



WOMEN'S HEALTH  
ADVANTAGE

# YOUR GUIDE TO THE **THIRD TRIMESTER**





## Welcome to the home stretch of your pregnancy!

While this is an exciting time for you, we also understand it can be overwhelming. Rest assured, Women's Health Advantage is going to be with you for every step of your pregnancy journey and beyond.

Our patient-centric, compassionate providers are here for you!

## HERE FOR YOU THROUGH EVERY STAGE

Women's Health Advantage offers comprehensive services to our patients throughout all stages of their lives, including in-house labs, ultrasounds and mammograms. Our team of specialized providers will work with you to develop individualized care to meet your health needs.

As an independent group, we partner with Dupont Hospital, Lutheran Hospital and Parkview Regional Medical Center for gynecologic surgeries, outpatient procedures and deliveries.

## WHEN TO CALL YOUR PROVIDER

Women's Health Advantage is dedicated to ensuring your pregnancy goes smoothly. Call us immediately if you:

- Feel less than 10 movements in two hours.
- Experience bleeding
- Have cramps that are persistent or severe abdominal pain
- Are leaking fluid, your water is breaking
- Have contractions stronger than Braxton-Hicks and are more than 6 an hour before 37 weeks
- Have a fever of 101°F or higher
- Think you are in labor

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## Monitoring Your Baby's Movements

Your baby's movement may feel like a fluttering in your belly or a rolling kick, depending on the day. Your baby should move many times every day, and you should generally feel it. Fetal movement or "kick counts" measure the baby's activity level. Use kick counts (following the directions below) when you cannot remember the last time your baby moved or if your baby is not moving as much as usual.

### KICK COUNTS STEP-BY-STEP

1. Eat a healthy snack and drink a large glass of juice or water. Babies are more active after you've eaten.
2. Use the restroom.
3. Grab a piece of paper and pen.
4. Turn off all distractions.
5. Find a quiet spot to lay down with a clock nearby. You can lay on either side to do this.
6. Record the time you start counting.
7. Concentrate on your baby's movements. Put one hand on your abdomen. If you don't feel movement after 30 minutes, turn on the other side.
8. Count the number of times you feel your baby move. Write down the numbers as you go.
9. If you feel fewer than 10 movements in 2 hours, please contact your Women's Health Advantage provider immediately.



## Routine Tests

### 28-40 WEEKS

Around 28 weeks, your visits with us will increase to every two weeks. After 36 weeks, we'll see you once a week. If you're high-risk, that number could increase. During each visit, you will have your weight, blood pressure, fetal heartbeat, and fetal growth checked.

Third trimester labs: These are performed between weeks 26-28. You will be given a sugar drink and instructions for how/when to drink it. You do not need to fast. One hour after you finish the drink, your blood will be drawn. A blood count and syphilis screening will also be done at this time. If your 1-hour glucose test is abnormal, additional testing will be recommended. If your blood type is Rh negative, then you will also receive an injection called Rhogam.

Vaginal culture for Group B strep: This swab of your vaginal area is performed at your 36 week appointment. Group B strep is a normal bacteria that can occur naturally in the vagina. It is not harmful to you or your baby during pregnancy. However, it can become harmful to your child if exposed at the time of delivery. If you test positive, you will receive antibiotics during labor and delivery.

## Tdap Vaccine

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the CDC (Center for Disease Control) recommend the Tdap vaccination to be given to all pregnant patients during each pregnancy, as early in the 27 to 36 week gestation window as possible. This allows for the mother to mount an antibody response and pass on this immunity to her baby prior to birth, allowing for greater protection of the newborn.

The main goal of this vaccination is to protect the newborn from pertussis, or "whooping cough." Pertussis causes uncontrollable, violent coughing which can make it difficult to breathe. After the coughing fits, one often needs to take deep breaths which result in a "whooping" sound. It can cause serious and even life-threatening complications, especially in infants who are three months old and younger. Infants do not begin their own vaccination series until two months of age and therefore are vulnerable from birth until this time. The vaccination is safe for both you and your growing baby. The CDC continually monitors the safety of all vaccines, which are held to the highest standards of safety.

