



Home Birth Information

Welcome to Nature to Nurture Midwifery

Congratulations on your pregnancy! We are honored to support you during this special season. Below are some general wellness recommendations and commonly used comfort measures for pregnancy.

Please note: This information is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for personalized medical care. Always discuss concerns, symptoms, or medication questions directly.

Healthy Pregnancy Basics

Hydration & Nutrition

- Aim for **64–100 oz of water daily**, or more if you are active or experiencing nausea/vomiting.
- Eat balanced meals that include:
 - Protein
 - Healthy fats
 - Whole grains
 - Fruits and vegetables
- Try eating small, frequent meals if large meals worsen nausea or heartburn.
- Limit highly processed foods and excess sugar whenever possible.

Prenatal Vitamins

- Take a daily prenatal vitamin as recommended by your provider.
- Look for one containing:
 - Folic acid/folate
 - Iron
 - DHA (if recommended)
- If prenatal vitamins upset your stomach, try taking them with food or before bed.

Rest & Movement

- Prioritize sleep and rest as your body adjusts to pregnancy.
- Gentle exercise is often beneficial, such as:
 - Walking
 - Swimming
 - Prenatal exercises
 - Light stretching
- Stop activity and contact your provider if you experience dizziness, pain, bleeding, or contractions.

Foods & Substances to Avoid During Pregnancy

Avoid:

- Alcohol
- Smoking or nicotine products
- Recreational drugs
- Medications not approved by your provider

Food Safety Guidelines

Avoid or limit:

- Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs
- Sushi or raw fish
- Unpasteurized milk, cheeses, or juices
- Raw sprouts
- Deli meats and hot dogs unless heated until steaming hot

Fish Guidelines

Choose low-mercury fish such as:

- Salmon
- Shrimp
- Cod
- Sardines
- Trout

Limit or avoid high-mercury fish, including:

- Swordfish
- Shark
- King mackerel
- Tilefish
- Bigeye tuna

Additional Safety Recommendations

Caffeine

- Limit caffeine intake to about **200 mg daily** (approximately 1–2 small cups of coffee).

Heat Exposure

Avoid prolonged overheating from:

- Hot tubs
- Saunas
- Very hot baths

Skincare & Medications

Avoid products containing:

- Retinoids/Retinol
- Certain acne medications unless approved by your provider

Household & Environmental Precautions

- Avoid changing cat litter when possible. If necessary, wear gloves and wash hands thoroughly.
- Limit exposure to harsh chemicals, paints, fumes, and pesticides.

Dental Health

Good dental care is important during pregnancy.

- Continue routine cleanings and dental exams
- Inform your dentist that you are pregnant
- Dental X-rays may be done with proper shielding if necessary

Common Pregnancy Comfort Tips

For Nausea

Try:

- Small frequent meals
- Keeping crackers by your bedside
- Eating protein-rich snacks
- Ginger tea, ginger chews, or ginger capsules
- Vitamin B6 (only as directed)
- Acupressure wristbands (such as Sea-Bands)

For Heartburn

Helpful strategies:

- Eat smaller meals
- Avoid spicy, greasy, or acidic foods if they trigger symptoms
- Stay upright after meals for at least 1 hour
- Avoid eating right before bedtime

For Constipation

Try:

- Increasing water intake
- Eating more fiber-rich foods
- Gentle daily movement
- Prunes, chia seeds, or magnesium if approved by provider

For Swelling

- Elevate your feet when possible
- Stay hydrated
- Avoid standing for long periods
- Wear supportive socks or compression stockings if recommended

For Hemorrhoids

Helpful measures may include:

- Sitz baths
- Witch hazel pads
- Increased fiber and fluids
- Stool softeners if approved by your provider

Common Over-the-Counter Medications

Only take medications after checking with your provider.

