



# The Right Start for You and Your Baby





## GETTING STARTED

**Congratulations! Welcome to the Healthy Beginnings pregnancy program. This program will help you and your baby to be in the best health possible for your upcoming delivery. Whether you are a first time parent or you are adding another child to your family, this program can help you.**

Here are a few things to remember about the Healthy Beginnings program:

- Healthy Beginnings can be reached at **888-447-0337**. You can call to join and speak with a maternity nurse during business hours, Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm or leave a message on our confidential voice mail.
- You can call the 24-hour Nurse Line® with any questions or concerns you may have.\* Please note that these services are educational in nature and are not meant to take the place of seeing your doctor. If you have any concerns about your health, you should get in touch with your doctor or, in an emergency, call **911**.
- Three phone surveys: The first survey will be done early in your pregnancy. The second one will be done about halfway through, and the third one will be done after you deliver your baby. These surveys help us help you to have a health pregnancy and delivery.
- If your doctor or midwife advises you that your pregnancy is high risk, he or she may refer you to our case management program. If so, you may receive a letter or phone call from the program. You can also contact a maternity nurse case manager to assist you in finding the care you need. Call **888-447-0337**, Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. If we are unable to speak with you when you call, please leave your name, member ID number and contact phone number and we will call you back within one business day.

\* These services are not meant to take the place of your doctor's care.

## Prenatal Care Visits

Prenatal care is the care a mother-to-be receives during her pregnancy. Good prenatal care during pregnancy increases an expectant mother's chance of having a healthy baby.

It is very important that pregnant women not travel to areas with documented Zika virus transmission. If you live in or must travel to one of these areas, talk to your doctor or other health care provider first. Practice safe sex and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites.

You will need to see your OB/GYN (doctor) or midwife often during your pregnancy. Please see below for the recommended number of times\* during the different stages of your pregnancy:

<b>Weeks</b>	<b>Number of times you need to see your doctor or midwife</b>
1-28	Once a month
29-36	Once every two weeks
36-Delivery	Once a week

After you have your baby, don't forget to go to your doctor for your postpartum (after childbirth) visit to be sure you are healing well.

## Eat Healthy, Stay Active

It is important for both you and your baby that you eat well during your pregnancy. Your baby needs certain nutrients and vitamins to grow strong. If you can't afford all the foods you need for healthy eating, you should contact the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program for help. If you are eligible, they will provide you with food resources and information about eating right and about how to feed your newborn. To find a WIC center near you in New York State, call **800-522-5006** or go to [fns.usda.gov/wic](http://fns.usda.gov/wic).

## Get Your Flu Shot

Seasonal flu typically strikes between October and April. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that pregnant women get a flu shot if they are pregnant during the season. Speak with your doctor about whether or not you should receive this shot.

## See Your Dentist

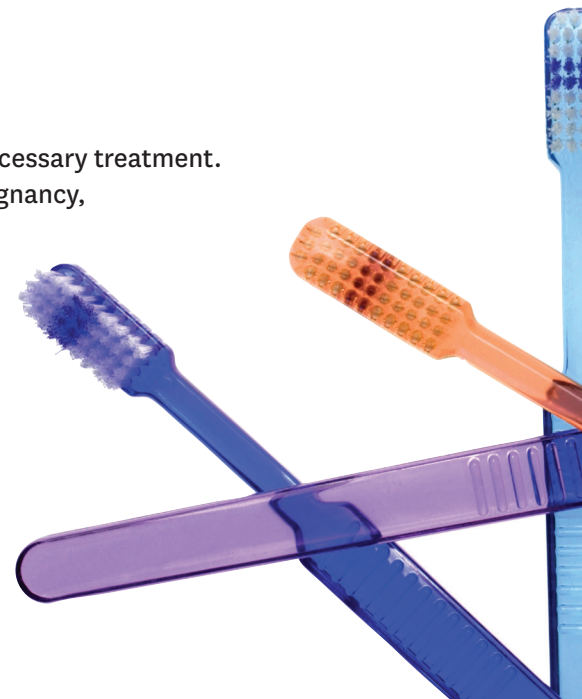
Dental care during pregnancy is not only safe but very important to your health and the health of your baby. You may see your dentist for oral health care any time during pregnancy, but the best time is between 14 and 20 weeks. It is safe to have dental X-rays during pregnancy, even during the first three months! There is evidence that young children get the bacteria that causes cavities from their mothers. Improving the health of your mouth may also improve the dental health of your baby.

