

Your Prenatal Care

Early, regular prenatal care is vital for the health of you and your baby. This handout outlines how often you will have prenatal visits. It also describes briefly what happens during these visits.

How often will I come in for prenatal visits?

A full-term pregnancy lasts about 40 weeks from the first day of your last menstrual period. Your healthcare provider can tell you which week of pregnancy you are in.

Your clinic visits usually will follow, or be close to, this schedule:

- Every 4 weeks until week 28 (7 months)
- Every 2 weeks from week 28 to week 36 (7 months to the start of the 9th month)
- Every week from week 36 until the birth

If you are in a specialty program at UW Medicine, such as Diabetes and Hypertension, or if you have a high-risk pregnancy, your prenatal visit schedule may be different.

What happens at a prenatal visit?

When you come for a prenatal visit, your healthcare provider will:

- Answer your questions and address your concerns.
- Measure your blood pressure, weight, and your baby's heart rate (after 10 to 12 weeks).
- Talk with you about what you eat and drink.
- Measure your abdomen as your pregnancy progresses, to check your baby's growth.



Your healthcare provider will measure your abdomen to check your baby's growth.

- Do at least 1 *ultrasound* exam to check your baby's growth and development.

Your provider may also:

- Ask for a urine sample to check for protein, glucose (sugar), or infections.
- Ask you to have other lab work and talk with you about the results.

Feel free to ask any questions and share your concerns with your healthcare provider at any time.

How can the clinic staff help me?

Your clinic staff are here to help you have a healthy baby. They welcome your questions and want to help you:

- Make appointments and get to know the healthcare system.
- Learn what resources and referrals are available to you. Some of these are:
 - Healthy diet information from a licensed dietitian
 - Talking with a social worker
 - Talking with a public health nurse
 - Childbirth education classes
 - Learning about breastfeeding
 - Maternity Support Services Program sponsored by Washington State
 - Learning about environmental hazards
 - Planning for a healthy lifestyle (quitting smoking or using drugs, exercising, eating healthy foods)
 - Other community resources

Questions?

Your questions are important. If you have questions about yourself, call your healthcare provider during office hours.