Commonly approved medications may include:

Cold Symptoms

- Saline nasal spray
- Plain cough drops
- Certain cold medications as approved individually

Digestive Support

- Tums
- Pepcid
- Stool softeners (as recommended)

Hemorrhoid Relief

- Preparation H
- Tucks pads
- Witch hazel products

Avoid unless specifically approved:

- Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)
- Aspirin (unless prescribed)

When to Call Your Provider

Please contact us if you experience:

- Heavy bleeding
- Severe abdominal pain
- Persistent vomiting
- Fever
- Severe headache not relieved with rest/hydration
- Sudden swelling of face or hands
- Decreased fetal movement (later pregnancy)
- Signs of labor or leaking fluid

We're Here for You

Pregnancy comes with many questions, and no concern is too small.

Nature to Nurture Midwifery

Questions or concerns? Please reach out anytime.

Weight Gain During Pregnancy

How much weight you should gain while pregnant depends on your starting body mass index (BMI). Your BMI uses your height and weight to show if you are underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese. Check the BMI chart in this packet or ask your midwife to help you find your number.

Healthy Weight Gain Goals:

- **Underweight** (BMI under 18.5): 28–40 pounds
- **Normal weight** (BMI 18.5–24.9): 25–35 pounds
- **Overweight** (BMI 25–29.9): 15–25 pounds
- **Obese** (BMI 30 or higher): 11–20 pounds

Gaining the right amount helps your baby grow healthy. Talk with your midwife about what is best for you.

Eating Well During Pregnancy

In early pregnancy, many women feel nauseous or have food aversions. You need about 300–400 extra calories a day compared to before pregnancy. Eating small meals or snacks every few hours often feels better than big meals.

Focus on healthy choices:

- At least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day
- Whole grains like brown rice or whole wheat bread
- Protein foods such as lean meat, eggs, beans, or peanut butter
- Cut back on fried foods, sugary drinks, desserts, and fatty meats

Your baby's growth depends on the food you eat. Good nutrition gives your baby a steady supply of what they need.

What if you gain too little weight?

Babies may be born too early or too small. This can cause breathing or feeding problems right after birth and sometimes learning challenges later. Let your midwife know if you are having trouble gaining weight.

What if you gain too much weight?

Extra weight raises your chance of gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, and needing a C-section. Your baby may be larger than usual, and it can be harder to lose the weight after birth. Babies who are very large at birth also have a higher chance of being overweight as children.

Exercise During Pregnancy

Exercise is safe and helpful for most pregnant women. It can:

- Reduce back pain and constipation
- Improve your mood and energy
- Help you sleep better
- Make labor shorter and easier
- Lower your chance of gestational diabetes and high blood pressure
- Help you return to your pre-pregnancy weight faster

Aim for: 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days. You should be able to talk while exercising but still be working a little hard.

Good, safe activities:

- Walking
- Swimming
- Prenatal exercise or gentle stretching
- Stationary bike
- Light weight training
- Dancing or low-impact aerobics

Exercises to avoid:

- Contact sports (soccer, basketball, hockey)
- Activities with high fall risk (skiing, gymnastics, horseback riding)
- Scuba diving
- Heavy weight lifting (over 50 pounds)
- Anything that could hit your belly

Important safety tips:

- Warm up and stretch before exercising
- Drink plenty of water
- Don't get overheated
- Avoid lying flat on your back after the first trimester
- Listen to your body — stop if you feel dizzy, short of breath, have chest pain, bleeding, or contractions

Always check with your midwife before starting a new exercise routine, especially if you have any health conditions or pregnancy complications.

Talk to Your Midwife

Every pregnancy is different. Your midwife will help you set healthy goals for weight gain, nutrition, and activity that are right for you and your baby. We're here to support you every step of the way!

Feel free to bring any questions to your next visit.

GDM Screening

GDM screening is a test done during pregnancy to check if a woman has gestational diabetes. Gestational diabetes is a type of high blood sugar that starts *during* pregnancy. Many women don't feel any symptoms, so testing is the only way to know if it's there.

Why This Test Matters

During pregnancy, the body makes hormones that can make it harder to use insulin. When insulin doesn't work well, blood sugar can rise too high. If this isn't found early, it can lead to problems like:

- A baby growing too large
- A more difficult delivery
- Low blood sugar in the newborn

Catching it early helps keep both mom and baby safe.

