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Health Problems in Pregnancy

What are health problems in pregnancy?

A health problem in pregnancy [<https://medlineplus.gov/pregnancy.html>] is any disease or condition that could affect your health or the health of your fetus [<https://medlineplus.gov/fetalhealthanddevelopment.html>]. Some health problems may make it more likely that you will have a high-risk pregnancy. A high-risk pregnancy is one in which you, your fetus, or both are at higher risk for health problems than in a typical pregnancy.

But just because you have health problems, it doesn't mean that you, or your fetus, will have a problem during the pregnancy. Taking care of yourself and getting early [<https://medlineplus.gov/preconceptioncare.html>] and regular prenatal care [<https://medlineplus.gov/prenatalcare.html>] from a health care provider may help you reduce pregnancy risks from health problems.

What raises my risk for health problems during pregnancy?

Every pregnancy has some risk of problems, but your lifestyle, as well as factors like certain conditions and health issues, can raise that risk, such as:

- A health condition you had before you got pregnant
- A health condition you develop during pregnancy
- A pregnancy with more than one baby [<https://medlineplus.gov/twintripletsmultiplebirths.html>]
- A health problem that happened during a previous pregnancy and could happen again
- Substance use during pregnancy [<https://medlineplus.gov/pregnancyandsubstanceuse.html>]
- Being over age 35

Any of these can affect your health, the health of your fetus, or both.

Can chronic health conditions cause problems in pregnancy?

Every pregnancy is different. If you have specific risks in one pregnancy, it doesn't mean that you will have them in another. But, if you have a chronic condition, you should talk to your provider about how to minimize your risk before you get pregnant. Once you are pregnant, you may need a health care team to monitor your pregnancy. Some common conditions that can complicate a pregnancy include:

- High blood pressure [<https://medlineplus.gov/highbloodpressureinpregnancy.html>]
- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) [<https://medlineplus.gov/polycysticovarysyndrome.html>]
- Kidney problems [<https://medlineplus.gov/kidneydiseases.html>]
- Autoimmune disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/autoimmunediseases.html>]
- Thyroid disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/thyroiddiseases.html>]
- Obesity [<https://medlineplus.gov/obesity.html>]
- HIV [<https://medlineplus.gov/hivandpregnancy.html>]
- Cancer [<https://medlineplus.gov/tumorsandpregnancy.html>]
- Infections [<https://medlineplus.gov/infectionsandpregnancy.html>]

Other conditions that may make pregnancy risky can develop during pregnancy - for example, gestational diabetes [<https://medlineplus.gov/diabetesandpregnancy.html>] and Rh incompatibility [<https://medlineplus.gov/rhcompatibility.html>] .

Can health problems in pregnancy be prevented?

You may be able to lower your risk of certain health problems by making healthy lifestyle changes before you get pregnant. These can include reaching a healthy weight, not smoking [<https://medlineplus.gov/quittingsmoking.html>] , and managing any health conditions.

However, health problems during pregnancy are not always preventable. Some chronic conditions can be treated and controlled, while others aren't treatable and carry a higher risk than usual, even if the health problem is well-managed.

Share your symptoms with your provider for early detection and treatment of health problems. Sometimes, it's hard to know what's normal. Some symptoms, like nausea [<https://medlineplus.gov/nauseaandvomiting.html>] , back pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/backpain.html>] , and fatigue [<https://medlineplus.gov/fatigue.html>] , are common during pregnancy, while other symptoms, like vaginal bleeding [<https://medlineplus.gov/vaginalbleeding.html>] or a severe or long-lasting headache [<https://medlineplus.gov/headache.html>] , can be signs of a problem. Call your provider to let them know if something is bothering or worrying you.

