

For Safety's Sake

Continue Positive Habits

Have you heeded warnings you've heard about substances to avoid during pregnancy? Have you stayed away from smoking, alcohol, illicit drugs and medications your doctor told you to avoid? Are you eating healthy foods? Good mother! Here are strategies to continue the positive habits that help to form and protect your baby.

Out of sight, out of mind! If liquor, beer, wine or cigarettes tempt you, make sure they're nowhere to be seen. Keep them out of the house. Stay away from people and places where illicit substances are used.

Say, "I'll have this instead." Have chilled apple juice instead of anything alcoholic. Have something crunchy instead of a cigarette. Keep favorite flavors of yogurt, fresh fruit and tasty crackers around for snacks.

Say, "No thanks." When anyone pressures you to have "just this one" of something that's not good for you, let

the mother in you speak up for your baby. Saying "no" to them is saying "yes" to your dear child's health.

Treat yourself well. It's often when we're tired and cranky that we give in to temptation. Take rest breaks. Get off your feet. Relax!

Think ahead to the moment when your baby is placed in your arms. Every mother checks anxiously, "Ten fingers, ten toes." At the moment when a perfect, healthy, beautiful child is snuggled close, how glad you'll be to have protected him or her from danger! Even after birth be aware of potential dangers of these substances on baby. If breastfeeding, remember that substances are passed through your milk, so continue to abstain. Secondhand cigarette smoke is harmful to children.



If you are currently using tobacco, alcohol or any other drug and are concerned about not being able to quit, talk to your doctor or call a community service organization.

Check These Out!

From the Public Library, check out free resources like those listed below. They'll help in the last few weeks of pregnancy and the first weeks of parenthood!

The miracle of birth : 5 birth stories. (V)

First days home : keeping your baby healthy & happy. (DVD)

Breastfeeding & basketball (V)

Babytalk: the video guide for new parents (DVD)

Dr. Paula's house calls to your newborn /
Paula M. Elbirt. (B)

The baby book : everything you need to know about your baby—from birth to age two /
William Sears and Martha Sears. (B)

(B) book, (V) video, (DVD) video disk

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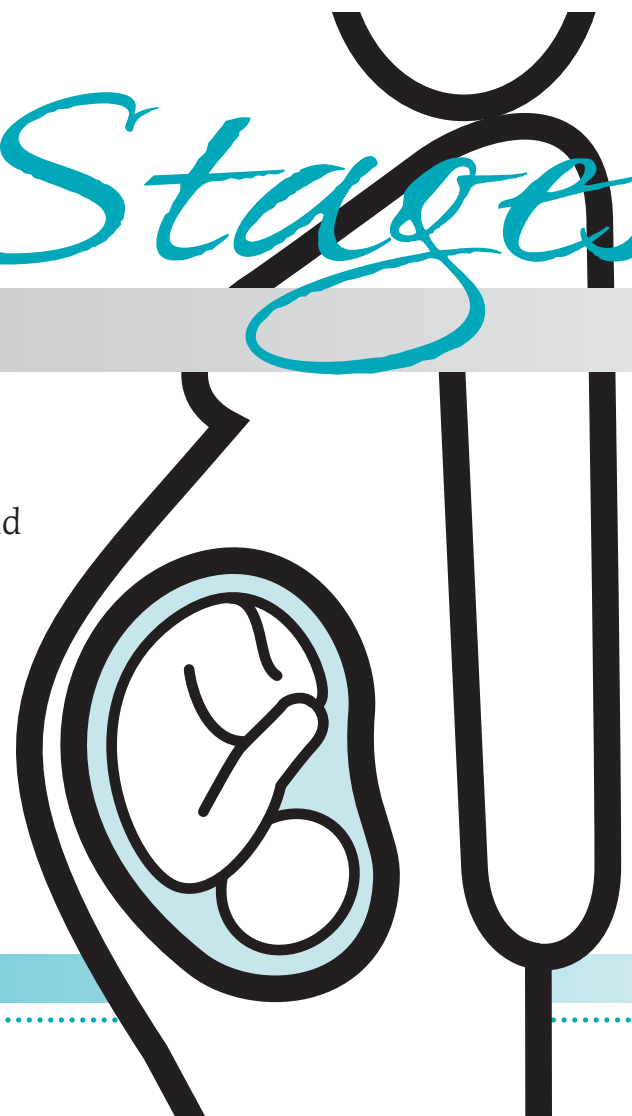
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Healthy Stages

3RD TRIMESTER

It's almost time! As these final months turn into weeks, then days, you may find yourself thinking often about what life will be like when your baby arrives. You may worry that you won't be a good enough mother. Relax! Every new mother has mood

swings and anxious moments. Instead of dwelling on your concerns, take action. Prepare yourself, your home and your lifestyle for the new baby. This issue of *Healthy Stages* has plenty of tips to help you.



Growing Together

More changes! Your baby is nearly ready for birth.

SEVENTH MONTH

- ♥ You don't need to be told that your baby is much more active. You feel that kicking, stretching and turning!
- ♥ The baby's bones are strengthening.
- ♥ Your baby can suck his or her thumb, open and close eyes, hiccup.
- ♥ The baby now weighs about 3 pounds and is about 15 inches long.
- ♥ You may have extra fatigue now. Rest as frequently as possible!

EIGHTH MONTH

- ♥ A major weight gain prepares your baby even more for birth.
- ♥ He or she is now 4½ to 6 pounds and 16½ to 18 inches long.
- ♥ The baby's brain is developing rapidly.
- ♥ He or she can see and hear, and sometimes "jumps" when there's a loud noise.
- ♥ You may have shortness of breath, lower backache and trouble getting comfortable sleeping. Don't be discouraged. You'll soon carry that wonderful child in your arms instead of beneath your heart!

