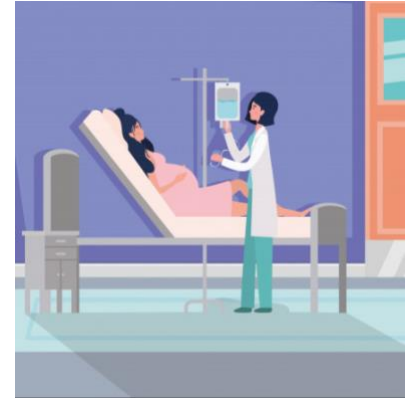


Preparing for a New Baby During COVID Part 1

With all the social distancing measures, we realize it is harder to access information or attend parenting classes on what to expect during pregnancy and how to prepare for the birth. We cover a few basics, and provide you with resources where you can go to find more information directly from professionals.

Maternal Health and Nutrition

- **COVID-19:** Based on what we know at this time, pregnant people might be at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant people. So, we continue to encourage you to take precautions, wear a mask, socially distance, and stay home when you can.
- **Doctor's Visits:**
 - It's important to continue with your regular doctor's visits.
 - When meeting with your doctors, it is important that you advocate for yourself with the health professionals you choose. You know what is best for you. If you are not happy with your doctor, look elsewhere to find someone who will listen to you and fit your needs. It is okay to switch to a different doctor.
 - It is expected you have anywhere between 10 and 15 doctors' visits while pregnant, increasing in frequency as you get closer to giving birth. Here is what the typical schedule looks like.
 - Weeks 4 to 28: Once a month
 - Weeks 28 to 36: Every other week
 - Week 36 until birth: Every week
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle during pregnancy:**
 - Gain an appropriate amount of weight – check with your doctor to see what is best for you.
 - Eating a balanced diet. This includes a diet of protein, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, with sweets and fats kept to a minimum.
 - Exercise regularly.
 - Drink several glasses of water each day.
 - Appropriate and timely vitamin and mineral supplementation according to your doctor.
- Do NOT drink alcohol and do NOT smoke as they can harm the baby with lifelong consequences. You can ask your healthcare provider for help to stop smoking and drinking.



Maternal Mental Health

- Physical and emotional changes during pregnancy can make pregnant people and new mothers feel sad, anxious, overwhelmed, and/or confused. These feelings of depression are not your fault and are expected.
- For many women, these feelings will go away quickly. When these feelings last for several weeks, or get worse over time, you may need professional help. Seeking help is very important and a sign of strength!
- Symptoms vary from person to person. Some symptoms include:
 - Feeling sad

- Feeling overwhelmed or anxious
- Feeling guilty or inadequate
- Mood swings – highs and lows
- Not enjoying things that used to be enjoyable
- Changes in sleeping and eating habits
- Excessive worrying about the baby
- Treatment options include therapy, talking with a trained professional, and various potential medication that is safe for you and the baby. Some women find that support groups, meditation, physical activity, and healthy eating can help them cope with stress and reduce symptoms of maternal depression.
- Help is available! If you have thoughts of harming yourself or your baby, or if you are hallucinating, this is a medical emergency. Call **9-1-1**. This is an emergency.
- Remember, asking for help is a sign of **strength**, not weakness.
- Start by talking with your health care provider. They can connect you with trained professionals to help get you through what you are feeling.



March of Dimes
TAKE ACTION
Make a birth plan.

While the COVID-19 pandemic continually changes, March of Dimes knows that every day babies are still being born. This document has been designed for you to assess the preferences you'd like based on the policies of your chosen place of birth. At the end you'll find a series of questions that you should ask your provider as you prepare for your baby's birth.

Your name _____
Your provider's name and contact information _____
Your baby's due date _____
Your baby's provider's name and contact information _____

1 Where do you plan to have your baby?
2 Can a support person be present during labor and birth? If yes, who is your primary support?
Name _____
Phone _____
This person is:
 Your partner Your baby's father
 A family member Your friend
 Clergy Your dad

3 Is there an option to have virtual support during labor and birth?
Virtual options:
 By phone Skype
 FaceTime Facebook
 Zoom WhatsApp

4 Can you bring your own device (phone/iPad)?
 Yes No
Does the hospital have WiFi access?
 Yes No
Will the hospital provide a device for virtual support?
 Yes No

5 What support do you want during labor?
 Help with breathing
 Help working through contractions
 Massage
 Help to move around
 Use of labor tools (birth ball, peanut ball)
 Sensory (lights, music)
 Other _____

Creating a Birth Plan

- A birth plan is a document that lets your medical team know your labor and delivery preferences in regard to things like:
 - pain management
 - postpartum care
 - newborn procedures
- Think of your birth plan as a guideline or even a map. Having a plan will give you a sense of control and will help you stay calm.
- There are lots of great Birth Plan templates online. This one from the March of Dimes is available in both English and Spanish.
 - [Birth Plan PDF English](#)
 - [Birth Plan PDF in Spanish](#)

Additional Resources for New Yorkers

- [Local Family Support Programs](#)- Find a home visiting program near you.
 - [PatentChild+](#),
 - [Nurse Family Partnership](#)
- [Growing Up Healthy Hotline](#)- toll-free hotline (1-800-522-5006)
- [NY State Online Parenting Guide](#)
- [Perinatal Regionalization Program](#) and [New York State Perinatal Quality Collaborative \(NYSPQC\)](#)
- [Breastfeeding Promotion Program](#)
- [Text4baby](#)- Text BABY (or BEBE for Spanish) to 511411

For any questions about the content or our virtual programming, please email Kristen Rocha Aldrich at krochaaldrich@reachoutandreadnyc.org.