Start Here

- About High-Risk Pregnancy [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/high-risk/conditioninfo>]  (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.nichd.nih.gov/salud/temas/high-risk/informacion/factores>]
- Pregnancy Complications [<https://www.cdc.gov/maternal-infant-health/pregnancy-complications/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Pregnant and Postpartum Women [<https://www.cdc.gov/hearher/pregnant-postpartum/>]  (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- What Are Some Factors that Make a Pregnancy High Risk? [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/high-risk/conditioninfo/factors>]  (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.nichd.nih.gov/salud/temas/high-risk/informacion/factores>]
- What Health Problems Can Develop during Pregnancy?
[<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/preconceptioncare/conditioninfo/health-problems>] 
(Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.nichd.nih.gov/salud/temas/preconceptioncare/informacion/desarrollar>]

Symptoms

- Signs and Symptoms of Urgent Maternal Warnings Signs [<https://www.cdc.gov/hearher/maternal-warning-signs/>] 
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cdc.gov/hearher/spanish/docs/pdf/hearher_women_palmcard_5x7-spanish-508c.pdf]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Estrogen Levels Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/estrogen-levels-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-estrogeno/>]
- Prenatal Testing: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/prenataltesting.html>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/prenataltesting.html>]
- Progesterone Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/progesterone-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-progesterona/>]

Prevention and Risk Factors

- Preventing Overheating during Pregnancy [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/overheating-pregnancy.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/overheating-pregnancy.html>]

• Who Is at Increased Risk of Health Problems during Pregnancy?

[<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/preconceptioncare/conditioninfo/risk>]

 (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)

Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.nichd.nih.gov/salud/temas/preconceptioncare/informacion/riesgo>]

Related Issues

- Asthma and Pregnancy [<https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/asthma-and-pregnancy/>] (Organization of Teratology Information Specialists)
Also in Spanish [<https://mothertobaby.org/es/hojas-informativas/asma-embarazo/>]
- Asthma, Allergies and Pregnancy [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/conditions-library/asthma/asthma,-allergies-and-pregnancy-ttr>] (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/biblioteca-de-condiciones/biblioteca-de-asma/asma,-alergias-y-embarazo-consejos-para-tener-en-c>]
- Chronic Health Conditions and Pregnancy [<https://www.marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/planning-baby/chronic-health-conditions-and-pregnancy>] (March of Dimes Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://nacersano.marchofdimes.org/embarazo/condiciones-cronicas-de-salud-y-el-embarazo.aspx>]
- Delivering Safer Pregnancies: Lower Your Risk of Health Problems [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2023/07/delivering-safer-pregnancies>]  (National Institutes of Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/embarazos-mas-seguros>]
- Depression and Pregnancy [<https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/depression-pregnancy/>] (Organization of Teratology Information Specialists)
Also in Spanish [<https://mothertobaby.org/es/hojas-informativas/la-depresion/>]
- Epilepsy and Pregnancy [<https://familydoctor.org/epilepsy-and-pregnancy/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/epilepsia-epilepsia-y-embarazo/?adfree=true>]
- Family Planning and Pregnancy with Multiple Sclerosis [<https://www.nationalmssociety.org/managing-ms/living-with-ms/diet-exercise-and-healthy-behaviors/pregnancy>] (National Multiple Sclerosis Society)
- Fever/Hyperthermia and Pregnancy [<https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/hyperthermia-pregnancy/>] (Organization of Teratology Information Specialists)
Also in Spanish [<https://mothertobaby.org/es/hojas-informativas/la-hipertermia/pdf/>]
- Gaucher Disease and Pregnancy [<https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/gaucher-disease-pregnancy/>] (Organization of Teratology Information Specialists)
Also in Spanish [<https://mothertobaby.org/es/hojas-informativas/la-enfermedad-de-gaucher/>]
- Headaches during Pregnancy: What's the Best Treatment? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/expert-answers/headaches-during-pregnancy/faq-20058265?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/expert-answers/headaches-during-pregnancy/faq-20058265?p=1>]
- Heart Conditions and Pregnancy: Know the Risks [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/in-depth/pregnancy/art-20045977?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/in-depth/pregnancy/art-20045977?p=1>]
- IBS in Women [<https://aboutibs.org/what-is-ibs/ibs-in-women/>] (International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)
- Lupus and Pregnancy [<https://www.lupus.org/resources/planning-a-pregnancy-when-you-have-lupus>] (Lupus Foundation of America)
- Pregnancy after 35: Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/getting-pregnant/in-depth/pregnancy/art-20045756?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/healthy-lifestyle/getting-pregnant/in-depth/pregnancy/art-20045756?p=1>]
- Pregnancy and Rheumatic Disease [<https://rheumatology.org/pregnancy-rheumatic-disease>] (American College of Rheumatology)
Also in Spanish [<https://rheumatology.org/embarazo-y-enfermedad-reumatica>]
- Providing Support for Pregnant or Postpartum Women [<https://www.cdc.gov/hearher/caring/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