# Exercises During Pregnancy

## GUIDELINES FOR EXERCISE

- Drink plenty of water
- After the 4th month, limit exercising on your back to 5 minutes
- Wear athletic shoes with good cushioning and arch support that are not worn out
- If your current exercise routine consists of more strenuous exercises, please consult your physician if modifications are necessary

## AEROBIC (CARDIOVASCULAR) EXERCISE

*Target Heart Rate: 110-140 beats per minute*

**Purpose:** Weight control, activation of immune system to ward off illness, strengthen the heart to pump increased fluid, and improve mood and energy level

Walking, swimming, low impact aerobics, and stationary bike riding are generally safe for most pregnant women. Start with 5 minutes of gentle exercise and gradually increase to 30 minutes.

## PELVIC TILT

**Purpose:** Improve abdominal muscle strength

**Position:** On hands and knees

**Movement:** Pull in your abdominals and buttocks, raising your lower back toward the ceiling.

**Reps:** 10 **Hold:** 5 seconds **Sets:** 2



## SHOULDER BLADE SQUEEZES

**Purpose:** Stretch pectorals, decrease forward head posture

**Positions:** Sit or stand

**Movement:** Gently squeeze your shoulder blades together, then relax and repeat.

**Reps:** 10-20 **Hold:** 3 seconds **Sets:** 2



## PELVIC FLOOR CONTRACTIONS “KEGEL”

The pelvic floor is a group of muscles that fill in the lowest part of the pelvis. Locating and properly exercising these muscles is an important task for women, especially during pregnancy.

**Purpose:** Improves bowel and bladder control, enhances sexual function, and keeps pelvic organs supported

**Positions:** Lie down, sit or stand

**Movement:** Tighten your internal muscles as if trying to hold back or stop the flow of urine as you exhale. Then inhale and relax.

**Reps:** 10 **Hold:** 5 seconds **Sets:** 2

## GASTROC STRETCH

**Purpose:** To stretch the calf muscle, increase circulation and decrease muscle cramps

**Position:** Stand with your feet in a staggered stance, holding onto a stable surface for support.

**Movement:** Keeping your back knee straight, push your hips forward. You will feel a stretch in the back of your lower leg.

**Reps:** 10-20 **Hold:** 30 seconds **Sets:** 2



## WALL ANGLES

**Purpose:** Stretch pectorals, promote upright posture

**Position:** Stand against the wall or lie on your back with knees bent

**Movement:** Bring arms out to sides at right angles. Slide hands up wall and back down.

**Reps:** 10-20 **Hold:** 3 seconds **Sets:** 2



## Additional Exercises After Pregnancy

In addition to the previous exercises mentioned, try the following routines to stay healthy and support your body after pregnancy.

### GUIDELINES FOR EXERCISE

- Drink plenty of water
- Wear athletic shoes with good cushioning and arch support that are not worn out
- Please discuss with your physician when you are cleared for more strenuous exercise

### LOWER ABDOMINAL EXERCISE

**Purpose:** Improve abdominal strength and reduce muscle wall separation associated with pregnancy

**Position:** Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet resting on the floor, and your fingers resting on your stomach just above your hip bones.

**Movement:** Tighten your abdominals, pulling your navel in toward your spine and up. You should feel your muscles contract under your fingers. Hold this position, then relax and repeat. Make sure to keep your back flat against the floor and do not hold your breath as you tighten your muscles.

**Reps:** 10-20 **Hold:** 3 seconds **Sets:** 2



### CHILD'S POSE STRETCH

**Purpose:** Increase flexibility in back and hips

**Position:** Kneel on the floor

**Movement:** Bend your chest forward and rest your arms on the ground straight overhead. Try to keep your chest as close to the floor as possible.

**Reps:** 10-20 **Hold:** 30 seconds **Sets:** 2



### INNER THIGH SQUEEZE

**Purpose:** Increase strength of inner thigh and pelvic floor muscles

**Position:** Lie on your back with your legs bent, feet resting on the floor, and a soft ball or pillow positioned between your knees

**Movement:** Squeeze your knees together into the soft ball or pillow, then release and repeat. Make sure to keep your back flat against the floor during the exercise.

