

# Pregnancy

Permafold®



## Topics

1. Prenatal Care
2. Pregnancy Safety Tips
3. Exercise Safely
4. Eat Smart
5. Manage Common Complaints
6. Reasons to Contact Your Provider



Reviewed and Approved by the Senior Medical Advisory Board

This Permafold® is not meant to take the place of expert medical care or treatment. Follow your doctor's or health care provider's advice.

## 1. Prenatal Care

Prenatal care is the care you get from a doctor or other health care provider(s) and the care you give yourself while you are pregnant. Prenatal care is very important. The health care provider you have now may provide prenatal care or you may need to see someone else. Go to your prenatal visits. Follow your provider's advice. Ask questions you need answers to.

### A Common Schedule For Prenatal Visits Is:

- A first visit
- Every 3 to 4 weeks from the first visit to 28 weeks into the pregnancy
- Every 2 weeks from weeks 28 to 36
- Every week from week 36 until your baby is born



Prenatal visits will be scheduled to meet your needs.

At visits, your health care provider will weigh you, feel your abdomen, and take your blood pressure. At certain visits, you will:

- Give a blood sample to test for anemia
- Give a blood sample for a protein called AFP and for certain hormones. Very high or low levels of these markers screen for certain birth defects.
- After about week 12, have your provider listen to your baby's heartbeat
- Get tested for the type of diabetes that some women get when they are pregnant
- Get tested for group B strep

What actually happens at each visit will depend on your needs at the time.

A common test done to check on the health status of your baby is an ultrasound. This uses sound waves to create a picture of the baby growing in your womb. Most often, this test confirms that your baby is doing well.



If needed, your provider will order special tests, such as an amniocentesis, to check for certain birth defects and other problems.

## 2. Pregnancy Safety Tips

- Don't take any medicine (with or without a prescription) unless okay with your health care provider.
- Get plenty of rest. Manage stress.
- Don't have X-rays unless your prenatal health care provider says it's okay.
- Avoid harmful chemicals (e.g., paint fumes, insect poisons, etc.). When you use cleaning agents, wear rubber gloves.
- Don't wear high-heeled shoes.
- Don't pick up, carry, or move heavy objects.
- Stay out of hot tubs and saunas. When you bathe, use warm (not hot) water. Use a rubber mat in the tub and shower to prevent slipping.
- Don't handle cat feces or cat litter. If you have a cat, have someone else empty the litter box. Cat droppings can carry a disease called toxoplasmosis. If a pregnant woman gets this disease, the baby can be harmed. It's okay to pet your cat, though.
- Ask your health care provider if your work life is healthy for you and your baby.
- Wear lap and shoulder seat belts when you ride in a vehicle. Fasten the lap belt as low as you can below your abdomen.

## 3. Exercise Safely

You may be able to do the exercises you did before you got pregnant. Follow your health care provider's advice.

### Safe Exercises

- Walking, low-impact aerobic exercises, and golfing
- Swimming and water exercises
- Riding a stationary bike
- Yoga, stretching exercises, and exercises for strength
- Kegel exercises, which strengthen the muscles of the pelvic floor. Ask your provider how to do them.



### Exercise Cautions

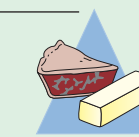
- Check your pulse when you exercise. Don't let your heart rate go over 140 beats per minute.
- Don't get overheated or dehydrated. This could happen if you work out in hot, humid weather or use saunas or hot tubs. Drink an extra 4 to 8 ounces of liquid for every 15 minutes of active exercise. Drink more in warm weather or if you sweat a lot.
- Avoid any sport or activity with a risk of blows to your abdomen or risk of a hard fall (e.g., contact sports, horseback riding, water skiing, etc.).
- Don't do high-impact aerobics or any exercises that make you bounce or jerk a lot. Don't do deep knee bends, full sit-ups, and straight-leg toe touches.
- Don't exercise without shoes.
- Stop exercising if you feel pain; feel strong, rapid heartbeats; have a hard time breathing; or feel lightheaded or dizzy.
- After 20 weeks of pregnancy, don't do exercises that have you lie on your back on the floor. During month 9, stretch and walk only.

## 4. Eat Smart

Choose foods wisely. Use the USDA Food Guide Pyramid for Pregnant Women.

### Fats & Sweets

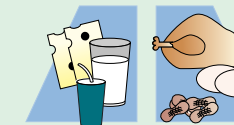
Eat only a little bit



**Note:** When changes are made to this Food Pyramid, you can learn more about them from the internet. Go to this Web site: [www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov).