• Thyroid Disease and Pregnancy [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/endocrine-diseases/pregnancy-thyroid-disease>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-endocrinas/enfermedad-tiroideas-embarazo>]

- Will Stress during Pregnancy Affect My Baby?

[<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/preconceptioncare/conditioninfo/stress>]

 (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)

Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.nichd.nih.gov/salud/temas/preconceptioncare/informacion/afecta>]

Specifics

- Back Pain during Pregnancy [<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/back%20pain%20during%20pregnancy>] (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists)
- Bleeding and Spotting from the Vagina during Pregnancy [<https://www.marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/pregnancy/bleeding-and-spotting-vagina-during-pregnancy>] (March of Dimes Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://nacersano.marchofdimes.org/embarazo/sangrado-y-manchado-de-la-vagina-durante-el-embarazo.aspx>]
- Blood Clotting and Pregnancy [<https://www.hematology.org/education/patients/blood-clots/pregnancy>] 
- Cervical Length: Why Does It Matter during Pregnancy? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/expert-answers/cervical-length/faq-20058357?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/expert-answers/cervical-length/faq-20058357?p=1>]
- Fetal Growth Restriction [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/intrauterine-growth-restriction/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/retraso-del-crecimiento-intrauterino-es/?adfree=true>]
- Morning Sickness: Nausea and Vomiting of Pregnancy [<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/morning-sickness-nausea-and-vomiting-of-pregnancy>] (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists)
- Placental Abruptio [<https://www.marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/pregnancy/placental-abruption>] (March of Dimes Foundation)
- Placental Accreta, Increta, and Percreta [<https://www.marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/pregnancy/placental-accreta-increta-and-percreta>] (March of Dimes Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://nacersano.marchofdimes.org/embarazo/placenta-accreta-increta-y-percreta.aspx>]
- Pregnancy and Obesity: Know the Risks [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/in-depth/pregnancy-and-obesity/art-20044409?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Umbilical Cord Conditions [<https://www.marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/birth/umbilical-cord-conditions>] (March of Dimes Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://nacersano.marchofdimes.org/embarazo/anomalias-del-cordon-umbilical.aspx>]

Test Your Knowledge

- Is Your Pregnancy High Risk? [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/quiz/002129_42.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/quiz/002129_97.htm]

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pregnancy Complications [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pregnancy+Complications%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pregnancy, High-Risk [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pregnancy,+High-Risk%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Implementation and Evaluation of a Weight Management Programme for Overweight or... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40717933>]

- Article: Placental and cerebral circulation in fetuses of mothers with polycystic ovary... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40640743>]
- Article: Mindfulness-based stress reduction intervention during pregnancy changes maternal brain. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40596371>]
- Health Problems in Pregnancy -- see more articles [[https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Pregnancy%2C+High-Risk%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+OR+%22Pregnancy+Complications%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+AND+%28patient+education+handout%5Bpt%5D+OR+guideline%5Bpt%5D+OR+clinical+trial%5Bpt%5D%29++NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Pregnancy%2C+High-Risk%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+OR+%22Pregnancy+Complications%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+AND+%28patient+education+handout%5Bpt%5D+OR+guideline%5Bpt%5D+OR+clinical+trial%5Bpt%5D%29++NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Pregnancy%2C+High-Risk%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+OR+%22Pregnancy+Complications%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+AND+%28patient+education+handout%5Bpt%5D+OR+guideline%5Bpt%5D+OR+clinical+trial%5Bpt%5D%29++NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+)]