**Reps:** 10-20 **Hold:** 5 seconds **Sets:** 2



# When to Go to the Hospital

## TIMING CONTRACTIONS

**Frequency:** How often are the contractions happening, from beginning of one contraction to the start of the next.

**Duration:** How long each contraction lasts. In labor, contractions usually last one minute or longer.

**Intensity:** How strong is each contraction?

If you are over 36 weeks, a general rule to follow is to go to Labor & Delivery if you are having contractions every 5 minutes for an hour, and the contractions last around one minute each. This is known as the 5-1-1 rule. You should also go if you think your water has broken. This could present as a gush of fluid or a trickle.

If either of these occur, we recommend that you go directly to Labor & Delivery at the hospital where you plan to deliver. There is no need to call the office first, as you will be instructed to go to the hospital for evaluation. Either your physician or the physician on call will be notified after your arrival.

## TRUE LABOR VERSUS FALSE LABOR

The chart below will help determine if you are in true labor.

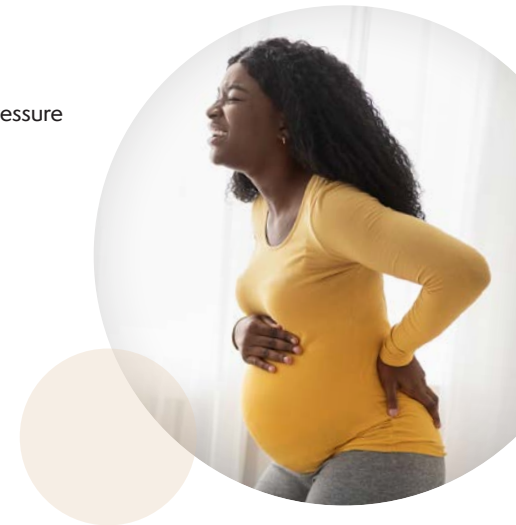
TRUE LABOR	FALSE LABOR
Contractions are regular, get closer together and last 40 to 60 seconds.	Contractions are irregular, do not get closer together and last 20 to 40 seconds.
Contractions continue despite movement.	Contractions may stop when you walk or rest or may change with change of position.
Pain/discomfort usually felt in back and moves around to front.	Pain/discomfort often felt in abdomen.
Contractions steadily increase in strength.	Contractions usually are weak and do not get much stronger.
Cervix dilates.	Cervix does not dilate.
Bloody show may be present.	Usually no bloody show is present.

# Preterm Labor

Preterm labor is categorized as labor occurring before 37 weeks (with your due date being at 40 weeks). Sometimes conditions arise to cause your baby to arrive early. Symptoms of preterm labor can sometimes be subtle and include:

- Vaginal bleeding
- Low back ache
- Menstrual-like cramping
- Persistent lower abdominal or vaginal pressure
- Contractions with or without pain (more than 6 per hour)
- Water breaking (could be a gush of fluid or a trickle)

Please call the office if you have any of the above symptoms, particularly if they occur before 36 weeks.



# Pre-eclampsia Symptoms

Pre-eclampsia, also called toxemia or hypertension of pregnancy, is an unusual elevation in an expectant mother's blood pressure before delivery. Pre-eclampsia can cause decreased blood flow and oxygen to the placenta and could result in seizures.

If you experience the following symptoms, contact the office immediately or go to Labor & Delivery if after hours:

- Severe headache (not relieved with Tylenol)
- Upper abdominal pain especially on the right side
- Nausea/vomiting
- Decreased urination
- Blurred vision/seeing spots
- Sudden swelling of your face and fingers

If you've been diagnosed with pre-eclampsia or hypertension of pregnancy, it is critical to keep your doctor's appointments to ensure a healthy pregnancy and recovery.

## Cord Blood Banking

Cord blood is the remaining blood in your child's umbilical cord following birth. It is a rich source of stem cells that can be collected at the time of birth. Some families opt for this, as cord blood stem cells have been used successfully to treat more than 70 diseases. Your newborn's stem cells could be used by your child, their siblings, and in some cases, parents. Stem cells can still be viable after 15 years of storage.