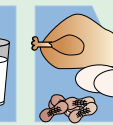
### Milk, Yogurt & Cheese

3 to 4 servings per day



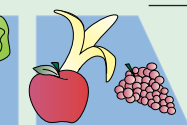
### Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs & Nuts

3 to 4 servings (2 oz. each) per day



### Vegetables

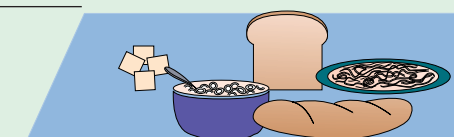
3 to 5 servings per day



### Fruits

2 to 4 servings per day

**\*Note:** Follow your health care provider's advice on what to eat.



### Bread, Cereal, Rice & Pasta

6 to 11 servings per day

- Don't diet during pregnancy.
- Drink at least 8 to 10 cups of fluid every day. Follow your provider's advice for liquids (and foods) with caffeine.
- Don't eat fish high in mercury (shark, swordfish, tilefish and king mackerel). Ask your provider how much tuna fish and other fish you should eat weekly.
- Don't drink alcoholic beverages.
- Take prenatal vitamins as advised by your provider. They don't take the place of healthy foods, but give extra amounts of needed nutrients such as folic acid.
- Watch your salt intake if your provider tells you to.
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before you eat them.
- Limit your exposure to harmful bacteria. Don't eat raw or rare meat. Wash your hands after you handle raw meat. Don't eat soft, unpasteurized cheeses (e.g., Brie and Camembert) and foods with raw eggs (e.g., cookie batter and homemade eggnog).
- Tell your provider if you are craving things that aren't food, such as laundry starch, clay, or dirt.

### Weight Gain

Follow your health care provider's advice about weight gain.

An average weight gain is 24 to 34 pounds. You may need to gain more weight if you carry more than one baby or if you were thin before you were pregnant.

### How Do the Pounds Add Up?

Source	Weight in Pounds at Baby's Birth
Baby's weight	7 to 8
Uterus increase	2
Amniotic sac and amniotic fluid	2
Placenta	2
More blood in your body	3 to 5
More fluid in your tissues	3 to 5
Breast increase	1 to 3
Fat and protein stored in your body	4 to 7
<b>Sample total weight gain:</b>	<b>24 to 34</b>



## 5. Manage Common Complaints

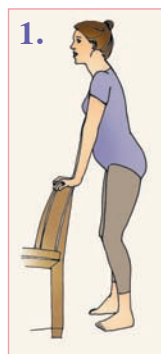
Your body goes through a lot of changes during the pregnancy. Tips that follow can help with the common complaints that result from these changes.

### For Backaches

- Have someone massage your lower back.
- Apply a hot water bottle, etc. to your back.
- Do relaxation and deep breathing exercises. Do yoga.
- Ask your provider for exercises to strengthen back and abdominal muscles. An example is the “pelvic rock.”

### Step One

- Stand 2 feet away from the back of a chair.
- Put your hands on the chair’s back. Keep your elbows straight.
- Bend a little forward from your hips.



### Step Two

- Push your hips backward and relax the muscles in your belly. Relax your back.
- Bend your knees a little.



### Step Three

- Slowly pull your hips forward.
- Tuck your buttocks under as if someone were pushing you from behind.

### Step Four

- Repeat steps 1, 2, and 3.
- Ask your provider about a back support girdle.
- Wear shoes with low (but not flat) heels.



- Practice good posture. Stand straight. If you have to stand for a long time, stretch your feet and shift your weight. Rest one foot and then the other on a footstool, etc.
- Sleep on a firm mattress or with a board under the mattress.
- Lie on your left side with your knees bent. Bend the upper knee more than the lower knee. Put a pillow between your legs and one behind your back.
- Sit on a straight chair with good back support and put a pillow at the small of your back. Rest one or both feet on a footstool, etc.

### For Constipation

- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water and other liquids (without caffeine) every day.
- Exercise as advised by your health care provider.
- Every day, have foods with fiber (bran, whole-grain breads and cereals, dried fruits, fresh fruits and vegetables).
- Use the toilet when you get the urge. Rest your feet on a footstool to keep you from straining.
- Ask your health care provider about stool softeners. Don’t take laxatives or enemas.

### For Headaches

- Eat at regular times throughout the day to avoid being hungry.
- Rest in a quiet, dark room with your eyes closed.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Relax. Picture a calm, soothing place. Breathe slowly and deeply.
- Massage the base of your skull with your thumbs. Work from the ears toward the center of the back of your head. Next, rub gently along the sides of your eyes. Then rub your shoulders, neck, and jaw.



