

## MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WOMEN'S HEALTH THERAPY

Some conditions require specialized care, privacy and sensitivity. Alexis Smith, PT, DPT, our Pelvic Health Physical Therapist, specializes in identifying and treating musculoskeletal causes for pelvic pain, incontinence, painful urination, pregnancy-related pain, postpartum pain, and more.

If you have difficulty with normal activities due to pain and dysfunction in the pelvis, you may benefit from this specialized treatment.

You will be evaluated and treated in a private treatment room, and you will receive compassionate, highly-trained care. Treatment may consist of pelvic floor muscle retraining with a biofeedback machine, specific exercises to strengthen or relax the pelvic floor muscles, bladder retraining education, soft tissue and joint mobilization, fitting of back/pelvis supports, and pain-relieving modalities.

For more information about pelvic health, or to schedule an appointment with Alexis Smith, PT, DPT, please call 270.659.5660.



**Alexis Smith, PT, DPT**

Physical Therapist, Pelvic Health and Orthopedics

**TJ Regional Health**

1301 North Race Street  
Glasgow, KY 42141



*Congratulations  
on your  
Pregnancy!*

**WHAT TO EXPECT  
OVER THE NEXT 9 MONTHS**

**WHAT'S NORMAL, WHAT'S NOT**





## YOUR FIRST TRIMESTER

### Weeks 1-4:

**Invest in a supportive bra!** Many women grow a full cup size within their first couple of weeks of pregnancy.

**Morning sickness** is normal during your first 14 weeks of pregnancy. Try eating multiple small meals throughout the day, and avoid any strong smelling foods to ease nausea. Ginger and citrus are good options to decrease tummy discomfort.

### Week 13:

**Eating for two is now normal** (within reason). Expect to gain about 12 pounds over the next 14 weeks.

#### A TIP FROM YOUR PELVIC HEALTH PHYSICAL THERAPIST:

You will likely feel quite fatigued as your body is starting to grow a child, but try to get into an exercise or stretching routine now to carry throughout your pregnancy. Yoga is a great option!

## YOUR SECOND TRIMESTER

### Week 16:

It's normal to begin to feel your baby move between 16-22 weeks.

**Increasing urinary frequency is normal.** The baby is pressing into your bladder. Continue to drink lots of water, and cut down on coffee, tea, or beverages with artificial sweeteners as these are bladder irritants. Do kegels to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles! And don't give in to the urge to pee every time.

#### A TIP FROM YOUR PELVIC HEALTH PHYSICAL THERAPIST:

If you just went 15 minutes ago, your bladder is not full yet! Do five quick kegels and distract yourself until the next urge. It's important to keep your bladder on your schedule, not the other way around.

**Have sex!** It's very safe for most pregnant women to have intercourse with their partner throughout pregnancy, so enjoy your baby-free time together.

**Exercise daily.** It's important to stay active, but with low to moderate intensity. Avoid activities that put you at risk for falling (as your center of gravity will be off), and heavy jostling activities to protect the placenta. If you're exhausted, at least go for a walk with your partner or dog.

If you are a **higher risk pregnancy** (35 or older, carrying multiples, or have other health problems), call your doctor if you notice any sustained high blood pressure, swelling in your face and hands, headaches, or nausea, as it could be a symptom of preeclampsia.



### Week 22:

Constipation and hemorrhoids are normal as the baby gets a little bigger. Try adding fluids and fiber to your diet. Don't strain to poop! Instead take deep, belly breaths and bear down gently. Also try to prop your feet up slightly on a book or stool (if your belly will allow), to better align your pelvic organs and make the expulsion more fluid.

### Week 27:

You may be noticing the scale increasing more quickly now. Expect to gain about one pound a week from here to delivery.

## YOUR THIRD TRIMESTER

### Week 35:

**Braxton-Hicks contractions** are common at this time. Familiarize yourself with the difference between these and actual contractions. The real ones will come more consistently and won't ease with movement.

Nearly 50% of women will experience some type of **low back or pelvic pain** during pregnancy. This may be due to increased release of the Relaxin hormone, which decreases pelvic and spinal stability.

Light strengthening and behavioral modifications such as sleeping with pillows between your legs or wearing a stabilization belt may be very helpful. Seeing a Pelvic Floor Physical Therapist will help you determine why you are having pain, and she will work with you to create a plan to make it more manageable.

#### A TIP FROM YOUR PELVIC HEALTH PHYSICAL THERAPIST:

Start doing perineal massage daily to prepare your "down-there" tissues for the stretch that is imminent. Begin this a couple of weeks before your due date.