

# Navigating pregnancy

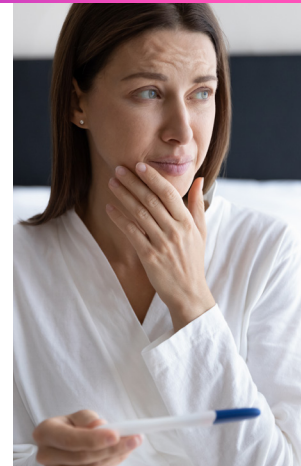


IT STARTS  
WITH  
MOM

Your health is affected by things other than your personal choices. Where you live and not having access to good quality healthcare services are just some examples. If you're pregnant this can be overwhelming, but don't worry—we're here to help you advocate for yourself and your baby to get the care you both need to be healthy and strong. Check out the recommendations below.

## 1 Pay close attention to pregnancy discomforts

- **Keep track of changes.** Pregnancy hormones, stress, and body tension caused from extra weight will cause changes in your body throughout pregnancy. Even though this is normal, write them down and discuss them with your provider at your prenatal checkups.
- **Listen to your body.** Discomforts such as fatigue and nausea are usually not a cause for concern, but if they interfere with your daily life tell your provider. Severe discomforts, such as headaches that don't go away or shortness of breath, should never be ignored.
- **Raise your concerns.** Too many women in the U.S. die during or after pregnancy because of health problems related to pregnancy—and most of them are preventable. If you're worried about changes in your body, speak up. You know your body best.



## 2 Understand risk factors that lead to pregnancy complications

- **Heart health.** If you have any heart related condition, talk to your healthcare team to understand your risks. Many conditions require medications to be controlled, but your provider can help you choose one that's safe for you and your baby.
- **Chronic conditions.** It's possible to have a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby even if you have chronic health condition. Keep seeing all the providers who treat your condition. They are all part of your team, and each one plays an important part of your care during pregnancy.
- **Mental health.** Perinatal depression is one of the most common complications of pregnancy. If left untreated it can cause problems, such as preterm birth. Be sure to tell your provider if you have a history of depression or think you may be depressed. Early treatment can help you feel better and be ready to care for your baby after birth.



## 3 Continue to keep good health habits

- **Move your body.** Healthy pregnant women need at least 2½ hours of aerobic activity, such as walking or swimming, each week. Regular physical activity can help reduce your risk of pregnancy complications and ease pregnancy discomforts, like back pain.
- **Maintain good nutrition.** Eating nutritious foods will help you support your pregnancy and the new changes in your body. If you have dietary restrictions, talk to your provider to make sure you're including options that will help you get the nutrients you and your baby need.
- **Set yourself up for a healthy postpartum experience.** If you have health problems during pregnancy, such as gestational diabetes and preeclampsia, you're at greater risk of having health problems later in life. Keeping healthy habits and going to your prenatal checkups can reduce your chances of having complications after you give birth.



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