- Get a foot massage. The big toes are acupressure sites for the head.
- Take a warm bath or shower.
- Apply a warm or cold washcloth to the area that aches. Or put an ice pack on the back or top of your head.
- Exercise as advised by your health care provider.

### For Heartburn

- Avoid the things you know cause you heartburn.
- Sit straight, stand up, or walk when you can.
- Eat several small (not 3 large) meals a day. Don’t bend over or lie down after eating. Don’t eat foods that are fried, spicy, or that have a lot of fat.
- Wear slacks and skirts that fit loosely.
- When you bend, use your knees, not your waist.
- Follow your provider’s advice about weight gain during pregnancy.
- Don’t take medicines for heartburn that you can buy without a prescription. Tums®, Maalox®, and Mylanta® are okay, but check with your provider first.
- Don’t take baking soda.
- If you have heartburn when you sleep, have someone raise the head of your bed 6 inches.



### For Hemorrhoids

- Don’t strain to pass stool.
- Eat foods high in fiber and drink plenty of fluids.
- Use an over-the-counter hemorrhoid cream, etc. if okay with your provider.
- Use a sitz bath (a basin that fits over the toilet).

### For Leg Cramps

- Before you go to bed, stretch your calf muscles.
- Massage your calf muscles or apply heat to them.
- Don’t point your toes when you exercise or stretch.

### For Morning Sickness

- Keep crackers or dry cereal by your bed to eat in bed before you lift your head up.
- If you can, sit in bed for a half hour before you get up. Get up and out of bed slowly.
- Eat small, regular meals and snacks throughout the day. Have a good source of protein with each one (e.g., low-fat milk, yogurt, low-fat cheese, meat, poultry). Have a snack before you go to bed and during the night if you wake up.
- Eat foods that taste good to you. Avoid ones with smells that bother you.
- Wear a motion sickness wrist band (e.g. Sea-Bands®).
- Take your prenatal vitamins with meals, not on an empty stomach. One prenatal vitamin called Premises® helps nausea.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Don’t take any home remedies or medicine without your health care provider’s okay.



### For Swollen Ankles and Legs and Varicose Veins

- Don’t sit or stand too long at one time.
- When you sit, don’t cross your legs. Elevate them.
- Wear support pantyhose, not stockings or socks with tight-fitting elastic tops.

- Get regular exercise, such as walking.
- Lie down on your left side. Raise your legs on pillows, etc.

## 6. Reasons to Contact Your Provider

Your health care provider will tell you how to contact him or her when you have certain symptoms, problems, and when you think you are in labor.

### Contact Your Provider the Same Day For:

- Burning, itching, or pain when you pass urine
- Gaining 5 or more pounds in 1 to 2 days
- A fever between 100.4°F (38°C) and 101°F (38.3°C)
- Vaginal spotting of blood

### Contact Your Provider Right Away For:

- Bright red vaginal bleeding and/or severe pain in the abdomen
- Extreme swelling of the hands, face, and/or feet with a headache; dizziness; seeing double or spots before your eyes; and severe pain in the top right part of your abdomen
- A fever that occurs with any of these problems:
  - Back pain
  - Burning, itching, and/or pain while you pass urine
  - Swelling, redness, or pus on any skin area
  - Vomiting



- A fever over 101°F (38.3°C)
- Constant headache
- Being more than 30 weeks pregnant and feeling no movement from your baby for 8 to 12 hours or no movement 1 to 2 hours after you eat a meal
- Signs of labor before week 38 of your pregnancy. (See “Signs of Labor” below.)

### Signs of Labor

- Contractions that occur at regular intervals, come closer together as time goes on, and continue when you move around. Contractions feel like menstrual cramps or a bad backache.
- Sudden gush or trickle of fluid from your vagina. (Your water breaks.)
- Vaginal discharge of a thick mucus or increase in clear, pink, or bloody liquid from the vagina
- Pressure in your pelvis, back, or in the insides of your thighs. It feels like the baby is pushing down.



### For Information, Contact:

American College of Obstetrician and Gynecologists  
800.762.2264 or [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org)

The National Women’s Health Information Center  
800.994.WOMAN or [www.4woman.gov](http://www.4woman.gov)

For free health information, access the American Institute for Preventive Medicine’s Web site: [www.HealthyLife.com](http://www.HealthyLife.com) and click on “Online Products / 365 Health Topics.”