



# Pregnancy



Month	Week
1	1-4
2	5-8
3	9-13



Month	Week
4	14-17
5	18-22
6	23-27



Month	Week
7	28-31
8	32-35
9	36-40

## You just found out you're pregnant – now what?

### My pregnancy test is positive...

If a pregnancy test has shown a positive result (even if the line is faint) you are most likely pregnant. The next steps are very personal to each individual, but everyone should start by booking an appointment with a care provider.

### How accurate is my pregnancy test?

At-home pregnancy tests are 99% accurate.<sup>1</sup> These tests measure the level of HCG or 'pregnancy hormone' in your urine. The best time to take a pregnancy test is a few days after a missed period, ideally first thing in the morning. Some tests are accurate up to 6 days before a missed period but it's possible your urine HCG levels won't be high enough yet to trigger a positive result.

Seeing a positive pregnancy test for the first time can bring on a wave of different emotions; whether this is the moment you have been waiting for or the last thing you expected to happen, it's normal to feel both excited and nervous as you start your pregnancy journey.

Although it can be overwhelming, there are so many resources at your fingertips to help guide you through this pivotal life stage.

This fact sheet will take you step-by-step through the pregnancy journey; addressing common concerns and highlighting important considerations to help you make informed and empowered decisions that promote a healthy pregnancy.

### How do I calculate my due date?

The first day of your last menstrual period (LMP) is considered day 1 of pregnancy, even though you likely didn't conceive until about 2 weeks later. Since many women won't know exactly when their baby was conceived, your period is a reliable timestamp to start the clock.

**1st day of last menstrual period + 40 weeks (280 days)**



## Prenatal visits

The goal of each prenatal visit is to monitor your progress throughout pregnancy and provide information to help keep you and your baby healthy. In Canada, 58% of women receive prenatal care from an obstetrician, around one-third see a family doctor and a small few will receive care from a midwife.<sup>2</sup> Some women with pre-existing medical conditions (see preconception fact sheet) will require specialist input and monitoring throughout their pregnancy, otherwise it's up to you to determine which care provider best aligns with your needs.

No matter which option you choose, you'll have access to the same routine tests and screenings. If you have a straightforward or 'low risk' pregnancy, you will see your practitioner once a month for the first 28 weeks of pregnancy, every two weeks until the 36th week, and then once a week until your baby is born.

## Adapting to pregnancy

Your body is working overtime to help provide your baby with the nutrients necessary for healthy development. Now more than ever, it's important to prioritize your health and wellbeing not only to benefit your changing body, but also your growing baby. Everyone's pregnancy journey is different - while there are some specific do's and don'ts, many of the choices you make throughout your pregnancy will be specific to your body's (and your baby's) needs.

**Education & Support** Pregnancy can be a time of information overload and it can easily become overwhelming. Support groups and prenatal education classes are an important part of preparing for your new baby.

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**Exercise** In low-risk pregnancies, it is beneficial to begin or continue mild-moderate intensity exercise. Women who have not been active before pregnancy should start with mild activities such as walking.

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**Sexual activity** For most women, engaging in sexual activity during pregnancy is not only safe, but has many health-boosting benefits for both you and your baby. If sex during pregnancy makes you uncomfortable or uneasy - that's ok too! Either way, it's important to discuss sexual activity with your care provider as some women will be advised to abstain from sex during their pregnancy due to personal risk factors.

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**Medication** Thankfully, many medications are safe to use during pregnancy, but there are some that you should not use. Speak to your care provider to make sure the prescriptions, over-the-counter medications and supplements you are taking are safe to use throughout your pregnancy. Here is a list of medications that should be safe to use while pregnant after checking with your care provider:

- Tylenol
- Antacids (Tums, Mylanta)
- Antihistamines (Benadryl)
- Fibre laxatives (Metamucil)
- Cough medication (Robitussin and Vicks)
- Gas/bloating relief (Gas-x, Mylanta Gas, Mylicon)

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Your nutritional intake before and during pregnancy influences the health of your developing baby. It's normal to need more food during your 2nd and 3rd trimester to meet your increased energy requirements. Here is a list of food to avoid during pregnancy as per Health Canada guidelines<sup>2</sup>:

<b>Nutrition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deli meats</li><li>• Pâté and meat spreads</li><li>• Refrigerated smoked seafood and fish</li><li>• Raw or lightly cooked eggs</li><li>• Raw sprouts, especially alfalfa sprouts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hot dogs, unless reheated until steaming hot</li><li>• Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, and fish (sushi)</li><li>• Unpasteurized and pasteurized soft cheese</li><li>• All blue-veined cheese</li><li>• Unpasteurized milk and juices (apple cider)</li></ul>
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## Your first prenatal visit

Once you have received a positive pregnancy test (either at home or with a care provider) it is important to book your first pre-natal visit which usually takes place somewhere between the 6 to 8-week mark.

