

# Special Delivery



Second Trimester Maternity Care Newsletter from BlueChoice® HealthPlan



## Your Second Trimester

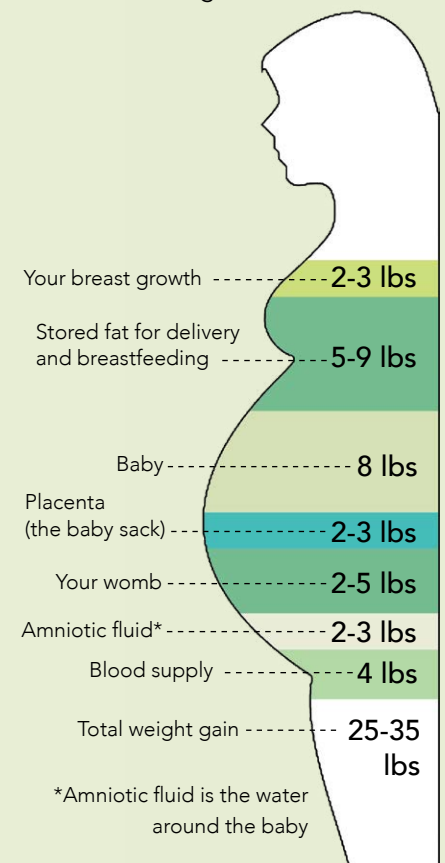
Ongoing prenatal care continues to be vital for your baby's health and your health. You will continue to see your doctor once a month during the second trimester. You also will begin routine lab testing and measurement of your baby's growth and development.

To track your baby's growth, your doctor will likely take a measurement of your abdomen. Typically, this measurement (in centimeters) is a close match to your weeks of pregnancy — for example, you'll measure about 26 centimeters during your 26th week. One of the more exciting moments may come during the second trimester, when you can listen to your baby's heartbeat. You may also begin to feel your baby move at around 20 weeks. Be sure to tell your provider when you start noticing your baby moving.

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## Where Does All That Weight Go?

Eating right during your pregnancy is one of the best things you can do for yourself and your baby. Finding a balance between getting enough nutrients while maintaining a healthy weight is important for your and your baby's future health. It may seem like your weight gain is all going to your belly, but during the average pregnancy, it looks more like the figure below



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## Here's a look at some of the testing and screenings you might undergo during your second trimester:

- Blood tests might be done to screen for a number of conditions, including gestational diabetes and anemia. These tests are done generally between 24 – 28 weeks of pregnancy. To check for gestational diabetes, you will drink a sugary drink your provider gives you. After a period of time, a blood sample will be drawn to measure the amount of sugar in your blood. This is called a glucose tolerance test or glucola. Your provider will notify you of your test results.
- Fetal ultrasound. An ultrasound exam is typically done between 18 – 22 weeks gestation. It checks your baby's growth and development while screening for any potential problems.
- Vaccination. The flu (influenza) vaccination is recommended for pregnant and breastfeeding women. It is best to get the vaccine early in the flu season, as soon as it is available. You can get the shot at any time during your pregnancy. If you are not vaccinated early in the flu season, you still can get the vaccine later. The flu vaccine does "double duty" by protecting both you and your baby. Babies cannot get the flu vaccine until they are 6 months old. When you get a flu shot during pregnancy, the protective antibodies made in your body are transferred to your baby. These antibodies will protect your baby against the flu until he or she can get the vaccine at 6 months of age. The Tdap vaccination is recommended each pregnancy, preferably at 27 – 36 weeks gestation. The administration of the Tdap vaccine during each pregnancy is safe and important to make sure that each newborn receives the highest possible protection against pertussis (whooping cough) at birth.

Make sure to write down any questions or concerns you have so you can discuss them with your doctor at your next visit. No question is a dumb question. Your provider and your maternity coach/nurse are happy to help.

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## Is Something Wrong?

### Symptoms of high blood pressure/pre-eclampsia

- A headache not relieved by over-the-counter medication.
- Vision changes.
- Sudden swelling of your hands and face.

### Symptoms of possible infection

- Fever greater than 100.4 degrees for more than three days.
- Vaginal discharge with foul odor or leaking of fluids.
- Burning or pain with urination.