When the Test Happens

Most women take the test between **24 and 28 weeks** of pregnancy. Some women who have higher risk factors—like being overweight, having a family history of diabetes, or having had GDM before—may be tested earlier.

How the Screening Works

There are a few parts to GDM screening, and Midwives may use different methods.

The Glucose Drink Test - Fresh Test

- You drink a sweet liquid, and your blood sugar is checked afterward. This is often the first step.

The Longer Glucose Tolerance Test

- If the first test is high, you come back for a longer test. You fast overnight, drink another sweet drink, and your blood is checked several times over a few hours.

Finger Sticks

- We use finger stick checks as part of the screening process. A finger stick is a quick poke on the fingertip to get a small drop of blood. These checks help the Midwives see how your body is handling sugar in real time.

Your Right to Decline

- Even though GDM screening is strongly recommended for the health of both mother and baby, **mothers always have the right to decline**. If someone chooses not to take the test, the Midwives will explain the possible risks and discuss other options. The goal is to support informed decisions, not force them.

After the Baby Is Born

Most of the time, blood sugar goes back to normal. But women who have had GDM have a higher chance of developing type 2 diabetes later. Because of that, Midwives check blood sugar again a few weeks after birth and then every few years.

GBS Screening

GBS screening is a test done late in pregnancy to check for Group B Strep, a type of bacteria that many adults carry without even knowing it. It usually doesn't make the mother sick, but it *can* cause serious problems for a newborn if it passes on to the baby during birth.

What Group B Strep Is

Group B Strep (GBS) is a common germ that lives in the body, often in the vagina or rectum. Most adults never notice it and don't need treatment unless they are pregnant.

What GBS Can Cause

If a mother carries GBS during labor, the bacteria can spread to the baby. This can lead to:

- Breathing problems
- Blood infections
- Meningitis (a serious infection around the brain)

Because newborns are more fragile, Midwives check for GBS so they can prevent these complications.

How the Test Is Done

GBS screening usually happens between **36 and 37 weeks** of pregnancy.

The test is simple and quick:

- A swab is gently wiped across the vagina and rectum
- The sample is sent to the lab to see if GBS is present

No needles, no blood draw — just a swab.

Fem Dophilus

Many Midwives **encourage the use of Fem Dophilus**, a probiotic that supports healthy vaginal bacteria. While it doesn't replace medical treatment, it may help create an environment that makes it harder for Group B Strep to grow.

Your Right to Decline

Even though GBS screening is strongly recommended for the baby's safety, **mothers always have the right to decline**. If someone chooses not to be tested, the Midwives will explain the possible risks and discuss what that means for labor and delivery.

Breastfeeding Basics

Breastfeeding is the natural way for a mother to feed her baby with her own milk. Breast milk has the perfect mix of nutrients, antibodies, and healthy fats that help a baby grow and stay protected from sickness.

Why Breastfeeding Matters

Breast milk:

- Helps the baby fight infections
- It is easy for the baby to digest
- Changes as the baby grows to meet their needs
- Supports bonding between mom and baby

For the mother, breastfeeding can help the uterus shrink back to size and may lower the risk of certain health problems later in life.

How Breastfeeding Works

Breastfeeding is a supply and demand process. The more often the baby nurses, the more milk the body makes.

A good feeding usually includes:

- **A deep latch** (baby's mouth covers most of the areola, not just the nipple)
- **Rhythmic sucking and swallowing**
- **Comfort for the mother** — breastfeeding should not be painful once the latch is correct

How Often Babies Eat

Newborns usually eat:

- Every 2–3 hours
- About 8–12 times a day

As they grow, feedings may become longer and more spaced out.

Signs Baby Is Getting Enough Milk

- Steady weight gain
- Several wet diapers a day
- Regular bowel movements
- Baby seems content after feeding

Crying alone does not always mean hunger — babies cry for many reasons.

Common Challenges

Some mothers may experience:

- Sore nipples
- Engorgement (breasts feeling overly full)
- Trouble with latching
- Worries about milk supply

These issues are common and usually improve with support and practice.

