



*Thames Valley*

---

**Family Health Team**

# **Prenatal Care and Changes in Pregnancy**

# Content

- Regular prenatal care
- Pregnancy timelines
- Baby's growth + development
- Physical changes
- Emotional changes overview
- Intimacy during pregnancy



# Health Equity Statement

- We acknowledge that this health promotion information does not address all unique cultural beliefs and practices surrounding pregnancy and birth, and we encourage you to have a conversation with your care provider when your cultural beliefs differ from any teaching within this material.



# Regular Prenatal Care

- Supports healthy pregnancy
- Prevents and identifies health concerns
- Provides the opportunity to ask questions and make decisions about your care
- Links to helpful community services



# Who are Health Care Providers?

- Medical Providers
  - Family Doctors
  - Obstetricians
  - Registered Midwives
  - Nurse Practitioners
- Support Providers
  - Doula



# How Often Should I See My Health Care Provider?

After the first visit, you will typically see your health care provider:

- Once a month until 28 weeks of pregnancy
- Every two weeks until 36 weeks of pregnancy
- Every week until the baby arrives



# Be An Informed Decision Maker

- **B** – What are the **benefits**? How will this help my baby and/or me?
- **R** – What are the **risks**? How will this affect my baby and/or me?
- **A** – Are there any **alternatives**?
- **I** – What is your **intuition** or **inner voice** telling you?
- **N** – What if you say **no** or **not right now**? You may need time to think a decision through.



# Common Tests Offered During Pregnancy

- Prenatal testing may be done for *screening* or *diagnostic* purposes
- Common tests:
  - Blood tests (i.e. blood type + Rh factors, complete blood count – CBC, rubella, chicken pox, hepatitis B status, HIV/AIDS, VDRL – syphilis)
  - Urine tests
  - Ultrasound (abdominal or transvaginal)
  - Genetic screening (i.e. enhanced first trimester screening)
  - Glucose tolerance test (blood test between 24-28 wks)
  - Vaginal cultures or swabs






# You and Your Baby

- During your pregnancy, you will hear many terms such as:
  - Placenta
  - Cervix
  - Amniotic fluid
- Your baby is growing inside your uterus – a muscular pear-shaped organ that stretches throughout pregnancy




# Pregnancy Timelines

## Pregnancy Time Lines




**1<sup>st</sup> Trimester (Weeks 1-12)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Month
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Month
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Month



**2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester (Weeks 13-28)**

- 4<sup>th</sup> Month
- 5<sup>th</sup> Month
- 6<sup>th</sup> Month



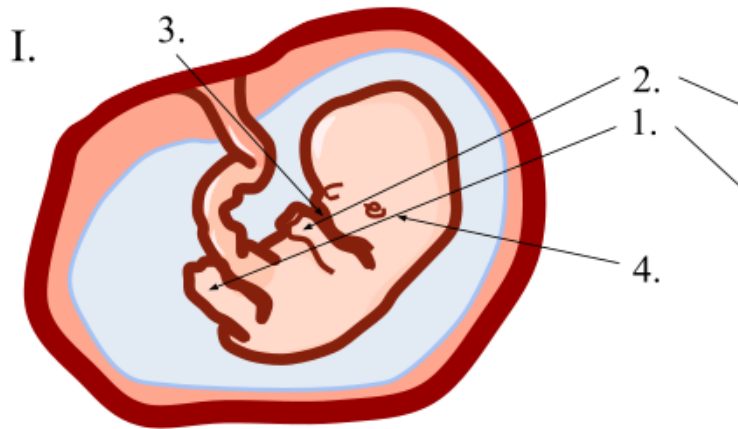
**3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester (Weeks 29-40)**

- 7<sup>th</sup> Month
- 8<sup>th</sup> Month
- 9<sup>th</sup> Month

best start  
meilleur départ  
better health starts here



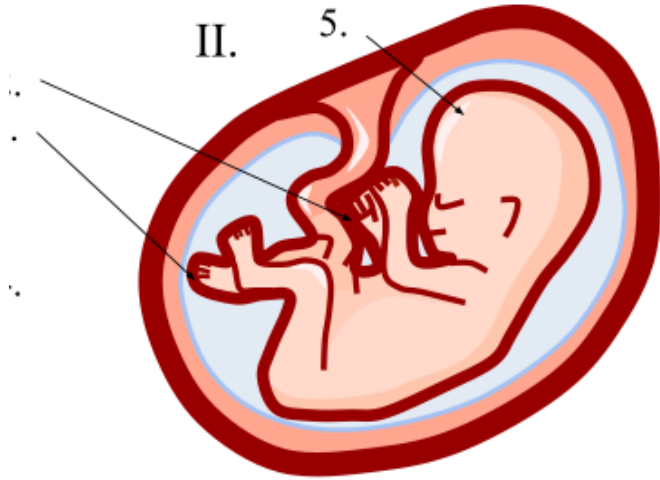
# Your Growing Baby (1-12 weeks)



- By the end of 1st trimester:
  - About 3-4 inches (7-10cm) long
  - About an ounce (28 grams)
  - Brain and spine are developing
  - Face and limbs are forming, arms and legs are moving