Here are some things you can do to improve your dental health:

- Brush your teeth twice a day with toothpaste and floss daily.
- Choose water or low-fat milk and avoid sugary beverages.
- Choose fruit instead of juice to meet your daily requirement.
- Do not eat sugary foods except during mealtime.
- Go to your dentist for a checkup early in pregnancy and receive any necessary treatment.

If your dentist is not comfortable examining or treating you during pregnancy, ask your dentist to contact your doctor to discuss treatment options.

If you have dental benefits as part of your health plan, you can call the Customer Service number on the back of your member ID card to find a dentist in your area. If you do not have dental coverage as part of your plan, you can locate a dentist by asking family or friends. Medicaid, Family Health Plus and Child Health Plus members can call DentaQuest at **844-776-8748**. All other members should call **800-468-0600**.





## WHAT SHOULD I DO TO STAY HEALTHY?

### Medicine, Drugs And Alcohol

Tell your doctor or midwife about any prescribed, over-the-counter, herbal or street drugs that you are using. Even medicines prescribed by a doctor may cause harm during pregnancy and may need to be changed. If you drink alcohol, speak with your doctor or midwife about quitting. Alcohol, even in small amounts, can do damage to a developing baby.

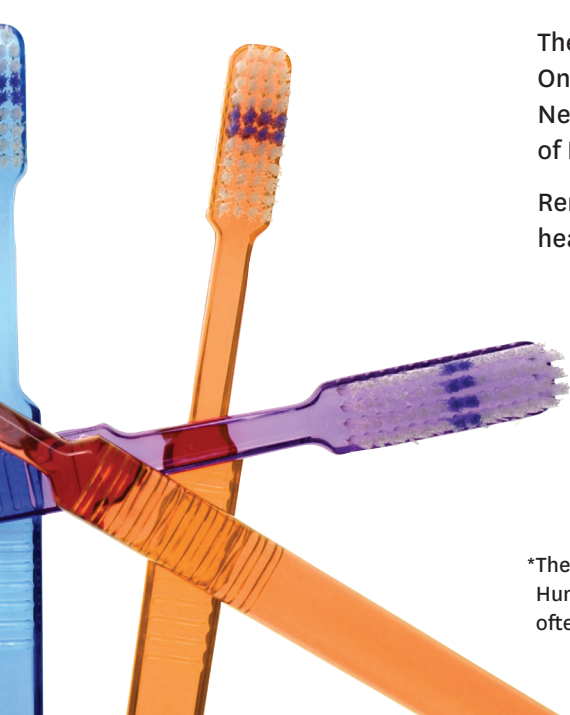
### Keep You and Your Baby Smoke-Free

If you or other family members smoke, especially around the baby, quitting is one of the best ways you can improve your health and give your baby a healthy start. When you stop smoking, your baby benefits, too.

- Your baby needs oxygen to develop properly. When you quit, your baby gets more oxygen and fewer toxins.
- You will lessen the chance of miscarriage or stillbirth.
- You will lessen the chance of early delivery or having a baby with a low birth weight.
- You will lower the chance of your baby developing breathing problems, asthma and ear infections after birth.

There are many reasons to quit smoking. If not for you, do it for your baby. Once you quit, don't start again after your baby is born. If you need help quitting, New York State residents please call **866-NY-QUITS** (866-697-8487), non-residents of New York State, please call **877-500-2393**.

Remember: Pregnant woman or breastfeeding mothers should talk with their health care practitioner before using nicotine replacement therapy products.



\*These recommendations are from the Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. If your pregnancy is high risk, your doctor or midwife will want to see you more often throughout your pregnancy to be sure you and your baby remain healthy.



## Learn About Lead Poisoning

### What is lead poisoning?

Lead is a poison. If lead gets into your body, it could harm you and your unborn child. It enters the body, usually through the mouth or the nose, travels through the blood stream, and collects in the soft tissues of the body, such as the liver, kidneys and the brain.

### Are you and your unborn baby at risk?

A pregnant woman who has lead in her body may expose her unborn child. Lead in the mother's womb passes through the placenta and can get into the baby's bones, brain and other organs. If you are exposed to lead when you are pregnant, you have a higher risk of having a premature baby, a miscarriage or stillborn, or of having a baby with a low birth weight.

### What can you do to protect your unborn baby?

- Talk to your doctor about lead poisoning.
- Consider being tested to measure lead levels in the blood.
- Stay away from places where products that contain lead, such as paint, are being removed.

