

## What is prenatal care?

Prenatal care is health care you get to help you have a healthy pregnancy. It's important to take care of yourself and your baby. If you know you're pregnant, or think you might be, call your doctor to schedule a visit.

## Healthy pregnancy tips

- Get early and regular prenatal care. Don't miss any checkups.
- Follow your doctor's advice.

## Why do I need prenatal care?

Prenatal care helps keep you and your baby healthy. Babies of mothers who do not get prenatal care are three times more likely to have a low birth weight than babies born to mothers who do get care. Low birth weight can cause serious problems in breathing, digestion and brain development.

Doctors can treat health problems early when they see expectant mothers regularly. Early treatment can cure many problems and prevent others. Your doctor will answer questions and provide information to help you give your baby a healthy start to life.

## For more information:

[www.womenshealth.gov/faq/prenatal-care.cfm](http://www.womenshealth.gov/faq/prenatal-care.cfm)

[www.womenshealth.gov/espanol/preguntas/index.cfm](http://www.womenshealth.gov/espanol/preguntas/index.cfm)



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8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday – Friday

**Taking  
Care of  
You and  
Your Baby  
Before  
Birth**



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## What happens during prenatal visits?

During the first prenatal visit, your doctor will:

- ask about your health history, including diseases, operations or pregnancies
- ask about your family's health history
- do a complete physical exam, including a pelvic exam and Pap test
- check your blood, urine, blood pressure, height and weight
- estimate your due date

Be sure to ask questions. Find out all you can about staying healthy.

At later visits your doctor will check you and be sure the baby is growing on schedule. He/she will measure your abdomen to check baby's growth and heart rate.

All pregnant women should have blood tests to check for anemia, blood type, HIV and other factors. You may have other tests based on your age, health history, your ethnic background or your test results.

## How often should I see my doctor?

You should see your doctor about **once each month** for weeks 4 through 28, **twice a month** for weeks 28 through 36 and **weekly** for weeks 36 to birth. If you are older than 35 or your pregnancy is high risk, you'll probably see your doctor more often.

## Taking Care of Yourself After Your Baby Arrives

"Postpartum" is the time after your baby arrives when you get to know your baby and adjust to motherhood. You will notice changes in your body and maybe your emotions. Taking care of yourself **will help you** to take better care of your baby.

- Get a postpartum check-up **within 21 to 56 days after your baby arrives**. Your doctor will do a complete exam to be sure you are healing. Talk with your doctor about healthy eating and safe weight loss, breastfeeding, birth control and your emotions.
- Take time for yourself. Do things that make you feel special. Give yourself small treats. Enjoy a good book or magazine; meet with friends.
- Sleep. Busy days and nights can drain your body and emotions. When baby naps, try to close your eyes and relax.
- Stay in touch with friends and family members. They can help when you need it.

## Do you need help finding a doctor?

Call CareOregon Customer Service at 503-416-4100 or toll-free at 1-800-224-4840.  
TTY/TDD 1-800-735-2900.  
Customer Service is available Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



## Well-care doctor visits

Health experts suggest that your baby should have **at least six well-care visits with her/his doctor before the age of 15 months**. Your baby is growing and changing very fast. Well-care visits will help your doctor spot problems early and give you peace of mind.

Your baby should have well-care visits at:

- 1 to 2 weeks after birth
- 1 month
- 2, 4, 6 and 9 months
- 12 months