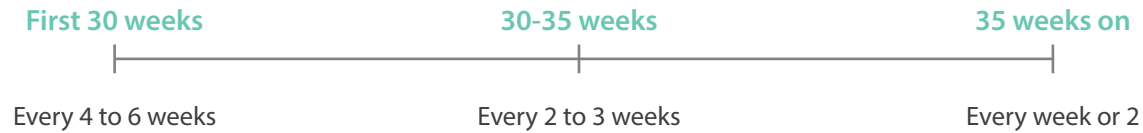


Health Care During Pregnancy

Working with your health care provider is key to a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

How Often Should You See Your Doctor or Midwife?



You'll need to visit more often if you:

- are underweight or overweight
- had problems with a previous pregnancy
- have diabetes or high blood pressure
- are over 40
- are carrying more than 1 baby
- have had a caesarean or other surgery on your uterus
- drink, smoke or use drugs
- are depressed or dealing with other issues, including violence in the home



DID YOU KNOW

You can choose to visit your doctor on your own or you can bring someone along. Do what makes you most comfortable.



PARTNERS

What You Can Do

Read through the list of medical emergencies (see [Pregnancy Risk Factors](#)), and ensure your partner visits her health care provider if necessary.



BE AWARE

Health Canada warns that gentian violet (also known as crystal violet) can increase the risk of cancer. If you're pregnant, don't use it to treat any condition.

What Happens at a Visit to Your Health Care Provider?

Each time you visit your health care provider, they'll likely:

- check your blood pressure
- check your baby's heart rate
- measure your belly to check the baby's growth

Your **early pregnancy visits** are usually the longest. Your health care provider will take a physical history and do a complete check-up, which may include:

- a pregnancy test
- questions about your lifestyle, including diet, exercise, smoking, drinking and drug use
- information about prenatal supplements
- an abdominal exam
- a pelvic exam with a Pap test or vaginal swab
- height and weight measurements
- blood tests to screen for STIs (sexually transmitted infections), confirm your blood type and check your iron levels
- genetic screening tests
- a urine test

At your later pregnancy visits, your health care provider may suggest tests to identify any issues with you or your baby that may need treatment. These tests may include:

- an ultrasound (20 weeks) to check the location of your placenta and the development of your baby
- glucose screening (24 to 26 weeks) to check for gestational diabetes
- a swab (35 to 37 weeks) to screen for Group B Streptococcus
- genetic screening tests

Your health care provider will also ask about your emotional well-being and, if you have Rh-negative blood, give you an Rh-immune globulin shot at 24 to 28 weeks.



TRY THIS

Write down some basic information and bring it along to your first appointment:

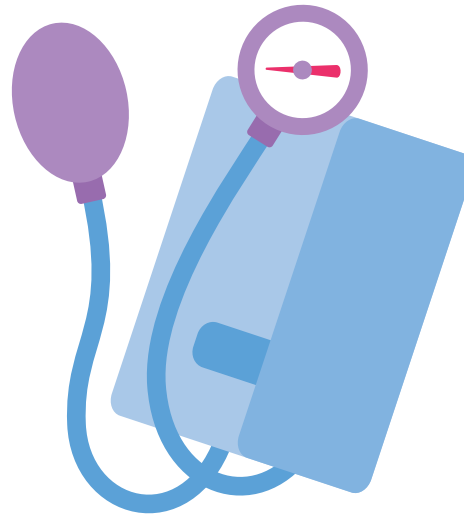
- the dates of your last period and Pap test
- your blood type and the father's
- medications (including herbal ones) you take
- illnesses you've had and any that run in your family
- past pregnancies
- plans and questions about feeding your baby
- any other questions

What is prenatal genetic screening?

Optional blood tests that can tell you the chance of your baby having conditions like Down syndrome or spina bifida. This screening isn't perfect and doesn't provide a diagnosis. If you get a positive result, you may choose to have more specific tests. See [Pregnancy Risk Factors](#) to learn more.

What are the Pregnancy Passport and the Aboriginal Pregnancy Passport?

Free pamphlets you can use to keep track of your pregnancy care. The Aboriginal Pregnancy Passport also includes traditional beliefs and values. Both are available online at perinatalservicesbc.ca or through your health care provider.



Vaccines You'll Need

Flu shot

Influenza (flu) is more serious when you're pregnant. Get a flu shot – it's safe, free, and can be given at any time in your pregnancy. And if you have flu symptoms (fever, cough, headache, achiness and fatigue), contact your doctor or HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 or healthlinkbc.ca.



DID YOU KNOW

By getting the flu shot yourself – and by encouraging family and friends you see regularly to do the same – you'll be helping to protect your baby until she's old enough to be vaccinated herself.

Pertussis vaccine

Pertussis is a serious infection of the airways that can cause pneumonia, seizures, brain damage and even death. It's especially dangerous to babies, but babies can't be vaccinated against it until they're 2 months old. By getting vaccinated while you're pregnant, you'll help protect your newborn. The pertussis vaccine is not currently provided for free to pregnant people in B.C. Talk with your health care provider.

Visit immunizebc.ca/pregnancy for more information, and talk with a public health nurse about other vaccines you may be eligible for.