### What causes lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning is usually caused by months or years of exposure to small amounts of lead in the home or work. The most common source of lead exposure is dust from old lead-based paint.

For more Information

**New York State Department of Health: [health.ny.gov](http://health.ny.gov)**

**New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health)**

## Get Tested

During your pregnancy, your doctor will recommend a number of tests to help keep you and your baby healthy, including tests for HIV and chlamydia. Both of these conditions can be passed from you to your newborn. Ask your doctor any questions you have about these tests. Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that can have no symptoms, but can infect your female organs and can cause eye infections and pneumonia in your baby. It can be detected by a simple urine test. If the test is positive, you can get treatment during pregnancy.

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. The HIV virus attacks your immune system. People can get it by having unprotected sex or sharing needles. It can be passed to a baby during pregnancy, delivery or during breastfeeding.

- It is important to find out if you are HIV positive early in your pregnancy. If you are positive, treatment should be started immediately. This treatment can help improve your health and can help you prevent passing the virus to your baby.
- It is recommended that you be tested for HIV as soon as you know you are pregnant. If that test is negative, you should be tested again between 34 and 36 weeks of pregnancy. Your doctor will talk to you about HIV before and after testing.
- In New York State your baby must be tested for HIV at birth. You will be informed of the results of this test before you leave the hospital.

For more information on HIV and AIDS go to [health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/](https://health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/).



## HIV and the Newborn Screening Program

New York State requires that all newborns be tested for HIV and other disorders through the Newborn Screening Program. Some of the conditions can affect a newborn's physical and mental development very early in life. Early treatment is very important to make sure your baby stays healthy.

- While in the hospital, a small amount of blood will be taken from your baby's heel. This blood sample is sent to the state for testing.
- The results will be sent to your baby's doctor. Be sure to discuss the results of these tests at your baby's first checkup. This testing is free.
- Your baby will also be tested for HIV while in the hospital. The results of this test will be confidentially reported to the State Health Department as well as your baby's doctor. Your baby's doctor is the best source of information about the results of this test. If the results are positive, the doctor will help you decide what treatment is needed.
- You can visit [wadsworth.org/newborn/index.htm](http://wadsworth.org/newborn/index.htm) for more information about the New York State Newborn Screening Program.

For more information about having a healthy pregnancy, go to [health.ny.gov/community/pregnancy/health\\_care/healthy\\_pregnancy\\_fact\\_sheet.htm](http://health.ny.gov/community/pregnancy/health_care/healthy_pregnancy_fact_sheet.htm).





# THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR

## Preterm Labor Signs

If you had previous preterm delivery, talk to your doctor about 17P. This is a medicine to lower risk of preterm birth for pregnant women.

Pregnancy usually lasts for 40 weeks. Preterm labor is labor that starts before 37 weeks of pregnancy (one or more weeks before your due date). Preterm labor may cause your baby to be born too soon. Preterm babies may:

- Experience breathing and feeding difficulties, and problems keeping warm.
- Get more infections than other babies.
- Need special hospital care in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).
- Have to stay in the hospital after their mothers go home.
- Have long-term health problems related to breathing, vision, walking and learning.
- Not be strong enough to survive, especially if they are very early.

It's not always easy to tell that you are having preterm labor. Many of the signs feel like some of the normal things that can happen during the second half of pregnancy. Important signs to watch for, especially if they are new or different from before, are:

- A sudden gush or constant leak of fluid from the vagina.
- Bleeding from the vagina.
- Contractions (tightening) of the uterus with or without pain.
- Cramps similar to those you have during your period.
- Intense pain in your abdomen that is constant.
- Low, dull or constant backache.
- Pelvic pressure; feeling full or heavy.
- Increase or change in discharge from the vagina.

It is frightening to have signs of preterm labor and to think that your baby might be born early. Sometimes, women worry that they may be wrong or don't want to "bother" someone at the hospital or their doctor. **If something feels different or "not quite right," and you have signs of preterm labor, your best chance to stop your labor is to be treated as soon as possible.** Contact your doctor, midwife or hospital immediately. Follow their instructions and if you are told to go to the hospital, ask a family member, neighbor or friend to drive you. Don't drive yourself. In an emergency, call **911**.

## Depression Can Be During or After Pregnancy

We hear a lot about postpartum (after childbirth) depression, but depression can occur at any time during or after pregnancy. If you think you are experiencing depression call your doctor or the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services phone number listed on the back of your member ID card to discuss options for help. Some of the signs are:

- Crying or sadness for no reason.
- Inability to start or complete normal tasks.
- Worrying constantly about your baby's health.
- Inability to care for yourself or your family.
- Anxiety or panic attacks.
- Fear or thoughts that you might harm yourself or others.

