

pregnancy guidebook



welcome to the pregnancy guidebook

Congratulations on your pregnancy! I'm so glad you're here. Pregnancy is such a beautiful time in our lives where we, as women, have the opportunity to grow and sustain life inside our bodies. I am in constant awe of what our bodies are built to do! As our bodies do this incredible work, we may feel symptoms of pregnancy too. In this guide, you will find tips to use for some of the symptoms you may experience, foods to eat, herbs to use, baby information, and our "To Do Lists" for each trimester are included as well.

Note that the following are guidelines and information for you regarding pregnancy and what to expect. Each woman is unique in her own way and will experience pregnancy differently. Each body may or may not experience the symptoms listed, may experience them in a different trimester, or may have a symptom not discussed in this guidebook. Baby's development is also approximate: each little one will grow at their own pace both inside the womb and outside. If you have any questions about your care, your health, your pregnancy, or your baby's development, please reach out to your provider. Any of the suggested remedies, herbs, foods, supplements, and medications should also be checked with your care team as your personal conditions should be taken into consideration before use.

first trimester

0-13 Weeks

The first trimester is typically when most people find out they are pregnant, schedule their first ultrasound appointment, and see their little baby and hear the heartbeat for the first time. It is filled with hormonal changes in the body and fatigue while your body is busy creating the baby's home – consisting of the placenta, amniotic sac, and umbilical cord. At the end of this trimester, you can find out the baby's sex at the earliest.



*your heart will be filled
with more joy and love
than you ever imagined*

Brief Week by Week Development

Pregnancy is actually counted from the first day of your last cycle

0 Weeks – Menstrual cycle & follicular phase

1 Week – Follicular phase

2 Weeks – Ovulation & Fertilization

3 Weeks – Fertilization, baby is a cluster of cells that are rapidly multiplying

4 Weeks – Implantation, baby is an embryo, and placenta begins to form
(size of a poppy seed)

5 Weeks – Embryo is growing and hormone levels are rising

6 Weeks – Baby's heartbeat may be seen & neural tube closing

7 Weeks – Facial features begin to appear more clearly
(size of a blueberry)

8 Weeks – Hands and feet are developing with fingers and toes

9 Weeks – Starting to look more like a little human & baby's heart divides into
four chambers

10 Weeks – Umbilical cord can be visible & the organs have formed

11 Weeks – Your baby has become a fetus, genitals & diaphragm develop

12 Weeks – Baby is developing the suck reflex and begins creating urine &
meconium (first poops)

13 Weeks – Organs are fully formed, but not yet fully developed or matured,
and you can celebrate the end of the first trimester
(size of a peach)

Mama

Prenatal Care

Weeks 4 to 28: 1 prenatal visit a month or about every 6 weeks

Approx. at 8 weeks, 16 weeks, 22 weeks, 28 weeks, 32 weeks, 36 weeks, 38 weeks and 40 weeks gestation

Note: Frequency of prenatal visits may differ per provider/institution and per personal conditions

Self-Care

This is the number one, most important thing to do. Listen to your body, do things that make you feel good, fill your cup, and create space for all that is to come!

Exercise

Engage in light exercise, walking is still exercise, get outside.

If you previously engaged in more moderate or intense exercise, you may continue your previous routine, just remember to listen to your body and make modifications as needed.

Rest

In case you need permission – here it is. Rest up! Although baby is seemingly small at this time, your body is doing a lot! It's not visible, but you sure do feel it! Your body's hormones are shifting drastically, it's creating an organ (the placenta), and rapidly growing your little babe and their safe environment inside. Give yourself some grace and take it easy.

Pelvic Floor Health

Engage in exercises to both strengthen and relax your pelvic floor muscles. This will ensure well rounded pelvic floor health, which is important for delivery and for your body after childbirth. Continue these exercises throughout your pregnancy and afterward. It makes a big difference and helps your body heal. Leakage isn't fun when you're middle aged (or ever).

- Maintain proper and upright posture
- Belly breathing upon inhale and exhale
- Exercises for the diaphragm, transversus abdominus, and pelvic floor
 - Breathwork
 - Engage "mula bandha" by lifting the pelvic floor up and in (as if drawing a tampon up and in or trying to hold back gas). Do so when engaging in activity, walking, exercise, etc or even as its own exercise at home. Remember to breathe!
 - On hands and knees, keeping your back flat, draw your belly up and in, pull your belly button toward your spine, tilt your pelvis under creating a slight "C" in the low back. Hold this position while you breathe in and out. (try this lying down and standing as well)
 - Other exercises – kegels, cat-cow, child's pose, pelvic tilt bridge, side-lying leg lifts, clamshells, squat. (all of these done with abdominal engagement – think "up and in")
- Relax the pelvic floor muscles too (important for delivery, bowel movements, and overall pelvic floor health). Although rare, there is such a thing as having a pelvic floor that is too tight for delivery. These tools for relaxation are just as important as the strengthening exercises.
 - Belly breathing is great for pelvic floor relaxation – without holding the breath or bearing down, just breathe and fully relax your pelvic region
 - Visualize softness, total relaxation, melting into your position, maybe even sigh "ahhh"

Decrease stress

Something that's not talked about enough is the effect of stress on pregnancy. Not only is stress a huge cause of personal health issues to begin with, it can even be a reason for difficulty conceiving. On top of that, cortisol, the stress hormone, passes through the placenta. So when you are stressed, your baby is actually growing and developing in a more stressful environment. Avoid overwhelm, overwork, comparisons, burnout, negative news, and other things that affect your mood. Do your best to relax, engage in self-care, go to a yoga class, do a meditation, get a massage, take a bath, and fill your time with things that make you feel good. Watch a rom-com instead of a thriller, listen to feel good music, surround yourself with people who uplift you, eat foods that nourish you, and simply take extra good care of yourself. You are doing this to benefit you and your baby.