Pumping and Storing Milk

Mothers can use a breast pump to collect milk for later. Stored milk can be kept:

- In the fridge for a short time
- In the freezer for longer periods

This helps when the mother returns to work or needs someone else to feed the baby.

Support Matters

Breastfeeding often goes more smoothly with:

- Encouragement
- Good information
- Help from a lactation consultant if needed

No mother should feel alone in the process.

Dental Hygiene in Pregnancy

Good dental hygiene is especially important during pregnancy because the body goes through big hormonal changes that can affect the gums, teeth, and overall oral health.

Why Dental Care Matters During Pregnancy

Pregnancy hormones can make the gums:

- More sensitive
- More likely to swell
- More likely to bleed when brushing or flossing

This can lead to **pregnancy gingivitis**, a common condition where the gums become red, puffy, and sore. If it isn't cared for, it can turn into a more serious gum infection.

Poor dental health during pregnancy has also been linked to:

- Increased inflammation
- Higher risk of gum disease
- Possible complications if infections spread

Taking care of the mouth helps protect both the mother and the baby.

Common Dental Changes in Pregnancy

Some women notice:

- Bleeding gums
- Tender or swollen gums
- More plaque buildup
- Tooth sensitivity
- A higher chance of cavities, especially if morning sickness is frequent

Stomach acid from vomiting can weaken tooth enamel, so gentle care is important.

How to Care for Teeth and Gums

Daily habits make a big difference:

- Brush twice a day with a soft toothbrush
- Floss once a day to remove plaque between teeth
- Rinse with water after vomiting to protect enamel
- Use toothpaste with fluoride for extra strength

Regular dental checkups are safe during pregnancy and help catch problems early.

Dental Visits During Pregnancy

Routine cleanings and exams are encouraged. Dentists can safely:

- Treat cavities
- Manage gum problems
- Take X-rays with proper shielding if needed

Let the dentist know you're pregnant so they can adjust care if necessary.

Healthy Habits That Support Oral Health

- Drink plenty of water
- Limit sugary snacks
- Choose healthy foods that support teeth and gums
- Avoid tobacco and alcohol

These habits help keep the mouth healthy and support the baby's development.

Your Right to Decline

Mothers always have the right to decline any dental procedure. If someone chooses to wait or skip a treatment, the dental team will explain the risks and help plan safe alternatives.

When to Call the Midwife for Emergencies

During pregnancy, it's important to know the signs that mean you should call your midwife right away. These warning signs help protect both the mother and the baby.

Bleeding

Call immediately if you have:

- Bright red bleeding
- Bleeding that soaks a pad
- Bleeding with pain or cramping

Light spotting can happen, but anything more than that should be checked right away.

No Baby Movement

By the third trimester, most babies have a regular pattern of movement. Call your midwife if:

- You feel **no movement**
- The baby is moving **much less than usual**
- You try drinking something cold or lying on your side and still feel nothing

A sudden change in movement is important to report.

Contractions Too Early

Call if you are **not fullterm**, and you notice:

- Regular contractions
- Tightening that comes and goes
- Back pain that doesn't go away
- Pressure low in the pelvis
- Fluid leaking or a gush of water

These can be signs of preterm labor.

Severe Pain

Call right away if you have:

- Strong abdominal pain
- Pain that doesn't improve
- Pain with fever, vomiting, or bleeding

Severe pain is never something to ignore.

Fluid Leaking

If you think your water broke — even if it's just a slow trickle — call your midwife. They will help you figure out if it's amniotic fluid or something else.

Signs of Infection

Call if you have:

- Fever
- Chills
- Burning when you pee
- Strong-smelling discharge
- Sudden swelling in your face or hands

These can be signs that your body needs quick care.

Headache, Vision Changes, or Swelling

These symptoms can be warning signs of high blood pressure. Call if you notice:

- A headache that won't go away
- Blurry vision or flashing lights
- Swelling that appears suddenly

Trust Your Instincts

If something feels "off," or you're worried, it's always okay to call. Midwives expect questions and would rather check on you than have you wait too long.

Postpartum Basics for Mom and Baby

The postpartum period is the time right after birth when both the mother and the baby are adjusting to big changes. This season can be joyful, tiring, emotional, and full of learning — all at the same time.