It is safe, easy, and painless for you and your child. It does not interfere with delivery, but it must be arranged in advance of delivery.

Cord blood banking is an optional service provided by outside public and private cord blood banks. If you are interested, Women's Health Advantage can provide you with their contact information. There is a fee that needs to be paid to the cord blood bank and the kit is shipped to you prior to delivery. There is also a storage fee. If you elect to do this, it is your responsibility to bring your personal kit to the hospital when you are in labor. Your Women's Health Advantage physician will collect the sample for you at delivery. It is then your responsibility to forward the sample to the cord blood bank.

Some hospitals have programs in place for patients to donate the cord blood, which is a good option to potentially help others. Please check with your hospital if you wish to donate cord blood.

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT LABOR IF I ELECT TO DO THIS?

After birth, but before the placenta is delivered, your provider will collect the blood from the umbilical cord and put it in a bag. It is your responsibility to have the bag at the time of delivery and have it shipped to the cord blood bank.

## Disability/FMLA Information

Motherhood brings many lifestyle changes that could potentially have an impact on your work. Speak to your employer and find out what your options are and if you qualify for short-term disability or FMLA. For more information, visit the Resources section on our website.

**Do not ask your physician for disability unless your provider has restricted you from all work.**

## Pain Management During Labor

**Natural birth** without medication for pain is certainly an option for women. If you prefer this approach for your delivery, we encourage you to take classes to prepare ahead of time.

**Epidural:** This is the most commonly used type of anesthesia during labor. A small catheter will be inserted in your back to deliver the local anesthetic and block the nerve impulses from the lower half of your body. Epidurals allow you to have consistent pain relief during labor.

**Nitrous oxide (if available at your hospital):** Also known as laughing gas, it is a clear, odorless, tasteless gas that can be inhaled during labor for pain relief as well as anxiety reduction. The effects of nitrous oxide are immediate and dissipate rapidly. Studies have shown that the medication is generally well tolerated and poses less risk to babies as it does not cross the placenta.

**Pain medicine administered through an IV:** This generally is given in early labor and not right before the baby is born.

**Other options:** Breathing/relaxation exercises, hydrotherapy, aromatherapy, and use of labor balls/tubs (available in select hospitals).



If you have questions about your options, ask your Women's Health Advantage provider.

## Breastfeeding

Choosing to breastfeed your baby is a personal decision.

Breastfeeding provides natural antibodies and proteins to your newborn. Not only that, it has numerous benefits to you, including reducing your risk of ovarian and breast cancer and more rapid weight loss.

Breastfeeding can be a challenging process at times, but resources are available to help. Lactation specialists are available for individual and group sessions at your hospital.

However, Women's Health Advantage understands some women do not want to breastfeed or are not able, depending on their age, lifestyle, medical concerns, etc.

### MASTITIS

Mastitis is an infection of the breast tissue that can occur in breastfeeding women. Please call your provider if you start to experience symptoms of mastitis.

#### Symptoms/when to call your provider:

- Breast tenderness
- Flu-like symptoms
- Skin redness and warmth
- Fever over 100.4°F

### PREVENTION

- Wash your hands before handling your breasts
- Use lanolin cream to treat nipples
- Breast feed or pump on a regular basis
- Stay well hydrated

### TREATMENT

- Apply moist heat to speed up milk letdown and ease soreness
- Your Women's Health Advantage provider may prescribe antibiotics
- Take Tylenol or Ibuprofen to reduce fever and discomfort
- If your symptoms do not improve within 48 hours, contact your provider immediately



## Cesarean Section Recovery

If you have a C-section for delivery, your doctor will have either closed the incision with dissolvable staples or sutures that do not need to be removed or sometimes non-dissolvable surgical staples are placed that need to be removed in the office after approximately one week. Once you are discharged from the hospital, it is important to dress and clean the wound regularly as instructed when released. An abdominal binder may be provided to you and worn optionally for your comfort.