**Remember, depression is an illness that can be treated if you ask for help. Don't wait. If you have these symptoms or other behavioral health problems, call your doctor today or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 (TTY: 800-799-4889).**



## It is Never Too Early to be Prepared.

### Make Your Wishes Known

We would like to give you some important information to help you prepare for a life-altering health condition, should it occur.\* The following describes three documents that can help your family, close friends and your doctors know your wishes should you become ill or injured, and unable to communicate because of your condition.

- **Health Care Proxy** — A health care proxy lets you identify a family member or close friend that would make your health care decisions for you if you were not able to communicate.
- **Living Will** — A living will allows you to let people know what medical care you would want used to save your life or whether or not to administer these treatments if your condition is not reversible.
- **Power of Attorney** — A Power of Attorney document allows you to name another person, often a family member, to act on your behalf. This allows the person you select to deal with financial and property matters including bank accounts, buying and selling real estate, and more. There are several types of Power of Attorney. Speak with a lawyer to find out if this is a good choice for you.

These documents should be filled out when you are well so that if you are in an accident or suddenly become seriously ill, your family, close friends and doctors will know exactly what your wishes are.

For more information and a copy of the health care proxy, go to [health.ny.gov/professionals/patients/health\\_care\\_proxy/](https://health.ny.gov/professionals/patients/health_care_proxy/).

\*New York and federal law gives every able adult 18 years of age and older, the right to make their health care choices, including the right to decide what medical care or treatments to accept, decline or stop.

# MAKE WAY FOR BABY!

Here are a few highlights.

## Elective Early Delivery

Pregnancy is usually 40 weeks long. Babies and moms need this time to grow and get ready for delivery. Babies need at least 39 weeks to be fully developed. Their lungs and brain are still developing at this time. Babies that are born at 37 or 38 weeks of pregnancy are more likely to have breathing problems low blood sugar, and infections.

You may feel impatient during the last few weeks of your pregnancy. You want to see and hold your baby and you're tired of being pregnant. But your baby is still growing in order to enter the world safely. And your body is preparing to give birth. Be good to yourself and your baby during those last few weeks. Rest and take care of yourself and let nature take its course. In some cases, your doctor or midwife might want you to have an early delivery for your health or the health of the baby. Your doctor or midwife will talk to you about why this is needed. If there is no medical reason for you to deliver your baby early, you should continue your pregnancy to at least 39 weeks.

## The Benefits of Breastfeeding

Some women are unsure about breastfeeding until they learn how easy and natural it can be. Just think, there is no preparation of formula. Breast milk also has nutrients that can help keep your baby from getting sick. This helps to give your baby a healthy start in life.

To help you feel more comfortable, here are a few tips to get you ready:

- Take a breastfeeding class. Ask your doctor, midwife or the childbirth education center at the hospital where you will have your baby for a list of classes. Classes are also available at WIC centers.
- After you have your baby, ask to have the lactation consultant, a specially trained staff member, to come and help you start nursing.
- Nurse in the delivery or recovery room, or as soon as possible after delivery.
- Nurse frequently - the more the baby "empties" the breasts the more milk that is made for future feedings. The breasts are never truly empty; they are always producing more milk.

**Please note: Women who are HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) positive should not breastfeed, since they may transmit the virus to their baby. In addition, premastication (i.e., prechewing) of food is a risk factor for HIV transmission to children and should not be conducted. Speak with your provider for further information and details.**

### **Buckling Up for Baby**

You must have a car seat in your car when you bring your baby home from the hospital. Make sure the car seat you choose meets federal safety guidelines.

- Infant car seats must face the back of the car and are safest when placed in the back seat. Never place a child or infant car seat in front of an air bag.
- Put the baby in clothing that allows the safety harness to fit properly between the baby's legs.

When installing your car seat, please follow the directions in your vehicle owner's manual and those that came with the car seat. If you need help, visit the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles website at [safeny.ny.gov/sesa-ndx.htm](http://safeny.ny.gov/sesa-ndx.htm) or [safekids.org](http://safekids.org).

### **From Your Health Plan**

If you move during your pregnancy, be sure to call the Customer Service number on the back of your member ID card and advise us of your new address and phone number.

Medicaid and Child Health Plus members should notify the local department of Social Services or the NY State of Health, depending on how you enrolled.









