

# Pregnancy Wellness: First Trimester

Congratulations on your pregnancy. This handout will help you understand what to expect in your first trimester, which is the first 13 weeks of pregnancy. Please remember: Every pregnancy is different. If you have questions or worries, reach out to your care team.



## What You May Feel

Your body will start to change to support your growing baby. Some of these changes may be new or feel strange, but they are normal. Here is what you might notice:

- **Breast changes:** Your breasts may feel sore or get bigger. This happens because your body is getting ready to feed your baby. Wear a soft bra if your breasts are sore.
- **Frequent urination:** You may need to urinate more often. This happens because your body is making more blood, and your growing uterus presses on your bladder. Make sure you can empty your bladder often. Do not hold it.
- **Fatigue:** You may feel very tired. Rest when you can.
- **Vaginal discharge:** You may notice more clear or white vaginal discharge. This helps protect you from infections. Let your care team know if it smells bad, looks yellow or green, or causes itching. Wear cotton underwear and avoid tight pants to help with discharge.

- **Mild cramping:** Some mild cramps are normal. Drinking water can help. If you have strong pain or heavy bleeding, call your care team right away.
- **Cravings:** You might crave certain foods, and some foods may make you feel sick. This is normal during pregnancy.

## Nausea

Many people feel sick to their stomach in the first trimester. This is often called “morning sickness.” It can happen at any time of day.

To manage nausea at home:

- Eat small meals often.
- Try plain foods like crackers or toast.
- Drink water or ginger tea.
- Avoid foods or smells that make you feel sick.

Contact your care team if:

- You cannot keep any food or water down.
- You feel dizzy or faint.
- You lose weight.



## Healthy Eating Tips

- Eat plenty of lean proteins like chicken, eggs, beans, and nuts. Limit fish high in mercury, like shark, swordfish, and king mackerel. Choose safer fish lower in mercury, like salmon, shrimp, and canned light tuna. Avoid raw fish.
- At each meal, try to fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables. Wash them before eating.
- Reach for low-fat dairy like milk and yogurt. Avoid undercooked meat and unpasteurized dairy.
- To help prevent constipation, choose foods high in fiber. Whole grains like oatmeal and brown rice are good choices.
- Drink water often. Aim for about 8 to 10 cups a day.
- Do not drink alcohol during pregnancy. There is no known safe amount.

## Prenatal Vitamins

Prenatal vitamins are special multivitamins made for pregnancy. They have the right amount of folic acid, iron, and other key nutrients.

- Take a prenatal vitamin with 400 to 800 micrograms of folic acid each day.
- Ask your care team which prenatal vitamin is best for you.
- Keep eating healthy foods even when you take a prenatal vitamin.

## Nutrients

- **Folic acid:** This helps prevent problems with your baby's brain and spinal development. Try to eat foods like leafy greens, oranges, and fortified cereals to boost your folic acid intake.
- **Iron:** This helps your body make more blood for you and your baby. Eat foods like lean meats, beans, and spinach. Your prenatal vitamin should also have iron.
- **Calcium:** This builds strong bones and teeth for your baby. Good sources are milk, cheese, yogurt, and fortified soy drinks.

- **Vitamin D:** This helps your body use calcium. You can get vitamin D from sunlight, milk, and eggs. Your prenatal vitamin should also have vitamin D.
- **Choline:** This helps your baby's brain develop. Eggs, lean meats, beans, and dairy are good sources. Some prenatal vitamins do not have choline, so ask your care team if you need more.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids:** These help your baby's brain and eyes. Eat fish, like salmon or sardines, or talk to your care team about a supplement.

## Exercise

- Low-impact exercise is generally OK in low-risk pregnancies, but always listen to your body and follow your care team's advice.
- Walking, swimming, or gentle stretching are good options. Aim for 30 minutes a day.
- Talk with your care team before starting new hard exercises.
- Stop if you feel dizzy, short of breath, or have pain.
- Do not do exercises that could cause a fall or impact to your belly, like horseback riding, boxing, or skiing.



Always talk to your care team about exercise while pregnant.

## Work or School

Most people can keep working or going to school during early pregnancy. However, your body is already going through many changes, and you may feel more tired than usual.

To help you feel your best:

- Take short breaks to rest or stretch.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Eat small, healthy snacks to keep your energy up.

If your job or school is physically hard or stressful, tell your care team. They may give you tips to help.

## Travel

Travel is often safe in early pregnancy, but always check with your care team before taking a long trip.

Here are some tips for safe travel:

- Wear your seat belt low across your hips, under your belly.
- Take breaks to stretch your legs and use the bathroom.
- Drink water and bring healthy snacks to stay comfortable.
- If flying, get up and walk every hour to help blood flow.

Your care team can help you decide what travel is right for you.

## Intimacy

Sex is usually safe in a low-risk pregnancy, but always follow your care team's advice.

It is normal for your feelings about sex to change. Some people feel more interested in sex, while others feel tired or sick and may not be in the mood. Both are OK.

If you choose to have sex:

- Stop if you feel pain, have bleeding, or feel uncomfortable.
- Call your care team if you have any concerns or questions.

If you feel unwell, spending time with your partner through talking, cuddling, or relaxing can also help you feel close and supported during pregnancy.



## Mental Health

It is normal to feel many emotions during early pregnancy. It is common to feel excited, tired, worried, or even sad. Your body and hormones are changing, and that can affect your mood.

Here are some ways to care for your mental health:

- Rest when you can. Fatigue can make feelings stronger.
- Take slow, deep breaths to help your body and mind relax.
- Talk to someone you trust, like a friend, family member, or your care team.
- Do calming activities like reading, listening to music, or taking a walk.

If you feel very sad, anxious, or overwhelmed, for more time than you feel is typical, talk to your care team. You are not alone, and help is available. Taking care of your mind is just as important as taking care of your body.



## **Thank You for Choosing Us**

Thank you for trusting us with your care. We are here to support you and want you to feel your best. Contact us with any questions.

**IF YOU HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, CALL 911 OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM.**

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.

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