Note: don't overwhelm yourself with all the things you need to know, learn, read about, etc. Intimate Mama is here for you as a one stop shop for all you'll need to know for exactly that reason! Don't stress! We've got you!

Symptoms

Nausea & Food Aversions

This is often the symptom pregnant people notice first due to rising hormone levels. "Morning Sickness" isn't the best name for this as it can last all day and doesn't always end after the first trimester, although I hope it does for you if you are experiencing nausea. Some women will also experience strong aversions to certain foods or smells.

- Maintain blood sugar levels by eating small, frequent meals every couple of hours and try a protein-rich snack before bed
- Go on a walk & get fresh air
- Increase iron and vitamin B complex in your diet or through supplements (B6 deficiency can cause nausea)
- Try unsalted crackers before getting out of bed in the morning & get out of bed slowly
- Drink a splash of apple cider vinegar in a full cup of warm water in the morning to help maintain more stable blood sugar levels throughout the day
- Try fennel, peppermint, ginger, or red raspberry leaf tea
- Eat something savory before you eat something sweet in the beginning of the day (ex: have a hard-boiled egg before a sugary coffee)
- Avoid spicy or greasy foods and coffee
- Ginger chews & ginger capsules can be helpful
- Try more bland foods (bananas, rice, fortified bran cereal)
- Stay hydrated and try carbonated beverages
- Switch to prenatal gummies instead of pills
- Try acupuncture or an anti-seasickness wrist band
- Unisom & Vitamin B6 together can help curb nausea too

The nausea is also sometimes accompanied by vomiting. If your symptoms are severe, it could be hyperemesis gravidarum for which you may need to be seen for dehydration and possible weight loss. If you're throwing up multiple times a day for a few days, you may want to reach out to your provider.

Breast Tenderness

Your breasts may feel bigger, more tender, and sore. Tenderness may resolve, however breasts will continue to grow, areolas may darken, and you may notice more veins as your body prepares for breastfeeding

- A comfortable and supportive bra can be helpful during this time

Headache

Changing hormone levels and blood volume, stress, and fatigue may cause headaches in pregnancy. Do what you can to rest and release tension. If headaches or migraines persist in pregnancy, speak to your provider.

- Eat smaller, more frequent meals to maintain blood sugar (avoid migraine triggers)
- Use proper posture
- Stay hydrated
- Try a cool compress at the base of your neck
- Decrease stimulation
- Practice relaxation techniques & get rest
- Acupressure, massage, & essential oils may also be beneficial
- Tylenol is safe in pregnancy, but consult with your provider (avoid NSAIDs)

Linea Nigra

This is a darker pigmented, vertical line that may appear and extends down the middle of the belly. This can show up any time in pregnancy and may darken throughout pregnancy.

Fatigue

The body is producing more progesterone to thicken the uterine lining, this can cause lower blood pressure and blood sugar, leaving you feeling tired. Rest is important, but even with rest, you may still feel fatigued as your body is working hard. As the placenta begins to take over hormone production around 12 weeks, you may notice your energy beginning to return.

- Take it easy
- Nap when you can
- Go to bed early
- Practice good sleep habits

Emotions

With all of the hormone changes, you may also feel more emotional. Mood changes are normal and there are also many mixed emotions from happiness and excitement to nervousness and overwhelm. It's okay to give yourself permission to feel all the feelings. If you do find yourself unable to find joy in your days and are having persistent feelings of being down, reach out to your provider for more support. Mood disorders in pregnancy can be common.

- Remember to engage in self-care

Vaginal Discharge

Rising estrogen levels are the cause of increased vaginal discharge in pregnancy. This should be mild in odor with a clear or white color. Use cotton underwear for proper hygiene and look for any changes in your discharge that may require provider follow up.

Spotting

Some vaginal bleeding or spotting can be normal from implantation or even from sexual intercourse. If you ever have any concerns, reach out to your provider.

Difficulty Sleeping

Trouble sleeping is common in pregnancy as well as insomnia, which can be defined as difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or even both. There can be so many factors leading to insomnia including the discomforts experienced in pregnancy or sometimes stress related. Do your best to get comfortable, relax, eat well, hydrate up, exercise, and take care of yourself. If unresolved, medications can be used after speaking to your provider.

- Wind down before bed with a warm bath, bedtime routine, mindfulness practice, etc
- Herbal tea before bed – chamomile, lavender, & peppermint (unless experiencing heartburn)
- Warm low-fat milk or spoonful of black beans can help you sleep
- Eat foods high in magnesium or a magnesium supplement
- Cook with herbs like sage or basil
- Leave the bedroom as a place for sleep or intimacy
- Avoid doing activities in bed like watching tv, working, or scrolling on social media
- Keep it dark, wear an eye mask
- Try white noise
- Keep snacks and water at the bedside if needed, but try cutting back on water before bed
- Any position is okay to sleep in if you're comfortable. As your belly grows, lying flat on your back may put more pressure on your chest, in which case, you can try sleeping on your side

Speak to your provider if needed for sleep apnea or insomnia – Unisom or Benadryl may also be safe to take in pregnancy.

Gas & Bloat

Hormones are at it again! These are other common symptoms that may be experienced.

Constipation

Constipation is normal, especially in the first trimester (for hemorrhoids, see third trimester list)

- Hydrate
- Eat fibrous foods (whole grains, berries, apples, oranges, carrots, broccoli, artichokes, potatoes, dates, high fiber cereal)
- Limit white bread, pasta, and rice
- Try prunes (maybe even soak them in hot water overnight)
- Go on a walk and increase activity
- Probiotics
- Take stool softeners as needed to avoid straining like Colace

Heartburn.

