Discovering you are pregnant can be both an exciting and anxious time. You are also likely to have many questions.

This fact sheet is intended to answer the questions you may have between the time you find out that you are pregnant and when you have your first appointment with your obstetrician or midwife. Gannett can assist you with your early pregnancy health needs and refer you to a pregnancy care practice in the community. Be sure to tell a Gannett health care provider if you have known medical conditions that you think may affect your pregnancy.

While you are waiting for your first prenatal care appointment, taking care of yourself is important. Below are some tips to help you navigate the next few weeks.

**Listen to your body**

Hormonal changes can be dramatic in early pregnancy. Some women experience very few symptoms of pregnancy while others experience several, including nausea, breast tenderness, or an overwhelming feeling of fatigue. The need to urinate frequently is common, as is constipation, mood changes, and heartburn. Usually these symptoms are mild.

More severe symptoms such as painful urination, daily vomiting, severe headache, pelvic or abdominal pain or worsening mood changes should be discussed with your health care provider.

**Be nourished**

- **Eat smaller servings of nutritious food more frequently** throughout the day during early pregnancy. Nausea is sometimes a symptom of hunger, so consider eating a healthy snack every 2-3 hours. Carry fresh fruit, crackers, protein bars or other healthy foods with you. If nausea is worse in the morning, keep some snacks by your bedside and eat a little before getting up.
- **Eat a wide variety of foods** throughout your pregnancy. If you follow a special diet, consider meeting with a nutritionist at Gannett to discuss your unique needs during pregnancy. Pregnancy is not a time to diet. Your obstetrician or midwife will help you monitor healthy weight gain during your pregnancy.

- **Take a folate (folic acid) supplement.** The occurrence of some birth defects such as spina bifida can be lessened when women use at least 400mcg of folic acid every day both before and during pregnancy. A multivitamin or prenatal vitamin can supply this amount. Eating foods such as dark leafy vegetables, liver, fruit and whole grains can also supply folate.

- **Sip on water** throughout the day to help you manage constipation and nausea. Drinking lots of fluid all at once can make nausea worse, so consider drinking a few sips every 15 minutes between snacks. Try to keep your urine a pale yellow color.

- **Monitor nausea and vomiting.** If you are concerned that nausea or vomiting is preventing you from getting the right nutrition, come to Gannett to discuss more ways to manage the symptoms.

**Be well**

There are many things you can do to help make your pregnancy healthier.

- Rest when you are tired. Consider taking naps when you are able.
- Exercise moderately through brisk walking, swimming or gentle yoga.
- Get a flu shot if you will be pregnant during flu season.

Pay attention to the way you are feeling and give yourself permission to feel scared, excited, anxious, exhilarated and sad: sometimes all in the same day! Not only is your body adjusting to the changes that are occurring, but you are adjusting to the idea of parenting and how it may affect your relationships, career, finances or academics. Gannett has

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**Local Obstetric (OB) Providers**

The following groups provide pregnancy care and support in the Ithaca area:

**Pregnancy Care**

- **Obstetrical & Gynecological (OBGYN) Associates of Ithaca**
  20 Arrowood Drive, Ithaca, NY
  607-266-7800
  www.ithacaobgyn.com

- **Cayuga Women's Health**
  1301 Trumansburg Road, Suite L, Ithaca
  607-273-0250
  www.cayugaobgynwomenshealth.com

**Doulas and Lay Midwives**

- **Doulas of Ithaca** (offering labor and post-partum support) www.ithacadoulas.com
- Also, view: www.ithacabirthgroup.org/resources.php

**Other Resources**

- **Ithaca Birth Group**
  www.ithacabirthgroup.org
  Non-profit organization offering support, information, education & referrals

- **Tompkins County Health Department**
  www.tompkins-co.org/health/

- **Medicaid Obstetrical and Maternal Services (MOMS) Program**
  www.tompkins-co.org/health/chs/moms.htm
Be aware

Sometimes pregnancies don’t progress to full-term. As many as 1 in every 4 early pregnancies end in miscarriage. Sometimes there are problems with the embryo’s chromosomes; sometimes a fertilized egg does not implant correctly into a woman’s uterus. Often, no reason can be found for a miscarriage.

Symptoms such as vaginal bleeding, uterine cramping, or back pain can be signs of early miscarriage, but not always. Approximately 20% of women will have some light bleeding in the first trimester and continue to have a healthy pregnancy. If you experience any of these symptoms, call Gannett. If your bleeding is heavy (more than 1 pad every hour) or cramping is more than a menstrual cramp, go to the Cayuga Medical Center (or other hospital) emergency room.

Be informed

You may find the following list of resources helpful in providing additional information about the basics of body changes, testing, experiences of pregnancy and childbirth:

Books

- *The Complete Book of Pregnancy and Childbirth*, Sheila Kitzinger
- *Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn*, Penny Simkin PT, Janet Whallet, and Ann Keppler
- *Active Woman’s Guide to Pregnancy: Practical Advice for Getting Outdoors*, Aneema Van Groenou, MD (Note: this book is for women who don’t want to give up vigorous exercise.)

Websites

- Early pregnancy care: www.marchofdimes.com/pnhec/159.asp
- Nutrition and food safety: www.cfsan.fda.gov/~pregnant/pregnant.html
- Workplace safety throughout pregnancy: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/99-104/default.html

Contact Us:

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