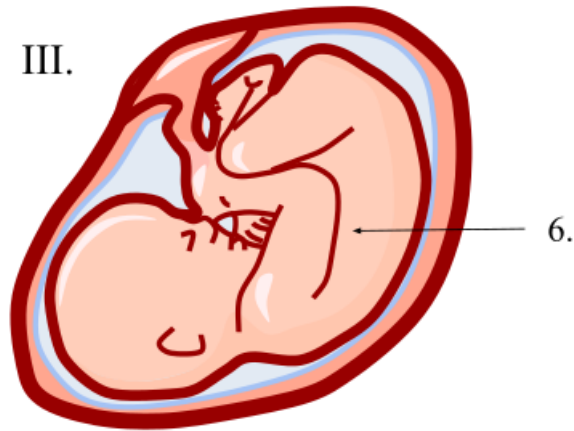
# Your Growing Baby (13-28 weeks)



- By the end of 2nd trimester:
  - About 14 inches (35cm) long
  - About two pounds (1kg)
  - Can suck their thumb and hiccup
  - Can open their eyes
  - Teeth are developing inside the gums



# Your Growing Baby (29-40 weeks)



- By the end of 3rd trimester:
  - About 20 inches (50cm) long
  - About 7.5 pounds (3.5kg)
  - Your baby can hear your voice and other sounds



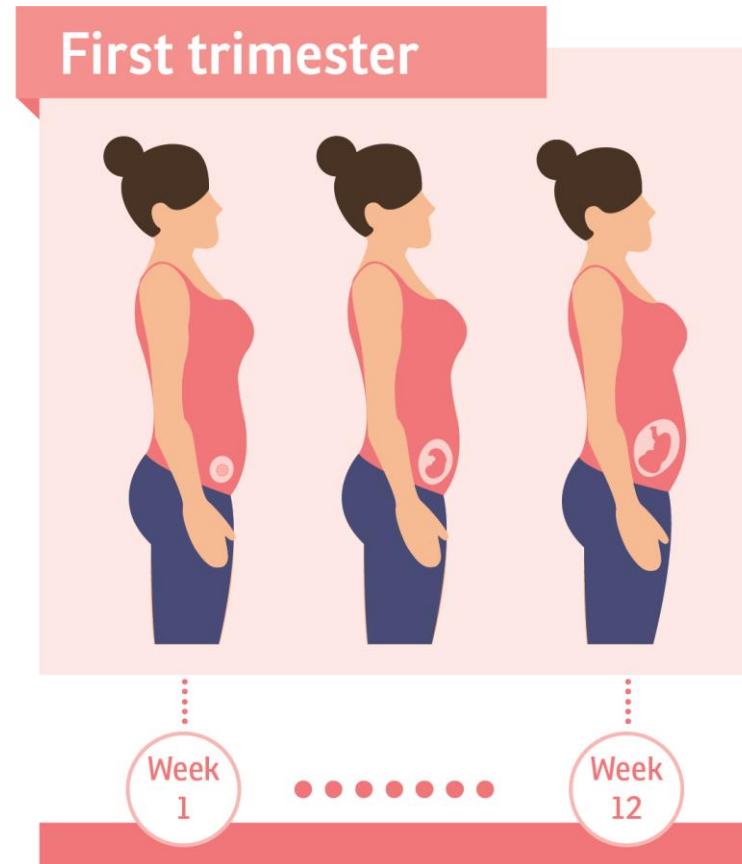
# What is happening to me?

- Key Hormones:
  - Human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG)
  - Progesterone
  - Estrogen
  - Relaxin
  - Oxytocin



# Common Changes – First Trimester

- Coping with nausea and vomiting
- Coping with fatigue
- Coping with urgency
- Coping with feeling faint



# Common Changes – Second Trimester

- Less nausea
- More energy
- Change in body shape and size
- Linea nigra
- Mask of pregnancy
- Colostrum
- Back and joint pain
- Bleeding gums

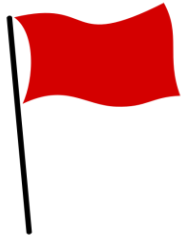




# Common Changes – Third Trimester

- Practice contractions
- Swelling of ankles and feet
- Varicose veins
- Increased need to urinate
- Back pain
- Shortness of breath
- Indigestion/gas
- Heartburn
- Difficulty sleeping





# When to Seek Medical Help

- Unusual and constant headache
- Visual changes (seeing spots or flashes)
- Persistent lower back pain
- Regular contractions of the uterus before 37 weeks
- Vaginal bleeding
- Leaking or a gush of fluid from your vagina
- Abdominal pain
- Decreased fetal movement



# Immunizations During Pregnancy

- **Adacel** (Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis)
  - NACI recommendation: provided between 27-32 weeks
  - Shown to protect 9/10 infants against pertussis ("whooping cough") less than 3 months old
- **Covid-19** Vaccination
  - SOGC: all pregnant persons should be prioritized to receive Covid-19 vaccinations
- **Influenza** Vaccination
  - NACI recommendation: all pregnant persons be vaccinated against influenza



# Emotional Changes

- Most of the time within the last two weeks...
  - Have you been sad, depressed or irritable?
  - Have you been unable to enjoy the things you used to enjoy?
  - Have you felt anxious, worried or panicky?
  - Have you cried more easily?
- Have you experienced any recent losses or stressful life events?
- Do you have a history of anxiety, depression, or any other mental health challenges?



# Tips for Taking Care of Emotional Health During Pregnancy

- Encourage activity as tolerated and a balanced diet
- Take time to relax and rest whenever possible
- Support with developing coping strategies
- Share thoughts and feelings with someone you trust
- Be honest with your health care provider about your feelings



# Intimacy During Pregnancy

- Sexual activity during pregnancy is safe and healthy in most cases
- A pregnant person's desire and comfort levels change throughout pregnancy
- Your health care provider may advise you to avoid or limit intercourse if your pregnancy is high risk