Changing hormones are a common cause of heartburn as they relax the sphincter in your esophagus

- Eat smaller, more frequent meals
- Chew your food well and eat slowly
- Drink after eating
- Sit up for a little after eating
- Chew on an orange peel to aid in digestion
- Eat raw almonds
- Avoid acidic foods like tomatoes, citrus fruits, fried or spicy foods, coffee/caffeine, chocolate, mint, pickles, and other foods with vinegar.
- Drink low-fat milk – milk is more alkaline and can balance out the acidity
- Tums or calcium carbonate can help, but be careful not to use them around the clock as this can result in other issues. Speak to your provider if using consistently and discuss other meds for heartburn like Pepcid or Zantac.

Frequent Urination

Even though baby isn't in the way of your bladder yet, hormone changes also make you pee more frequently. Make sure to stay hydrated during the day.

Weight Gain

On average, weight gain is about three to four pounds during the first trimester, some may gain more, and some may even lose a few pounds due to nausea. Note that everything gets a little bigger - don't be alarmed that you may gain weight all over and not just in your belly during pregnancy.

Nutrition

Red raspberry leaf tea is a uterine tonic, meaning it helps to tone your uterus muscle. Drink this tea throughout your pregnancy to build uterine tone. It also has many vitamins and minerals and can help with nausea as well as milk production due to the high mineral content.

Nettle leaves are another toning agent high in vitamins and minerals including vitamin K which can help with bleeding. Nettle can be used to aid leg cramps/muscle spasms, hemorrhoids, and in milk production.

Hydration is so important for your body, your uterus, and your baby. Water is your best friend!

Eat foods high in:

Folic Acid/Folate/B9 – dark, leafy greens like spinach, eggs, beans, lentils, asparagus, peas, citrus fruits, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, banana, avocado, nuts, seeds, and fortified cereals

Calcium – oranges, milk, goat milk, goat cheese, yogurt, salmon, sardines, mackerel, spinach, seaweed/kelp, tahini, kale, beet greens, turnip tops, and fortified cereals

Vitamin D – fish, milk, eggs (avoid full fat milk if experiencing heartburn)

Protein – lean meat, seafood, poultry, eggs, milk, cottage cheese, beans, lentils, peas, nuts, seeds, and tofu

Iron – lean red meat, liver, beans, leafy greens like spinach, beets, oysters, poultry, and oats with iron (eat with foods high in vitamin C or a vitamin C supplement for better absorption)

first trimester checklist

For Healthcare

- Make your first prenatal appointment
- Schedule monthly appointments
- Make a list of questions for your provider
- Prenatal vitamins
- Schedule your 12 week ultrasound and nuchal translucency scan (between 11-13 weeks) - the nuchal translucency checks the measurement of fluid under the skin in the back of the neck of baby. Increased measurements can be associated with a greater risk for chromosome and sometimes congenital abnormalities. Blood work is also offered in conjunction for genetic screening as well as regular first trimester labs.

For You

- Manage pregnancy symptoms – see our “Pregnancy Guidebook” for details
- Start bump documentation
- Download a pregnancy app
- Plan pregnancy announcement
- Eat nourishing foods
- Reduce caffeine, alcohol, & stress
- Detoxify daily products
- Rest, take naps, listen to your body, go on a walk, go to bed early, skin care (moisturize), hydrate, pelvic floor exercises, and allow yourself time to relax.

For Relationship (if in one)

If in a relationship, work on verbalizing your needs, practice open communication, and do your best to understand one another and where you're at. Practice this throughout your pregnancy. Most partners have not and will not ever experience what you are going through, so it can be hard for them to understand and sympathize with you. Along with that, have discussions about parenting, different styles, thoughts about the future and how to be a team when baby arrives, etc.

second trimester

14-26 Weeks

This trimester is full of growth with growing baby bumps, developmental milestones, and baby's first movements (called quickening)!

Continue prenatal visits approximately every 6 weeks

Brief Week by Week Development

14 Weeks – Baby can make facial expressions & suck their thumb

15 Weeks – Moving lots (but often not felt) & can sense light

16 Weeks – Can hear sounds inside your body, like your heartbeat and voice

17 Weeks – Bones are hardening & umbilical cord thickening (size of a pear)

18 Weeks – Vernix appears on your baby's skin & genitals are recognizable

19 Weeks – Baby's hair may begin to grow & five senses are evolving

20 Weeks – Taste buds are working & yay for the half way mark!

21 Weeks – Baby has fully formed fingers and toes with nails and fingerprints

22 Weeks – The earliest stage of memories are forming & sleep patterns

23 Weeks – Baby can hear sounds outside of the womb (size of a mango)

24 Weeks – Baby is considered viable – a big milestone!

25 Weeks – Plumping up and adding fat to baby's body

26 Weeks – Lungs make surfactant and baby can practice breathing

Baby

Vernix Caseosa

This is a white, waxy, and cheesy like, waterproof, protective substance on the baby's skin that has amazing immune properties.

Lanugo

These are the little, fine hairs that cover the baby's body and keep them warm in utero.

Lung development

This happens as the baby practices breathing by swallowing and excreting the amniotic fluid. Hiccups are baby's way of working out their diaphragm to prepare for breathing.

Sleep patterns

Baby might be up more at night or you may notice when baby is most active throughout the day now that they have more of a pattern.

Mama

Energy

This trimester, you may notice your energy is back! It's an amazing feeling to get back into your regular routine without feeling overly fatigued. The placenta has taken over the role of hormone production and is giving you a bit of a break. Enjoy this trimester!

