeeding, and how to overcome them. They also go over common concerns of mothers who breastfeed, pump, how to store milk, going back to work, and who can support you with breastfeeding.

JOIN A BREASTFEEDING GROUP

Breastfeeding groups provide community & support

Breastfeeding groups provide community and are a valuable asset to your breastfeeding journey! You will find that you are not alone in your concerns and can share your breastfeeding wins with other mothers cheering you on! I encourage you to find a breastfeeding group run by lactation professionals. Sometimes advice given by another mom, while well-intended, may be wrong or misguided. Lactation professionals can give you more accurate advice and suggestions.

Birth is not only about making babies. It's about making mothers- strong, competent, capable mothers who trust themselves and believe in their inner strength.

BARBARA KATZ ROTHMAN



PERINATAL CLASSES

WHAT KIND OF CLASS?

There are a variety of classes you can take to prepare for pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and parenting. With so many options available, here's a guide to help you choose the classes that best meet your needs.





6 TYPES OF CHILDBIRTH CLASSES

WHICH CLASS DO I CHOOSE?

Childbirth classes prepare expecting couples for childbirth and give mothers their options as patients. Many childbirth classes cover how to cope with and reduce labor pain, different prenatal concerns, prenatal diagnoses, and what to expect during planned or emergency C-sections.



01 | LAMAZE

Lamaze focuses on how birth is a natural process and gives women the confidence to birth naturally. It also gives parents the tools to make informed choices and teaches them their rights in childbirth. Many hospitals use the Lamaze curriculum.



02 | HYPNOBIRTHING

Hypnobirthing helps mothers achieve deep relaxation during labor and to have more instinctual and calm experiences. It focuses on a meditative birth to help reduce fear, tension, and pain.



03 | THE BRADLEY METHOD

This method equips mothers to have a natural birth, free from medication, and to create a birth environment that will help women progress. It also empowers partners to support mothers during their labor and gives them the tools they need to do so.

04 | BIRTH FROM WITHIN

This option helps parents let go of specific birth outcomes. This helps them look within themselves and listen to their own inner wisdom to make birth choices.



05 | EVIDENCE-BASED BIRTH

Parents are given the tools they need to make informed decisions, based on current scientific evidence, to achieve a birth that's right for them.



06 | SPINNING BABIES

Spinning babies looks at solving possible birth problems by understanding different positions to help babies' transition out of the birth canal. It empowers parents to believe in their ability to give birth even if problems arise. It also gives mothers tips and tools to prepare their pregnant bodies to give birth and stay healthy. This is excellent for parents who have a baby that is in a breech position.



CLASSES



SCHEDULING CLASSES

Your 2nd or 3rd Trimester are the best times to sign up

Although taking childbirth classes won't guarantee the outcome you want, they will remove fear, prepare you for any changes, and give you some tips to deal with labor. There are other classes that can prepare you for early parenting and staying healthy.

ADDITIONAL CLASSES TO CONSIDER:

- Prenatal Health Classes
- VBAC Classes
- Parenting & Newborn Classes
- Breastfeeding Classes
- Prenatal Yoga/Pilates
- The Bradley Method
- Hypnobirthing
- Birthing from Within



PREMATURE LABOR

PREVENTING EARLY LABOR

Prematurity is one of the biggest causes of infant mortality. While we're not completely sure what causes premature labor, there are some ways to prevent it. Eating nutritious meals, exercising, attending all prenatal appointments, lowering stress and anxiety, and maintaining good dental care are all sound ways to decrease your chances of going into pre-term labor. Notify your doctor of discomfort such as pain during urination, foul-smelling urine, or itching or burning in your vaginal area. These could be issues such as urinary tract infections, STIs, yeast infections, and STDs; all things that can cause preterm labor.



CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THESE SIGNS:

- Bleeding (especially bright red blood from your vagina) at any time during pregnancy should be immediately reported to your caregiver
- Headaches, blurred vision, swelling of arms, hands, face, or pain right under your ribcage
- Decreased fetal movements (< 10 movements per hour)
- Signs of labor before 37 weeks, such as contractions of your uterus (four or more in an hour), menstrual-like cramps, or a dull ache in your lower back
- Pressure in your pelvis, groin, or thighs
- Increase or change in vaginal discharge, especially a gush of fluid



FAQs

CAN I HAVE SEX WHILE PREGNANT?

Yes, sex is generally safe to continue while pregnant, even in your third trimester. If you have concerns about the safety of positions, or if sex is safe for your situation, talk to your doctor.

I'M STILL BREASTFEEDING. CAN I CONTINUE WHILE PREGNANT?

Yes, you may continue, but it is common to experience uterine contractions while breastfeeding. Your doctor may advise against it if you have a history of preterm labor. Occasionally, moms may experience breastfeeding aversion (a strong feeling of disgust, irritation, or anger towards breastfeeding your older child). This is normal and you may choose to wean if you feel you can no longer continue. Talk to a lactation professional about weaning if this is something you wish to do.

IS EXERCISE SAFE DURING PREGNANCY?

You can exercise as you normally would, but it's not a good idea to pick up a new skill during your pregnancy. Again, speak with your provider about your specific situation.

CAN I TRAVEL ON A PLANE WHILE PREGNANT?

You can generally travel on a plane up until around 36 weeks pregnant. Guidelines for this varies among airlines, so it's a good idea to check with your specific airline about their rules and regulations for pregnant passengers. It's usually not recommended to travel when you are within a month of your delivery due date.

WHEN WILL I KNOW THE SEX OF MY BABY?

You can usually find out the sex of your baby at your anatomy scan (between 18-22 weeks pregnant), but now you can find out sooner via blood testing.

WHEN WILL I FEEL THE BABY MOVING?

Usually, you will feel your baby move between 16-22 weeks pregnant. Very thin mothers, or mothers on pregnancy number two or more, may feel their baby's movement as early as 14 weeks. Overweight and/or first-time mothers usually feel their babies move later, some as late as 26 weeks.



RESOURCES

F O R P A R E N T S

DOULA ORGANIZATIONS

- Doula Match
- DONA International
- Pro Doula
- CAPPA
- Black Doula Association

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- Suicide Prevention Lifeline
- National Domestic Violence Hotline
- SAMHSA Helpline
- Postpartum Support International

LACTATION PROFESSIONALS

- International Board Certified Lactation Consultant
- Certified Lactation Counselor

BLACK MOTHER RESOURCES

- Breastfeeding Rose
- Black Mamas Matter Alliance

PREGNANCY RESOURCES

- March of Dimes
- Spinning Babies
- Lamaze International
- Evidence Based Birth

COVID RESOURCES

- March of Dimes COVID-19 FAQs
- Evidence Based Birth COVID-19 Info
- Mayo Clinic Pregnancy & COVID-19



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