**Call your Women's Health Advantage provider if you experience the following symptoms:**

- Redness/swelling at the incision site
- Discharge from the incision site
- Unusual pain at the incision site
- Heavy bleeding that soaks more than one pad per hour
- A fever higher than 100.4°F
- Severe abdominal pain
- Painful urination

## Contraception Options After Delivery

It is important to understand what your conception options after delivery are, and what method is right for you. You may have heard that breastfeeding prevents pregnancy. Some studies suggest that it can be an effective form of birth control in the first 6 months after delivery but you may want to have a backup option. Your Women's Health Advantage provider can discuss your options at your 4-6-week postpartum visit, depending on your future plans. If you are interested in having an IUD placed at that appointment, please call ahead.



## The Baby Blues

Although having a new baby is often a joyous time, it can also be exhausting and stressful. Many women begin to feel sad, anxious or upset around 2-3 days after giving birth.

**Symptoms of the baby blues can last up to two weeks and include:**

- Moodiness
- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Headaches
- Panic
- No energy/exhaustion
- New fears
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Sadness
- Confusion
- Anxiety
- Not eating
- Over sensitive
- Tearfulness or continuous crying

Baby blues symptoms will lessen as your hormones and body return to normal. With support, household help, loving care and time the blues will go away.

If symptoms continue longer than 2-3 weeks, please talk to your provider.



## Postpartum Depression

If your symptoms continue, or you feel you may be struggling with depression, the most important step is to talk with your healthcare provider about your symptoms and struggles, especially if they continue to get worse or continue after two weeks, as this may be a sign of postpartum depression.

**Symptoms can include the same ones as the baby blues, as well as:**

- Totally avoiding family and friends
- Not being able to take care of yourself or your baby
- Fears that you're not a good mother
- Severe mood swings, anxiety, or panic attacks
- Lack of interest in daily tasks
- Thoughts of harming your baby
- Trouble feeling close to your baby, or bonding
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts

If you feel you may be struggling with depression, the most important step is to talk with your healthcare provider about your symptoms and struggles. It is also very important to keep your follow-up postpartum appointment with your physician.

**Talk to your healthcare provider about your symptoms.**



## Frequently Asked Questions

For answers to the following frequently asked questions and more, please visit our website or scan the QR code below.

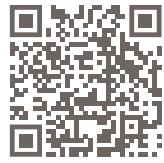
WHERE CAN I GET A BREAST PUMP?

WILL MY DOCTOR DELIVER MY BABY?

SHOULD I TAKE A BREASTFEEDING CLASS?

SHOULD I MAKE A BIRTH PREFERENCE LIST?

[HerAdvantage.com/resources/pregnancy](https://www.heradvantage.com/resources/pregnancy)



For additional questions and answers, please consult the ACOG website: [acog.org/patients](https://www.acog.org/patients)



## Hospital Checklist

### PREPARE FOR LABOR AND DELIVERY

- ☐ Pre-register at hospital where you plan to deliver
- ☐ Tour the hospital
- ☐ Attend educational classes offered on labor and delivery, breastfeeding, infant CPR, and baby care
- ☐ Contact your pediatrician's office around 32 weeks

### DON'T FORGET TO PACK

- ☐ Car seat
- ☐ Two sets of baby clothes (onesies, blanket, weather-appropriate outerwear)
- ☐ Toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, etc.)
- ☐ Hair dryer
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Contact lens supplies
- ☐ Glasses
- ☐ Sleepwear
- ☐ Bathrobe
- ☐ Slippers
- ☐ Warm socks
- ☐ Full-coverage bra/nursing bra
- ☐ Loose-fitting clothes to wear home
- ☐ Cell phone and charger
- ☐ Music to play
- ☐ Chapstick/lip balm
- ☐ Boppy pillow
- ☐ Hair brush
- ☐ Hair ties
- ☐ Supplies for Dad or anyone staying with you



## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### **Dupont Road**

2518 E. Dupont Road  
Fort Wayne, IN 46825

### **West Jefferson Blvd.**

7988 W. Jefferson Blvd.  
Fort Wayne, IN 46804

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## WOMEN'S HEALTH ADVANTAGE

**260-432-4400**

## PERINATAL CENTER

**260-969-6881**



For Pregnancy resources and FAQs,  
scan the QR code or visit **HerAdvantage.com**



*Here for you through every stage.*