Bump Connection

As your baby bump grows, embrace your beautifully changing and evolving body. Appreciate all the work it is doing to support your baby. Practice mindfulness, try a gratitude practice, send your baby love and positive thoughts. Use our Meditation, Visualization, and Yoga Nidra in the Wellness Package to create a deeper connection.

Sex

Engaging in sexual intercourse is safe in pregnancy unless otherwise stated by your provider. Some women will experience an increased libido with the rise in estrogen and some may experience the effects of increased progesterone and may not be as into it. Experiment with different positions for comfort as your body may feel subtle changes. Connecting more to your body and embracing its changes will allow you to continue feeling sexy in your skin.

Dental Care

Take extra good care of your teeth in pregnancy. Swollen gums or pregnancy gingivitis can be experienced due to hormone changes in the body and you may notice your gums bleeding more when brushing your teeth or flossing. Dental care is extremely important in pregnancy and dental insurance may even cover an extra cleaning – check with your insurance provider if applicable.

Maternity Clothes

Along with weight gain and a growing bump comes different clothing. Maybe you're choosing comfort and going for the loose fitting clothes, maybe stretchy fabrics, maybe you're in need of longer tops to cover the whole bump, or maybe you're ready to show off your bump and want more tight fitting clothes. Whatever it is, give yourself permission to get a few things that make you feel good in your new body. You may also want to think postpartum and breastfeeding friendly to make the most use of them.

Skin Care

Hydration is so important. Drink water to hydrate your body, your uterus, and your skin. Using oil can be another way to help hydrate your skin and relieve any itchiness you may experience as your body stretches. Stretchmarks sometimes appear and are often genetic. There's not much we have control over in this department, but a few things that may help are hydration, skin care, and trying to avoid rapid and excessive weight gain.

Symptoms

Colostrum Production

Some women may already notice colostrum production this trimester. Don't be afraid to get intimate with your body and manually express to see. Manual expression is done by massaging the breast tissue down toward the nipple and it may take a couple minutes before you see a little glisten of colostrum on your nipple. Not to be discouraged if you don't see anything yet, some bodies wait until baby arrives. We'll go over tons of breastfeeding information in our "Mom, Baby, and Breastfeeding" Course to help you feel most prepared for the months following birth.

Baby Movements

Yay! My personal favorite part of pregnancy! The first movements feel similar to gas, like flutters in your belly and as baby grows and the movements get stronger, they may feel more like little jabs. You might also feel baby hiccup, which is a more rhythmic sensation every few seconds.

Off Balance

Feeling like your equilibrium is a little off? As your belly continues to grow, you may notice a shift in your balance and center of gravity. This is normal, just move around a little more carefully and slow down your transitions from lying or sitting to standing.

Iron Deficiency Anemia

During pregnancy, our iron requirements increase and some may experience anemia.

- Eat foods high in iron with vitamin C
- Avoid coffee, tea, bran, and other diuretic foods as they inhibit absorption of iron

Heartburn

Heartburn may be experienced again, continued, or for the first time because of lack of space as baby grows.

- Eat smaller, more frequent meals
- Avoid acidic, fried, or spicy foods
- Drink low-fat milk – milk is more alkaline and can balance out the acidity (avoid full fat as that can actually exacerbate symptoms)
- Tums – a great option, but be careful not to use them around the clock as this can result in other issues

Speak to your provider if needing to use consistently and discuss prescription meds for heartburn.

Leg Cramps

There's nothing more fun than waking up in the middle of the night with a charley horse. Leg cramps happen due to changes in blood circulation during pregnancy.

- Stretch
- Exercise
- Massage the area
- Hydrate
- Compression socks
- Foods high in magnesium or magnesium supplement
- Nettle tea, rosemary, turmeric

Melasma

These are darker pigmented spots on the skin caused by an increase in melanin.

- Wear sunscreen

Varicose Veins

These occur due to increased blood volume, changes in circulation, hormone changes, and the added pressure of the uterus.

- Stay active
- Avoid crossing your legs
- Put your legs up & avoid being on your feet for long periods of time
- Leg massage
- Topical witch hazel or apple cider vinegar
- Compression socks
- Oats, buckwheat, green, leafy vegetables, and okra nourish the circulatory system
- Raw onion, garlic, and lecithin help with vein elasticity
- Vitamin E supplement
- Avoid spicy foods/spices
- Herbs: nettle, parsley, oatstraw

Back Pain & Sciatica

Back pain can be normal with your growing bump and ever-changing body. Signs of sciatica may be numbness, tingling, or shooting pain through the back, bottom, and even down the legs. This is caused by the uterus putting pressure on the sciatic nerve. Try the following to soothe pain:

- Rest
- Massage
- Take a warm bath
- Apply a heat pack
- Stretch & gentle exercises
- Lemon water, wheat grass juice, nettle tea
- Foods high in calcium & magnesium

Braxton Hicks Contractions

These may be felt in the second trimester, maybe in the third trimester, or maybe you don't feel them at all. These contractions are the uterus practicing for labor. The uterine muscles tighten from anywhere between 30 seconds to two minutes and is a great time to practice your focused deep breathing. They differ from labor contractions because Braxton Hicks contractions will ease up with rest, hydration, position change, etc. and they don't speed up in frequency and intensity.

Abdominal Pain

Round ligament pain is a growing pain and may be felt as the uterus increases in size and stretches. You may feel tenderness on the sides of your abdomen, or it may feel more like an ache, cramp, and sometimes a sharp or pulling pain.