Find an Expert

- Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health [<https://womenshealth.gov/>] Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.womenshealth.gov/>]
- Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/>] 
- How to Find Find an Ob-Gyn [<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/find-an-ob-gyn>] (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists)
- March of Dimes Foundation [<https://www.marchofdimes.org/>] Also in Spanish [<https://nacersano.marchofdimes.org/>]

Patient Handouts

- Bed rest during pregnancy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000581.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia) Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000581.htm>]
- Hydramnios [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000599.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia) Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000599.htm>]
- Hyperemesis gravidarum [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001499.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia) Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001499.htm>]
- Insufficient cervix [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000595.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia) Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000595.htm>]
- Placenta abruptio [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000605.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia) Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000605.htm>]
- Placenta previa [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000900.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia) Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000900.htm>]
- Pregnancy - health risks [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002129.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia) Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002129.htm>]
- Vaginal bleeding in early pregnancy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000614.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia) Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000614.htm>]
- Vaginal bleeding in late pregnancy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000627.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia) Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000627.htm>]
- Vaginal bleeding in pregnancy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003264.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia) Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003264.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

[Bed rest during pregnancy](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000581.htm)

[Diastasis recti](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001602.htm)

[Hydramnios](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000599.htm)

[Hyperemesis gravidarum](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001499.htm)

[Insufficient cervix](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000595.htm)

[Intrauterine growth restriction](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001500.htm)

[Peripartum cardiomyopathy](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000188.htm)

[Placenta abruptio](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000605.htm)

[Placenta abruption - definition](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000901.htm)

[Placenta previa](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000900.htm)

[Placental insufficiency](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001485.htm)

[Polyhydramnios](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003267.htm)

[Pregnancy - health risks](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002129.htm)

[Serum progesterone](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003714.htm)

[Vaginal bleeding in early pregnancy](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000614.htm)

[Vaginal bleeding in late pregnancy](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000627.htm)

[Vaginal bleeding in pregnancy](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003264.htm)

Related Health Topics

[Childbirth Problems](https://medlineplus.gov/childbirthproblems.html)

[Diabetes and Pregnancy](https://medlineplus.gov/diabetesandpregnancy.html)

[Fetal Health and Development](https://medlineplus.gov/fetalhealthanddevelopment.html)

[High Blood Pressure in Pregnancy](https://medlineplus.gov/highbloodpressureinpregnancy.html)

[HIV and Pregnancy](https://medlineplus.gov/hivandpregnancy.html)

[Infections and Pregnancy](https://medlineplus.gov/infectionsandpregnancy.html)

[Pregnancy](https://medlineplus.gov/pregnancy.html)

Pregnancy and Medicines [<https://medlineplus.gov/pregnancyandmedicines.html>]

Pregnancy and Substance Use [<https://medlineplus.gov/pregnancyandsubstanceuse.html>]

Premature Babies [<https://medlineplus.gov/prematurebabies.html>]

Prenatal Care [<https://medlineplus.gov/prenatalcare.html>]

Rh Incompatibility [<https://medlineplus.gov/rhincompatibility.html>]

Tumors and Pregnancy [<https://medlineplus.gov/tumorsandpregnancy.html>]

Twins, Triplets, Multiple Births [<https://medlineplus.gov/twinstripletsmultiplebirths.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Health Problems in Pregnancy* is the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/Pages/index.aspx>]

Other Languages

Find health information in languages other than English

[<https://medlineplus.gov/languages/healthproblemsinpregnancy.html>] on *Health Problems in Pregnancy*

NIH MedlinePlus Magazine

By the Numbers: Health Disparities in Pregnancy [<https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/by-the-numbers-health-disparities-in-pregnancy>]

High-Risk Pregnancy: What You Need to Know [<https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/high-risk-pregnancy-what-you-need-to-know>]

Mother Spreads Awareness After Multiple Preeclampsia Diagnoses [<https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/mother-spreads-awareness-after-multiple-preeclampsia-diagnoses>]

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