

SINAIHEALTH LINK

is produced by the Public Affairs

Department of Sinai Health System,

California Avenue at 15th Street, Chicago, IL 60608

HEALTH LINK

1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624)

HAVING A HEALTHY BABY

Taking care of yourself when you're pregnant is the best way to have a healthy baby and be a healthy mom.

But first, you have to know you're pregnant. How? For a woman with regular periods, missing one is usually an accurate sign, says E. Charles Lampley, MD, an OB doctor at Mount Sinai Hospital in Chicago.

"Another sign is simply if you think you're pregnant," Dr. Lampley says. "It changes your life, and many women feel different and just know."

Make sure by going to your doctor or a clinic. Pregnancy tests from stores are often wrong, Dr. Lampley says. The blood test your doctor gives you is much better.

Early in your pregnancy, you may feel tired, your breasts may be sore, and you may have morning sickness. By 12 weeks, the sick feeling usually disappears. If it doesn't, avoid fatty foods, eat crackers when you feel sick, and drink flat ginger ale or cola. In more serious cases, medicine can help.

As your uterus, or womb, grows, you may want to go to the bathroom more often – even if you don't really need to. In a few weeks, the feeling usually goes away. It may come back



In Mount Sinai Hospital's maternal and child center, you can deliver your baby in a spacious, beautifully furnished room, surrounded by the latest medical equipment and the finest care.

For information, call

1-888-AT-SINAI

(1-888-287-4624)

TTY (773) 257-6289

late in your pregnancy, when the baby's position shifts to the lower abdomen.

You may also have problems with constipation. If you do, eat lots of fruits and vegetables, and drink lots of fluids (like water and fruit juice).

During the first four months of pregnancy, the hormones in your body change quickly. That can make you feel anxious or depressed. Try to relax. The feeling will go away. If it doesn't, tell your doctor.

If everything is OK, how often should you see your doctor?

"If there are no risk factors, once a month for the first 28 weeks is just fine," Dr. Lampley says. Women who develop diabetes or high blood pressure during pregnancy, or who have

a history of early delivery, should see the doctor more often.

The doctor may use ultrasound to figure out how fast the fetus is growing, its age, and whether there's more than one baby. Also, between 15 and 20 weeks, you will get a blood test to check for certain risks. But nearly all unborn children are fine, as long as mom takes care of herself.

Starting with the 28th week – the third trimester – see your doctor every two weeks.

continued on back

By then, it may be harder to move around, and your back may hurt. Vaginal discharge is common. Keep yourself as clean as possible.

About one woman in four bleeds vaginally. It's called spotting. It could be a sign of a problem, or it may mean nothing serious at all. If it happens, tell your doctor.

In the final stage of pregnancy, you may have trouble falling asleep. And you may find yourself short of breath because of the extra load you're carrying. Dr. Lampley suggests propping yourself on pillows at night, and lying on your left side. That gets more blood to the baby.

Tips for having a healthy baby

- **Eat a well-balanced diet** of meat and meat substitutes, milk products, vegetables, fruits and grains, all in reasonable amounts. It is normal to gain 25 to 40 pounds during pregnancy.
- **Continue your current exercise program**, but don't begin a strenuous one after you become pregnant.
- **Avoid cigarettes.** Smoking puts babies at risk.
- **Avoid drugs.** Ask your doctor if it is all right to keep taking medicine you are on – even over-the-counter medicines like aspirin. IV drugs put the baby at risk for hepatitis, AIDS and other problems.
- **Avoid alcohol.** It can lead to serious birth defects.
- **See a doctor as soon as you think you might be pregnant.** Give a complete medical history. If you don't like the doctor, find a different one. You receive the best care when you and your doctor are partners in care.

To learn more about getting a Sinai obstetrician or about delivering your baby at Mount Sinai's beautiful maternal and child center, call 1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624).

Don't worry if your baby hasn't come by the due date – it's only an estimate.

When the time is near, many women feel the first signs of labor, rush to the hospital, and then find out it's a false alarm.

But if you feel pain every five minutes for two hours, it's probably the real thing. After that, labor pains come more often and are sharper – so you may want to speak to your doctor about medicine that can ease the pain. The uterus hardens, the birth canal widens and, after some hard work by you, you've got a beautiful baby.

Congratulations, Mom.



Ask your Sinai doctor

Q. *Now that I'm pregnant, I get lots of advice. Some is good, and some is really strange. What's true?*

A. Here are a few things that are true:

- You can't tell a baby's sex from the shape of the mother's abdomen.
- If a mother has a surgical delivery – a Cesarean section – she can usually deliver future babies vaginally.
- There's no guarantee a woman won't become pregnant if she is nursing.
- Reaching for objects above your head does not mean your child will be born with a loop of cord around its neck.
- Wearing a tight binder or girdle around your abdomen after birth won't restore your figure. That takes exercise and diet.

HEALTHY LIVING TIP

During pregnancy, drink plenty of fluids. Pregnant women should have at least four 8 oz. glasses of water a day, plus extra milk or juice.