- Rest
- Avoid triggering activities/positions
- Wear a supportive belly band

Sleep Difficulty

Insomnia is something we discussed before and it may continue. You may just have difficulty sleeping some nights, challenges finding a comfortable position with your belly, getting up to pee, etc. Do your best to relax and rest, it's so important.

- Bedtime routine
- Pregnancy/body pillow
- Herbal tea before bed – chamomile, lavender, peppermint (unless experiencing heartburn)
- Warm, low-fat milk
- Foods high in magnesium
- Cook with herbs like sage or basil

Weight gain

By this time, on average, weight gain is about twelve to seventeen pounds in total, plus or minus of course. There are so many factors that play a role in this. Know that some of this weight gain is from increased fluids – amniotic fluid, blood volume, swelling, etc. It feels strange knowing your baby is still small and only 1-2lbs during this trimester, but there is so much more going on in your body. You've even grown a new organ to support your baby! Give yourself some credit!

Note: If you have excessive swelling, changes in your vision (blurriness, floaters, spots), persistent headache, upper abdominal pain, and/or vomiting, these may be a sign of high blood pressure/pre-eclampsia and you would want to get evaluated by your provider.

love and embrace your growing body —
appreciate its work, have gratitude for its abilities,
and know that it is meant to grow, change, and stretch,
just like you are evolving and becoming a mama

Nutrition

Keep up with your uterine toning tea – red raspberry leaf & your hydration. Focus on nourishing your body and baby with foods high in vitamins and minerals and do your best to eat a balanced diet with all the food groups. This trimester, it is also important to moderately increase your calorie intake. We're not literally "eating for two," but you might notice yourself having a greater appetite. Continue to follow your body's cues for satiation.

Iron – meat, poultry, seafood, beans, dark, leafy greens

Calcium – dairy & dark, leafy greens

Vitamin D – milk, fish, eggs

Fiber – whole grains, berries, apples, oranges, carrots, broccoli, artichokes, potatoes

Protein – meat, eggs, Greek yogurt, nuts

Omega-3s – salmon, mackerel, chia seeds, flaxseeds

Healthy fats – avocado, cheese, dark chocolate, eggs, salmon, nuts, olive oil

Folic Acid – beans, fruits, leafy greens

Magnesium – bananas, leafy greens, black beans, avocados, apples, figs, nuts, seeds, yogurt

Have a sweet tooth? Try some of these tasty and healthier alternative treats:

- Greek yogurt & honey or yogurt parfaits
- Banana "Nice Cream"
- Berry fruit salad with a sprinkle of dark chocolate
- Chia pudding with your choice of topping
- Dried fruit
- Protein energy balls
- Frozen grapes
- Baked apples or pears with cinnamon

Or a smoothie!

One of my favorite things is to make a smoothie packed with nutrients!

(Ps mom hack - kids love these too!)

- Start with a couple fruits
- Add in some greens
(spinach & zucchini tend to be my "go to" because they don't have a strong flavor, but I will admit, sometimes the color is off-putting)
- Protein – nuts, nut butter, Greek yogurt, protein powder – whatever you choose!
- Extras: chia seeds, flaxseed, hemp seed, oats
- Sweeten it up if you'd like with coconut shreds, honey, dates, maple syrup, or a little juice
- Then add in your low-fat milk or dairy substitute

And voila! A yummy and healthy option to add in to your day!

second trimester checklist

For Healthcare & Logistics

- Schedule 20 week ultrasound for anatomy scan
- Schedule monthly prenatal appointments
- Schedule second trimester labs & genetic screening (if applicable) and screening for gestational diabetes, which is typically done between 24-28 weeks. This consists of going into the lab, getting a sugary drink, then getting labs drawn an hour after drinking it. This is not a fasting test so you can eat your regular meals. Avoid a sugary or carb heavy meal as it may skew your results. A healthy breakfast before going in (ex: egg and avocado slices).
- If working, announce pregnancy to prepare for maternity leave

For Relationship (if in one)

- Go on a babymoon if you'd like and celebrate your growing family

For Baby

- Make a list of baby names
- Start setting up nursery
- Think about plans/needs for daycare, schedule a couple tours, and get baby on a waitlist if needed
- Build baby registry – see our “Baby Registry List” for suggestions (also consider hand me downs or lightly used items – many products are short lived)

For You

- Start building your mama community
- Continue self-care, physical exercise & stretching, skin care, pelvic floor exercises, and bump documentation
- Make a dental appointment
- Get some maternity clothes & a pregnancy pillow
- Pregnancy affirmations & begin our birth visualization
- Plan a baby shower or blessingway with loved ones to celebrate your pregnancy, your journey to motherhood, and your baby to be!

For Birth

- Start childbirth preparation and education – our “Labor & Delivery” and “C-Section” courses will cover all the bases!

Third Trimester

27-40 weeks

Begin prenatal visit every 4 weeks & move to every 2 weeks around 36 weeks

Brief Week by Week Development

27 Weeks – Opening and closing eyes & sucking fingers (size of an eggplant)

28 Weeks – Eyelashes have formed & baby has learned to cry

29 Weeks – Brain can now control body temperature

30 Weeks – Fat deposits make the skin look less translucent

31 Weeks – Digestive tract is fully formed and functioning (size of a coconut)

32 Weeks – Some lanugo (fine hairs on the body) may begin to come off

33 Weeks – Brain and nervous system are mostly finished developing

34 Weeks – Vernix may get thicker (Fun fact: I was born at 34 weeks!)

35 Weeks – Baby may begin to turn head down (if not already)

36 Weeks – Baby is gaining about an ounce a day (size of a melon)

37 Weeks – Descent into pelvis may begin & brain, lungs, liver still developing

38 Weeks – Baby has developed a firm grasp reflex

39 Weeks – Full term (size of a pumpkin)

40 Weeks – Due date!

Fun fact: approximately 5% of babies are actually born on their due date

Baby

After 30 weeks, baby gains about half a pound a week

Baby develops and improves the five senses

Bones are hardening, but the skull will still be soft

Babies can actually go through REM sleep and begin dreaming

Most babies are born with a blueish/brown eye color, which changes by a few months of age