This will be your longest appointment - there is lots to discuss as you begin your pregnancy journey.

Here is a list of what to expect during your first prenatal visit:

- Discussion of personal, physical, mental, spiritual and cultural needs that will underpin your care journey
- Extensive medical history
- Discussion of common pregnancy symptoms
- Advice, education and safe-guarding
- Weight and height measurement
- Blood pressure measurement
- Pap smear, if due for screening
- Ultrasound
- Blood tests

## 1st trimester symptoms

### Morning sickness

Unfortunately, morning sickness is a bit of a misnomer, the nausea and vomiting of early pregnancy can actually strike at any time of day. This common symptom impacts an estimated 3 in 4 pregnant women during their first trimester.<sup>1</sup> Morning sickness typically starts around week 6 lasting around 10 weeks until finally dissipating around the beginning of the 2nd trimester.

### Implantation bleeding and cramping

Yes, some abdominal cramping or light bleeding is normal during the first trimester. These are symptoms of implantation - the process in which the embryo first attaches to the uterus early in your pregnancy.

### Tender breasts

You may notice your breasts feel tender and larger than usual around week 6.

### Other symptoms

Every woman will experience her first trimester differently, other common symptoms include heartburn, constipation, metallic taste, food aversions and headaches.

## 1st trimester ultrasound

In Canada, all women are offered at least 1 ultrasound scan during their first trimester at 7-12 weeks.<sup>2</sup> This scan, often referred to as the 'dating scan', measures the size of your growing baby to help determine their exact gestational age.

### Prenatal screening

Your care provider may recommend nuchal translucency (NT) screening between weeks 10 and 13 of pregnancy to look for Down Syndrome. Depending on your risk factors, further screening procedures for a variety of genetic conditions may be recommended:

Non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) is a blood test that identifies whether your baby is at risk of developing certain genetic conditions. The result of this test will determine whether further invasive tests (as listed below) are necessary.

Chorionic villus sampling is a test reserved for higher risk pregnancies that involves taking a small tissue sample from the finger-like projections of the placenta, called chorionic villi.

Amniocentesis is a procedure that extracts amniotic fluid (the fluid that surrounds your baby) for further genetics analysis.

## 2nd trimester prenatal care

Your prenatal visits will be shorter during the second trimester. Your care provider will keep track of how you and your baby are progressing through your pregnancy.

### Tests for you:

- Blood pressure check
- Weight
- Urine test

### Tests for your baby:

- Measuring your abdomen
- Listening to fetal cardiac activity
- Checking for fetal movement like belly kicks or fluttering

## 2nd trimester ultrasound

Your 2nd trimester ultrasound, sometimes called the anatomy or anomaly scan, will take place between weeks 18 and 22 of pregnancy. This scan looks for signs of specific structural issues or congenital abnormalities of the growing fetal organs. Depending on the fetal position, the ultrasound technician may also be able to identify the sex of your baby.

## 2nd trimester symptoms

### Congestion

As your pregnancy progresses, there is increased blood flow to the mucus membranes in your nose causing congestion, snoring and sometimes nosebleeds.

### Mild swelling of ankles and feet

This common symptom affects 3 in 4 pregnant women from about 22 weeks until delivery.<sup>1</sup>

### Achiness in lower abdomen

Also known as 'round ligament pain', these ligaments support your belly as your tummy continues to grow.

### Other symptoms

Every woman will experience her second trimester differently, other common symptoms include dizziness, varicose veins, weight gain, increased or decreased sex drive.

## Gestational diabetes

Your fluctuating hormone levels during pregnancy can impact your blood sugar levels and many women will develop temporary diabetes (gestational diabetes) while pregnant.

High blood sugar levels during pregnancy can be harmful to both you and your growing baby. Birth defects, premature birth, and delivery complications are all risks associated with poorly controlled diabetes during pregnancy.

About 1 in 10 women are diagnosed with gestational diabetes, which is why all women are screened for the condition around week 24-28 of pregnancy.<sup>1</sup>

There are different variations of glucose testing during pregnancy, but all involve drinking a sweet glucose drink with subsequent blood testing to measure your sugar levels.

