

Early Pregnancy Guidelines

Discovering you are pregnant can be both an exciting and anxious time. You are likely to have many questions about the changes to your body and the well-being of your developing fetus.

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 folate 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. Your goal is to keep your urine a pale yellow color.

Local Obstetric (OB) Providers

The following groups provide pregnancy care and support in the Ithaca area. If you are covered by the Cornell Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP), you must contact Gannett for pregnancy-related referrals:

Pregnancy Care

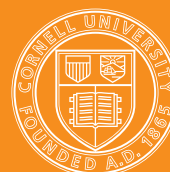
- **Obstetrical & Gynecological (OB/GYN) Associates of Ithaca**
20 Arrowwood Drive, Ithaca, NY
607-266-7800
This practice employs several male and female providers, including physicians and nurse midwives.
- **Cayuga Women's Health**
1301 Trumansburg Road, Suite L, Ithaca
607-273-0250
Currently, only male physicians are practicing in this group.

Doulas and Lay Midwives

- **Doulas of Ithaca** (offering labor and postpartum 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



- **Monitor nausea and vomiting.** If you are concerned that nausea or vomiting is preventing you from getting the right nutrition for you and your developing fetus, 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 having a baby in your life and how it may affect your relationships, career, finances or academics. Gannett has several places for you to talk about these kinds of concerns. You may want to start by talking to the Gannett Clinical Counselor, who can help you find the resources you may need as your pregnancy progresses.

Above all, relax and remember to be kind to yourself. The physical changes you are experiencing are temporary and, even if your few weeks are a bit of a challenge, you will probably find relief as you near the second trimester. Please talk to us if you are worried. We want to help you feel your best!

Be safe

Some things should be avoided in pregnancy. No amount of alcohol has been shown to be safe in pregnancy as it can harm a developing fetus. If you drink caffeine, do so in moderation. Some studies have shown higher amounts of caffeine are linked to miscarriage or low birth weight in babies. Smoking tobacco can cause miscarriage, low birth weight babies, and other health problems. If stopping drinking alcohol or smoking will be hard for you, talk with your health care provider about the individualized programs available at Gannett that can help you.

Be cautious about medications. If you are currently using a medication, check with Gannett to make sure it is safe to use while pregnant. Some non-prescrip-

tion medications you may want to use for a cold, headache or stomach upset can cause problems in early pregnancy. Others are considered safe. If you are unsure, call Gannett before beginning any new medicine or herbal product.

- **Tylenol** (acetaminophen, paracetamol) can be used for a headache, fever or pain.
- **Sudafed** (pseudoephedrine), plain Robitussin (not DM) and cepacol lozenges can be used for cold symptoms such as a sore throat or stuffy nose.
- **Benedryl** (diphenhydramine) can be used for allergy symptoms.
- **Metamucil** can be used for constipation.
- **Emetrol** can be used for nausea and vomiting.
- **Imodium** (loperamide) can be used for diarrhea

Do NOT Take: Ibuprofen, Advil, aspirin, Aleve, Pepto-Bismol, Alka-Seltzer, or any medicines that contain these. Many cold medicines have them in their ingredients, so check the label before using.

Be sure to tell any health care provider you are seeing that you are pregnant. They will need to consider your pregnancy when recommending medications, x-rays or other treatments.

Be "covered"

Because all insurance policies differ, Gannett recommends that if you have the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP), you talk with a representative in the Cornell Office of Student Health Insurance, 255-6363. Their staff can tell you which expenses SHIP will cover and which you will be responsible for. If you have a different insurance plan, be sure to call for information. (Often, a toll-free number is provided on the back of an insurance card.)

The Tompkins County Department of Social Services' Medicaid Office, 274-5330, can help determine whether or not you are eligible to receive additional assistance through Medicaid.

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

Be aware

Sometimes pregnancies don't progress 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 the Cayuga Medical Center (or other hospital) emergency room.

- *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: www.cdc.gov/niosh/pdfs/99-104.pdf

Fall and Spring Semester Hours:

Monday-Friday	8:30 am-5:00 pm
Saturday	10:00 am-4:00pm
Sunday	building closed

Check the web for hours during breaks, winter and summer sessions: www.gannett.cornell.edu

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