Terminology based on when baby is born:

Preterm < 34 weeks

Late preterm 34-37 weeks

Early term 37-39 weeks

Full term 39-40 weeks

Late term 41 weeks

Post term 42 weeks

Mama

Kick Counting

Sit or lie down and focus on baby's movements. The goal is five movements in an hour or ten in two hours. You may feel these in a matter of a couple minutes, but sometimes it may take longer. Try to do these kick counts at the same time every day as baby has developed more distinct sleep and wake patterns. If you feel baby moving around often, you don't necessarily need to do kick counts. If you're ever concerned about baby's movement, feeling less movement than normal, or a change in baby's patterns, don't hesitate to reach out to your provider.

Nesting

This is a natural instinct to prepare the environment for baby's arrival. This can be anything from packing the hospital bag (or repacking), birth planning, getting the nursery together, washing baby's clothes, or cleaning the home, reorganizing, and tidying up. It's yet another pregnancy experience due to changing hormones and a rise in estrogen levels, although it can also be a great tool for easing anxiousness as delivery approaches.

Nervousness

Speaking of, feeling nervous or anxious, as the due date gets closer it is totally normal to have mixed emotions. Whether you're preparing for an induction, a scheduled C-section, or simply awaiting spontaneous labor, emotions run high. Try focusing on the things you have control over. Review childbirth prep information, go over important sections of the e-course, review guidebook notes, take a nap, do our visualization, engage in self-care practices, and simply relax.

GBS Screening

This screen is usually performed between 35-37 weeks with a swab from the vagina to the rectum checking for the common group B strep (GBS) bacteria. If positive, the standard prophylactic treatment is to have at least a couple doses of IV antibiotics onboard before a vaginal delivery.

Rhogam

Around 28-29 weeks, if you have Rh negative blood type, you will need to get a dose of Rhogam. This is a shot that helps to prevent complications for future pregnancies.

TDAP Vaccine (whooping cough) & Flu Vaccine

It is important to stay up to date on our vaccines as mamas to protect our babies and to pass some antibodies through the placenta. Partners should also get these vaccines as they will be primary caregivers for baby as well.

Perineal Massage

Massaging the perineum is one thing you can begin to do in the last month of pregnancy to prepare the perineal tissue for birth. A couple techniques are a gentle stretch downward or a sweeping motion from side to side to stretch the tissue. This is easier to do with help from a partner and there are also products for this as well.

Baby's Position

This will be checked upon ultrasound to see if baby is head down and in an optimal position for a vaginal delivery. At some institutions, an external cephalic version (ECV) may be offered if criteria are met to see if baby will turn to head down with manual assistance. In addition, some providers and institutions may also offer a vaginal breech delivery, again if deemed safe by certain criteria.

Cervical Exam & Membrane Sweep

Around the 39 week visit, a cervical exam and a membrane sweep may be offered to help release some of the labor hormones. The membrane sweep can be done if the cervix is slightly dilated and is done with a sweeping motion to separate the amniotic sac from the uterine lining.

*your baby is soon to arrive and
your life will be flipped upside down in all the best ways
as you fall head over heels for this little human you've created*

Symptoms

Fatigue

And we're back! The more our bellies grow the more tired and uncomfortable we can get. Get rest when you can, take it easy, and nap if you have the luxury!

Difficulty Sleeping

We've talked about this one every trimester. Difficulty sleeping comfortably, interrupted sleep, and insomnia are all normal.

- Rest when you can
- Engage in healthy sleep habits
- Find ways to prop parts of your body for comfort with pillows or a body pillow
- Try an earlier bed time
- Use a meditation or relaxation technique to fall asleep or fall back asleep

Aches & Pains

Low back, hip, and pelvic pain is normal from all the pressure of having a baby growing inside. Your body not only has extra weight to carry, but pregnancy hormones also loosen the hips, causing less strength / stability for your back.

- Massage
- Gentle exercise
- A supportive back brace or belly band
- Take it easy

Frequent Urination

Baby is growing and now pressing on your bladder. You may even feel a kick or a few at your bladder, which is just another fun experience as a pregnant mama. Daytime and night time, going to the bathroom is a new hobby of yours. Remember to stay hydrated throughout the day.

Vaginal Discharge

Increased estrogen levels may mean more discharge.

If ever concerned about leaking of fluid, contact your provider.

Breast Changes

Breasts may continue to grow in size, nipple and areola changes are also common, and colostrum production may be noticed (some women will even leak – for which there are pads for).

Hemorrhoids

Hemorrhoids can be a normal part of pregnancy, often caused by constipation and the increased pressure in the pelvis. Hemorrhoids can come with soreness, itchiness, and pain. They can also cause a feeling of fullness down there or the sensation of needing to have a bowel movement when enlarged. Things to help with itching, comfort, and healing:

- Sitz baths (add astringent herbs if you'd like)
- Witch hazel pads (may slightly burn)
- Baking soda paste (may slightly burn)
- Nettle tea
- Fibrous foods (whole grains, berries, apples, oranges, carrots, broccoli, artichokes, potatoes), beets, avoid spicy foods/herbs

Shortness of Breath

As baby grows and your uterus gets bigger, it presses on your diaphragm, lungs, and rib cage, sometimes making it harder to breathe.