For the Mother

Physical Recovery

After giving birth, the body needs time to heal. It's normal to experience:

- Bleeding (called lochia) for several weeks
- Cramping as the uterus shrinks back down
- Soreness, especially if there were stitches or a Csection
- Tiredness from labor and nighttime feedings

Rest, hydration, and gentle movement help the body recover.

Emotional Changes

Hormones shift quickly after birth, which can lead to:

- Mood swings
- Tearfulness
- Feeling overwhelmed

These feelings are common in the first couple of weeks. But if sadness or anxiety becomes heavy or lasts longer, it's important to reach out for help.

Breastfeeding or BottleFeeding

Mothers may breastfeed, pump, or use formula — every family chooses what works best. If breastfeeding, the first days may include:

- Learning how to latch
- Tender nipples
- Engorgement as milk comes in

Support makes a huge difference during this stage.

Warning Signs for Mom

Call a Midwife right away for:

- Heavy bleeding
- Fever
- Severe headache
- Chest pain
- Thoughts of harming yourself or the baby

These symptoms need quick attention.

For the Baby

Feeding

Newborns eat often — usually every 2–3 hours. Whether breastfed or formulafed, babies should:

- Have several wet diapers a day
- Gain weight steadily
- Seems satisfied after feeding

Crying alone doesn't always mean hunger.

Sleep

Newborns sleep a lot — often 16–18 hours a day — but in short stretches. They wake often to eat, which is normal and healthy.

Diapers and Stools

In the first days, stools change from dark and sticky to yellow and loose. Wet diapers increase as the baby gets enough milk or formula.

Bonding and Comfort

Babies feel safest when held close. Skintosome time helps:

- Regulate their temperature
- Calm their breathing
- Strengthen the parentbaby bond

Crying is their main way of communicating, not a sign of misbehavior.

Warning Signs for Baby

Call a Midwife right away if the baby has:

- Trouble breathing
- A fever
- No wet diapers
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes
- Poor feeding or extreme sleepiness

Quick care can make a big difference.

The Heart of the Postpartum Season

This time is about healing, learning, and growing together. Mothers need support, rest, and encouragement. Babies need closeness, feeding, and gentle care. No one is expected to do it alone.

Negative Blood Types & Rhogam

What a Negative Blood Type Means

Everyone has a blood type, like **A**, **B**, **AB**, or **O**. On top of that, each type is either **positive (+)** or **negative (-)**.

The positive or negative part comes from something called the **Rh factor** — a tiny protein on the surface of red blood cells.

- If you *have* the Rh protein → you are **Rhpositive**
- If you *don't* have it → you are **Rhnegative**

Being Rhnegative is not an illness. It just means your blood is missing that protein.

Why It Matters in Pregnancy

Problems can happen **only if**:

- The mother is **Rh negative**, and
- The baby is **Rh positive**

This can happen if the baby's father is Rh positive.

If the baby's blood mixes with the mother's blood (which can happen during pregnancy or birth), the mother's body may see the baby's Rhpositive cells as "foreign" and start making **antibodies** against them.

These antibodies don't usually affect the first baby, but they can cause serious problems in future pregnancies if not prevented.

What Rhogam Is

Rhogam is a medicine that **protects Rh negative mothers**. It stops the mother's body from making those harmful antibodies.

Rhogam is usually given:

- Around **28 weeks** of pregnancy
- Again, after birth, **if the baby is Rh positive**
- Sometimes, after bleeding, miscarriage, or certain procedures

It's a simple shot that keeps future pregnancies safer.

What Rhogam Does

Rhogam acts like a shield. It clears away any Rhpositive cells from the baby *before* the mother's immune system reacts to them.

This prevents the mother from becoming "sensitized," which means her body won't attack Rh positive blood in future pregnancies.

Summary of Negative Blood Types & Rhogam

- Rh negative blood is normal — it just lacks the Rh protein.
- It becomes important only in pregnancy if the baby is Rh-positive.
- Rhogam protects the mother and future babies by preventing harmful antibodies from being passed to them.