Initial treatment of gestational diabetes is with diet modification; however, some women will require medication to stabilize their blood sugar levels.



## 3rd trimester prenatal care

As you near the end of your pregnancy, your prenatal visits will become more frequent. Now is the time for last-minute questions about labour, pain management during delivery and when to contact your care provider if you think your baby is on the way

### Tests for you:

- Blood pressure check
- Weight
- Urine test
- Pelvic exam

### Tests for your baby:

- Measuring your abdomen
- Listening to fetal cardiac activity
- Checking fetal positioning
- Checking for fetal movement like belly kicks or fluttering

## Vaccinations & Screening

During the third trimester, your care provider may offer Tdap vaccination (short for tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) and recommend testing for Group B Strep (GBS). The Tdap vaccine helps provide passive immunity (through the placenta) to your newborn baby to protect against whooping cough. GBS is a common bacteria found in the intestinal tract, however if babies are exposed to this bacteria during delivery, they can become seriously ill.

## 3rd trimester symptoms

### Braxton Hicks contractions

Sometimes called 'practice contractions' or 'false labour', this tightening in your abdomen often comes and goes as your body warms up for the main event.

### Heartburn (acid reflux)

In the last few weeks of pregnancy your uterus will push up against your stomach increasing your chances of feeling heartburn.

### Achiness in lower abdomen and back

Round ligament pain and backache will worsen as your belly grows. Sharp shooting 'sciatic' leg pain can also develop as you near the end of your pregnancy.

### Other symptoms

Every woman will experience her third trimester differently, other common symptoms include lack of bladder control, leaky breasts, weight gain, fatigue, and insomnia.

## What to avoid during the 3rd trimester

### Traveling

While this may seem obvious, it's important to stay close to home as you near the end of your pregnancy. Many airlines have policies prohibiting pregnant women from flying after 36 weeks.

### Lying on your back

Avoid lying or exercising on your back during the third trimester. The weight of your belly can press on an important vein that carries blood from your lower body to your heart causing you to feel nauseous and short of breath.

# Labour & Delivery

While Braxton Hicks contractions are often mild in comparison to real labour, some women feel anxious distinguishing the two. Once you have established you are in labour, it's time to call your care provider. Here are some real labour signs to watch out for:

Baby dropping describes the descent of your baby into the lower pelvis. This can occur a few weeks before delivery or mark the beginning of labour.

Bloody show is the stringy pink-brown discharge that signals labour is on the way.

Labour contractions tend to intensify compared to Braxton Hicks contractions which will diminish as you move around.

Pelvic pressure often feels like cramps in the groin area as your cervix starts to dilate.

## Stages of Labour

1

### Early labour & active labour

During early labour, your cervix dilates (opens) and thins in preparation for delivery. You will begin to experience mild irregular contractions. For first time moms, early labour can be unpredictable, lasting anywhere from hours to days. Once your cervix reaches 6cm and your contractions become stronger, more regular and closer together, you will have begun active labour. Active labour usually lasts 4 to 8 hours with your cervix dilating about 1cm per hour.

2

### Delivery of your baby

Your care provider will be regularly performing pelvic exams to check your cervix. Once your cervix reaches 10cm, they will instruct you to start pushing. It's best to push like you're having a bowel movement and tuck your chin to your chest.

3

### Delivery of the placenta

After your baby is born, it's time to deliver their placenta. The placenta is a special pregnancy organ that helps deliver nutrients from your blood to your growing baby in the womb. This final stage can last around 30 minutes to an hour; however, by this point you will be so focused on your new baby you may be oblivious to what's happening around you.

## Delivery

Ideally all babies would be born at 40-weeks on the nose; however, this is often not the case - 8% of babies in Canada are born prematurely (before 37 weeks) and 1 in 3 women surpass their due date.<sup>2</sup> For

**When?** some women, certain medical conditions will increase their risk of delivering prematurely or require early induction of labour due to maternal or fetal complications. By 42 weeks, you are officially considered 'overdue' and will likely be induced through various methods and medications to start labour.

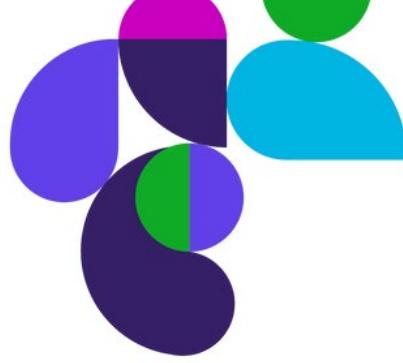
**Where?** Where you give birth is almost entirely up to you. Some women will opt for home births while some prefer birthing centres or hospitals. For women with high-risk pregnancies or a history of delivery complications it's best to plan for a hospital delivery in case you need extra support.