- Take slow, deep breaths
- Listen to your body when engaging in exercise
- Keep your posture upright to create more space in your torso
- Prop yourself up at night with extra pillows for comfort

If you feel short of breath and it doesn't resolve with rest, see your provider.

Swelling

Mild swelling can be normal as pregnancy increases blood volume by fifty percent, hormone changes can make your body retain more fluid, and the pressure of the uterus can get in the way of blood flow, but remember to look out for signs of pre-eclampsia (persistent nausea, upper abdominal pain, vision changes, headache, excessive swelling, high blood pressure)

- Reduce sodium intake
- Spend time off your feet
- Elevate your feet when resting
- Wear compression socks

Weight Gain

On average, weight gain is about a half pound to one pound a week this trimester. By the end of the pregnancy, the average person will have gained about 25-35 pounds. Remember, there is a large range of normal aside from the average. This weight comes from baby, the placenta, the uterus, larger breasts, increased blood volume, amniotic fluid, other bodily fluids, and overall weight gain dispersed across the body.

Lightening

Around 36 weeks, baby may begin to shimmy down into the pelvis and get ready for birth even though delivery may be weeks away. You may hear people refer to this as "lightening" or "baby dropping" and the good of "lightening crotch" sensation, which is often a quick, sharp pain in the vagina, rectum, or pelvis, especially felt when baby moves. Baby presses on certain nerves and the sensation can increase as baby moves further down into the pelvis. Note that not every mama will experience this with baby dropping lower.

Braxton Hicks Contractions

This is where the uterine muscles tighten from anywhere between 30 seconds to two minutes. If felt, it's a great time to practice your focused deep breathing. This is your body's way of preparing and practicing for labor. Labor contractions don't ease up with rest, hydration, or position change (like these do) and they get closer in frequency and increase in intensity.

Spotting & Bloody Show

Spotting may be normal after intercourse as your cervix is very vascular at this time and can be easily irritated. Bloody show is also normal toward the end of pregnancy and can be a sign of cervical change. This is usually more mucousy than blood.

Note: If you notice bleeding, call triage, contact your provider, and get evaluated.

Mucus Plug

Mucus collects in the cervix in pregnancy to protect the baby's environment and act as a barrier to bacteria and the outside world. As your body prepares for labor, you may lose your mucus plug. This is typically experienced after 37 weeks and delivery may follow soon after or sometimes weeks after. The mucus plug can be lost all at once or sometimes gradually over a period of time, making it less noticeable. Some women will lose it after labor has already begun.

Nutrition

Continue all the previous nutrition tips and add in 6 dates per day in the last month of your pregnancy. You can eat these as is, throw them in a smoothie as a sweetener, or get creative if they're not your favorite. Dates are a great source of fiber, they have natural sugars for energy, and they have folate, iron, potassium, and vitamin K. Along with their nutritional benefit, dates have been shown to decrease the need for induction, promoting spontaneous labor and cervical ripening. Eat away and enjoy!

Third Trimester checklist

For

- Schedule regular prenatal visits
- Schedule labs and get vaccines/rhogam (if applicable)
- Pack hospital bag – use our “Hospital Packing List” for reference
- Get a free breast pump with insurance (if applicable)
- If working, get everything situated so maternity leave can be a smooth transition
- Make a list of people to notify of baby’s arrival and assign this task to your partner, sibling, parent, etc.
- Establish a plan for spontaneous labor for yourself, pets, kids, etc.
- Take a tour of the Birth Center if delivering in a setting outside of your home & figure out where to park

For You

- Begin breastfeeding/bottle feeding education

- Learn about care for yourself and baby after delivery – Our “Mom, Baby & Breastfeeding” course covers it all
- Meal prep some freezer meals – I recommend labeling these and freezing them by lying them flat so they can easily be stacked in your freezer to conserve space
- Continue self-care, physical exercise & stretching, skin care, pelvic floor exercises, and bump documentation (option for maternity photos)

For Birth

- Discuss birth preferences and fill out our “Birth Intentions Worksheet”
- Finish your childbirth prep and revisit certain topics closer to date to refresh your memory
- Practice labor support positions with partner or support person
- Make a playlist for labor (calming), pushing (upbeat), or C-section (anything you choose)
- Begin naturally ripening your cervix at home with tips from our “Labor & Delivery” course at 39 weeks

For Baby

- Get any leftover registry items
- Finalize baby name or short list
- Install infant car seat into the car
- Pick a pediatrician
- Take an infant CPR class
- Finish preparing the nursery & home environment – wash baby's clothes (try a baby friendly detergent and avoid fabric softeners for their sensitive skin), gather other baby necessities, stock medicine cabinet with just in case supplies (thermometer, infant Tylenol/Motrin, nasal aspirator, etc.)

For Relationship (if in one)

- Go on some dates & enjoy time together
- Revisit communication in your relationship. Verbalize your needs, discuss how you envision your birth and what that experience will be like together, talk about your fears or anxieties around it, go over any expectations you may have of the other person during labor, and don't forget to talk about how you see your nighttime routine going when baby arrives, what kind of team you will be, etc.

fourth trimester

This is the twelve week period following birth that feels like a taboo time that people don't talk much about. It is an incredible time full of change, transition, and the beginning of parenthood, while so much is still happening to your body. Much more about this time is covered in detail in the 'Mom, Baby, & Breastfeeding' e-course. Labor may be hours to days, but the postpartum period, after baby is born, lasts months. Society has put a big emphasis on labor preparation, that we often forget to prepare for the many months to follow. Here are just a few things you should know:

Changes in Your Body

Your body is slowly adapting to not being pregnant anymore. It is normal to still look pregnant after you've delivered for days, weeks, months as your uterus has to work hard to get back down to its normal size after being stretched out with baby inside.