### Symptoms of preterm labor

- Contractions, with your abdomen tightening like a fist every 10 minutes or more often.

- Cramping like during a menstrual period.
- Pelvic or rectal pressure.
- Low, dull back pain despite position change.
- Abdominal cramps with or without diarrhea.
- **Monitor fetal movement:** There are many ways to note your baby's movements. The simplest one is to record the amount of time it takes for you to feel 10 movements, such as kicks, rolls or jabs. You should feel 10 movements in no more than two hours. If not, call your doctor.

# Your Changing Body

At this point during your pregnancy, you're probably noticing a number of changes in every area, from changes in your body to emotional changes. Many women are more upbeat during their second trimester as they adjust to pregnancy and begin to feel less tired. If so, take advantage while you can! Now may be a great time to get a jump-start on finding a childbirth class, a health care provider for your new baby and looking into day care options if you plan to return to work.

Here are some of the changes you may see in your body:

- **Growing belly:** Your uterus becomes heavier and begins to grow more rapidly to make room for your growing baby. If you experience back pain, talk with your doctor about things that might help.
- **Braxton Hicks contractions:** Think of these as sort of a warmup for labor. They are typically weak and come and go unpredictably. If your contractions become more painful or regular, contact your doctor immediately. This could be a sign of preterm labor.
- **Leg cramps:** These are fairly common as you move further along in your pregnancy. To help prevent leg cramps, try stretching your calf muscles before bed. And make sure you drink plenty of fluids and stay active.
- **Fuller breasts:** The milk-producing glands inside your breasts begin getting larger during the second trimester in preparation for breastfeeding.

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# Breastfeed for the Best Start

How you choose to feed your baby — breast, bottle or both — is an important decision. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breast milk for the first six months of an infant's life. No matter what decision you make, your maternity coach/nurse is here to help. Please refer to the member services number on the back of your member ID card for information about breast pump benefits.

Here are a few of the benefits of breastfeeding:

**For your baby:**

- Protects against ear infections
- Protects against diarrhea and other stomach problems
- Protects against allergies
- Protects against asthma
- Protects against bone loss later in life
- Reduces risk of SIDS, diabetes and obesity
- Provides all the nutrition your baby needs for the first six months of life
- Promotes stronger bones and teeth
- Develops higher IQ and improves brain development
- Promotes lower blood pressure and cholesterol later in life

**For you:**

- Reduces risk of cancer, including breast and ovarian cancer
- Reduces risk of postpartum depression
- Reduces risk of low iron
- Helps return uterus to its normal size
- Promotes weight loss (burns up to 500 calories a day)
- Reduces health care costs because babies are healthier
- Develops a special bond between you and your baby

## Do's and Don'ts for a Healthier Pregnancy

Improve your chance of having a healthy baby by making some important lifestyle changes today.

### Do:

- Keep all scheduled prenatal care appointments.
- Contact your provider with any problems or concerns.
- Take a daily multivitamin containing 400 micrograms of folic acid.
- Eat a well-balanced diet that's divided into small, frequent meals each day. This includes:
  - Six to 11 servings of whole grains
  - Three to five servings of vegetables
  - Two to four servings of fruits
  - Four to six servings of dairy products
  - Three to four servings of meat and protein
- Limit fatty foods and sweets.
- Drink at least eight to 10 glasses (64 – 80 ounces) of water or other non-caffeinated beverages a day.
- Minimize your caffeine to one 12-ounce cup of coffee a day (equivalent to 200 mg).
- Avoid saunas, hot tubs or steam rooms.

### Don't:

- Take any prescription or over-the-counter medication without your doctor's advice.
- Use alcohol or street drugs.
- Smoke cigarettes.
- Handle used cat litter.
- Eat undercooked meat/seafood or unpasteurized cheese.
- Eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tilefish. Choose fish and shellfish such as shrimp, salmon, catfish and pollock. Limit white (albacore) tuna to six ounces a week. You also should check advisories about fish caught in local waters.

If you have any questions about how to have a healthy pregnancy, please call your maternity coach/nurse. He or she will be happy to discuss them with you. Or, talk to your health care provider about any concerns or questions you may have.