**How?** How you give birth depends on a number of different factors. While most women are safe to plan for a vaginal delivery, some may be offered a planned Cesarian, or 'C'-section based on personal risk factors such as co-existing medical conditions or fetal positioning. For women who experience prolonged labour, additional delivery supports, such as forceps, may be required if you or your baby are becoming distressed. If these methods are unsuccessful, an emergency C-section will be recommended.

## Pregnancy milestones

Day 1	LMP	your last menstrual period (LMP) is the most reliable benchmark to date your pregnancy from.	Week 20	sweet potato	Your baby is as big as a <u>sweet potato</u> . Halfway there! Your 2nd trimester 'anomaly' scan that takes place around 18-22 weeks should be able to determine the sex of your baby.
Week 4	poppy seed	<b>Your baby is as big as a poppy seed.</b> The fertilized egg is implanting into the uterus, which may be accompanied by some bleeding or cramping.	Week 22	papaya	<b>Your baby is as big as a papaya.</b> Your baby now weighs over 1lbs! As their hearing and vision improve, your baby will now be able to hear your voice and heartbeat.
Week 5	orange seed	<b>Your baby is as big as an orange seed.</b> Pregnancy hormone levels are now high enough to reliably give a positive result on a pregnancy test - time to book your first prenatal visit!	Week 28	lettuce	<b>Your baby is as big as a head of lettuce.</b> Welcome to the 3rd trimester! Your baby's face is fully formed, and they are experimenting with facial expressions. If you're lucky, you may catch our baby smiling or sticking out their tongue on a scan.
Week 6	sweet pea	<b>Your baby is as big as a sweet pea.</b> Attend your first prenatal visit between week 6-8. Your baby's face and heart are starting to form, and you may be able to hear your baby's heartbeat from 6-weeks onward.	Week 29	cauliflower	<b>Your baby is as big as a cauliflower.</b> Your baby will likely be moving every day and you may start to notice a rhythm or pattern to their activity.
Week 7	blueberry	<b>Your baby is as big as a blueberry.</b> The umbilical cord forms and connects the growing placenta to your baby to help deliver nutrients necessary for development.	Week 32	celery	<b>Your baby is as big as a stalk of celery.</b> All of your baby's organs are fully formed, except for the lungs.
Week 9	green olive	<b>Your baby is as big as a green olive.</b> All your baby's essential organs (brain, heart, kidneys, lungs) have started to develop.	Week 36	kale	<b>Your baby is as big as a bunch of kale.</b> Your baby may drop lower into your pelvis in preparation for delivery.
Week 14	naval orange	<b>Your baby is as big as a naval orange.</b> The beginning of the second trimester! Early pregnancy symptoms start to subside, and your belly may go from looking a little bloated to actually 'popping'.	Week 39	jackfruit	<b>Your baby is as big as a jackfruit.</b> Your baby has reached their birthweight and should arrive very soon!
Week 18	cucumber	<b>Your baby is as big as a cucumber.</b> Baby's first kicks! At some point from week 18 to week 22 you will feel your baby move for the first time. This can feel like faint tapping, waves of pressure or butterflies in your stomach.	Week 40	pumpkin	<b>Your baby is as big as a pumpkin.</b> Any time now! Don't worry if your baby hasn't arrived this week, about 1 in 3 pregnancies will hit the 41-week mark.





## When should I be concerned about my symptoms?

While everyone's experience of pregnancy is different, there are some symptoms that warrant immediate medical attention. If you develop any of the following symptoms, it's best to contact your care provider immediately and/or attend the nearest emergency department.

- Heavy vaginal bleeding
- Severe abdominal pain
- Sudden, intense thirst that won't go away, especially when it's accompanied by more frequent urination and other symptoms
- Painful urination
- Fever over 38.5 degrees C, chills and/or backache
- Severe puffiness in the hands/face
- Vision disturbances

## How can Teladoc Health help?

"I'm looking for a care provider for my prenatal visits." ..... [Find a Doctor](#)

"I'm looking for additional resources on pregnancy education and community support" ..... [Personal Health Navigator](#)

"I'm looking for a second opinion on a medical condition related to my pregnancy." ..... [Expert Medical Opinion](#)

"My pregnancy journey has taken an emotional toll; I'm looking for mental health support." ..... [Mental Health Navigator](#)

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