Everyone's body will react differently physically, mentally, and emotionally. There are major hormone shifts happening after delivery as the body is regulating hormones. This can lead to a fragile emotional state and I often say that this period is full of tears. Tears happen for many reasons. They can be overwhelm tears, love tears, tired tears, happy tears, or tears just because. Allow yourself to feel these emotions.

Note: if these feelings persist, you don't feel quite like yourself, or you have any concerns, never hesitate to reach out to your provider for more support.

(Listen to different mama's experiences with postpartum mood disorders in the e-course)

You will have vaginal bleeding for approximately four to six weeks after both a vaginal and C-section delivery. If you imagine where the placenta was attached to the uterus, it has left a raw spot upon expulsion that has to heal. The vagina is the exit point for this blood even if you delivered via Cesarean.

Breastmilk production is something your body is working hard on too. Colostrum is the first milk, which then transitions to mature breastmilk around 2-4 days after delivery. Hydration is so important for breastmilk production and for promoting healing. You will want to continue taking your prenatal vitamin during this time and eat a healthy, nourishing diet with increased calories to encourage and maintain production.

Breastfeeding is work and has so many amazing benefits to both mom and baby. Most women will encounter some challenges with breastfeeding ranging from difficulty latching and pain to lower milk supply to things like inflamed ducts and mastitis. It is normal to have to work through a few things to gain the amazing benefits breastmilk and breastfeeding have to offer. After all, it is a new skill that needs to be learned by both you and your baby.

With that said, also know that sometimes plans change and breastfeeding may not be an option for all women or all families. Find the formula you would choose, just in case, and stay open and flexible to whatever methods work for you in providing your baby with nutrition.

Postpartum hair loss is normal. It's our body's response to stress and is often experienced a few months after the event. Don't worry, it'll slowly grow back.

Decreased libido is often another symptom that may be experienced due to hormone shifts. Know that it is normal, you're not alone, and it's not forever.

Lastly, your heart gets bigger! Okay, okay, maybe not literally, but gosh is it amazing to love someone so much! It's a new and different kind of love you've never felt before. If this is your first baby, you'll know exactly what I'm talking about so soon! Enjoy that feeling and bottle up the love you experience!

Know that our bodies are not meant to be the same after birth or go back to the way they were. You, yourself, are a new and different person. You are a mama, you have a different purpose, your personality may change, you may become even more gentle, nurturing, patient, and kind. As I mentioned, your heart will become bigger and softer and you'll feel more. Your perspective will change. Your body changing is a beautiful remnant of all that you had the opportunity to experience in pregnancy and through childbirth. Embrace your new body, love your new body, and most of all, love the new you! You are incredible and your baby is so lucky to have you!

Nutrition

Nutritious and nourishing foods for healing and milk production

Iron & iron rich foods for blood replenishment

Increased caloric intake for milk production

Prenatal vitamin if breastfeeding

Hydration is key for healing and milk production

Pelvic Floor Health

Let the tissue heal for the first two weeks

Walking, stretching, breathwork, yoga are gentle ways to invite more movement back into your life

Walking with a stroller or baby carrier can encourage core engagement

When you're ready to engage in more activity:

- Continue previous pelvic floor exercises for strength and relaxation (see first trimester)
- Bridges with pelvic tilt and abdominal engagement (add heel slides if ambitious)
- Glute squeezes
- Wall sits

When to be seen for further pelvic floor evaluation after initial healing (and consistent exercise & relaxation practices):

- Pelvic heaviness or vaginal bulging
- Constipation or incontinence
- Leaking when laughing, coughing, sneezing, jumping, etc.
- Frequent or painful urination
- Painful intercourse
- Pelvic, back, or foot pain
- Diastasis Recti or abdominal "doming" with sit up/head lift
- Planking and feeling it everywhere but your core

Note: Some women may benefit from pelvic floor therapy pre-pregnancy or during pregnancy. I mean who wouldn't benefit from it? However, it can sometimes be hard to get into and to be covered. Pelvic floor health is something we should all strive for to achieve optimal body balance.

fourth trimester checklist

(This is the twelve week period following birth)

For Healthcare & Logistics

- Schedule OB follow up appointment
- Schedule pediatric appointments
- Add baby to insurance (if applicable)
- Notify work of baby's arrival (if applicable)

For Baby

- Feed, diaper change, snuggle (it's the best), repeat
- Love on your baby and "ooh" & "aww" over everything
- Know that everything is a phase. This is my motto.

When it's tough, know it'll soon pass and when it's good, soak in every minute of it because it too, will soon pass.

- Focus on the beauty of mommyhood so you don't miss the fleeting moments during the messiness, chaos, and challenges.

For You

- Go outside, take a walk, get sunshine/vitamin D
- Rest and sleep whenever you can
- Eat nourishing foods for healing
- Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate!
- Be aware of your emotions & allow yourself to feel them
- Create mommy network – gather family, friends, neighbors, and build your village
- Learn to ask for what you need, reach out for help, and advocate for yourself.
- Engage in your favorite self-care activities, begin gentle exercise/stretching when ready, and continue pelvic floor exercises when healed.

For Relationship (if in one)

- Share duties & be a team!
- Verbalize your needs
Try each stating your top three priorities for the day and allow space for those needs to be met.
- Support one another in this transition, knowing this is new for both of you.
- Appreciate one another for what you bring to the family



I hope you found this guide to be helpful &
I'm so excited for your sweet and growing family!

A huge congratulations to you -
what an incredibly special time in your life!
I look forward to supporting you on your journey.

With lots of love, deep gratitude, and the best of wishes for you.

xo
Jess