NINTH MONTH

- ♥ Time for countdown!
- ♥ The baby grows more – to an average birth weight of between 6 and 8 pounds and a length of between 20 and 22 inches.
- ♥ As birth date approaches, baby will "drop" into position low in your abdomen.
- ♥ You may feel contractions from time to time.
- ♥ You'll visit your doctor more often.
- ♥ You'll be excited about the birth, but tired of being pregnant. Don't fret. The wonderful work of our pregnancy will soon be rewarded with a baby!

Planning The Trip

A Hospital Checklist

Have you ...

- ♥ Arranged your hospital stay?
- ♥ Asked your doctor and your hospital about birthing options?
- ♥ Taken those prepared childbirth classes you and your partner wanted?
- ♥ Talked to your partner about a name for your new boy or girl? You'll need it for the birth certificate.
- ♥ Received your hospital's list of what to bring for you and baby?

Some suggestions follow:

For you, consider packing ...

- ♥ Robe and slippers.
- ♥ A nightgown or two.
- ♥ A few cosmetics, hairbrush, etc.
- ♥ A favorite book, perhaps?
- ♥ Insurance and admission forms.
- ♥ Change for telephone calls to announce the good news.

For baby, you'll need only ...

- ♥ An outfit for baby to wear home.
- ♥ Baby outerwear if it's cold.
- ♥ Several blankets.

Arrange for a car seat now!

For baby's trip home from the hospital, you'll need a car safety seat. If you don't own one, ask your hospital if they loan safety seats. Many do. Or check with the Division of Motor Vehicles and see if they have special provisions for infant seats. The best answer is to buy or be given your own car safety seat. It's the law that your baby must ride in one. Remember, auto accidents are a bigger killer than all the childhood illnesses.

A Word For Dads

As the time approaches for baby to arrive, mom needs you more than ever. And you need her support, too! Don't worry about how good a dad you'll be. Do plan to be the best dad ever, and that's what'll happen! It's a choice, and it's yours to make. Here are others.

- ♥ Go to prepared childbirth with mom. It'll mean a lot to you both.
- ♥ Prepare baby's place in the home. Will it be an entire room, or just a corner of your bedroom? Either way, make it cozy, comfortable and safe. You'll do all the heavy lifting, crib assembly and furniture arranging. Let mom direct from a comfortable chair!
- ♥ Stay in close touch with mom in the final weeks. Make it as easy as possible for her to reach you when labor starts.
- ♥ At the hospital, see that visitors don't overtire mom and baby. She needs quiet time and rest. Matter of fact, so do you.



Who Will Be Your Baby's Doctor

Have you decided on the doctor who will care for your newborn baby? Choose one now, so he or she can be called to examine the baby in the hospital. You may choose a pediatrician, a specialist in caring for babies and children. Or you may have a family physician that sees not only adults but also children. Get suggestions from your doctor, other health professionals, or your hospital's physician referral service. Visit the doctor you choose, if possible, so you can see if you feel comfortable with him or her. Remember, you'll turn to this specialist for help many times. Plan a solid partnership by making the right choice now!

Nurturing Yourself

Treat Yourself Tenderly Too!

Those first weeks at home can be trying, as you, the baby, and the household adjust to each other. Plan now to make it as easy on yourself and baby as possible!

Let dad be the buffer.

He can tactfully "shoo out" company that stays too long, makes too much noise, or disrupts your schedule.

Accept all the help you can get.

Are friends and family offering to prepare a meal and deliver it? Straighten the house? Answer the phone? Rock the baby while you rest? Take them up on their offers! The best ones are from those who work quietly and depart, without lingering to

Just What Is Bonding?

A great deal has been said and written about "bonding" with your baby in the moments after birth. It's wonderful to be able to do that right after delivery, but keep things in perspective. You've bonded with your baby every day of your pregnancy, by taking good care of yourself. You'll bond with your baby in the hospital. But, most important, that close tie between mother and baby will really be strengthened in the early days and weeks at home.

Tell yourself:

- ♥ "I'll be tired and anxious when I come home. But from the first moments here, I'll welcome my baby home with love, cuddling and tenderness."
- ♥ "I'll realize that new babies cry a lot and I won't take it personally. Instead, I'll start figuring out just what soothes my baby."
- ♥ "We're a family now. We'll work out a regular schedule, so life around here is as calm and predictable as we can make it for our family, and especially for the baby."
- ♥ "I'll realize that life with a baby has its ups and downs. I won't let my fatigue, moods, or anger keep me from giving my baby good, tender care."

With those resolutions, the bond between you and your baby will be tender, long lasting and a source of strength to both of you.

Breast Or Bottle

Some women know almost instantly whether they want to breast feed or bottle-feed their baby. If you're undecided, talk it over with your doctor. Whichever you decide, make feeding time a time of special closeness. Here are some advantages of each:

BREASTFEEDING

- ♥ The mother-baby bond is renewed daily with breastfeeding.
- ♥ Your milk is right for your baby. It's from the body that formed and fed the baby for nine months!
- ♥ Breastfed babies have less colic, gas and spit-up problems.
- ♥ Some babies are allergic to cow's milk. It's seldom true of breast milk.
- ♥ Breast milk has antibodies that help a baby stay immune to diseases.
- ♥ Breast milk is always ready – no mixing, pouring, or heating.
- ♥ Breastfeeding promotes postpartum weight loss.
- ♥ Dad can participate too by burping the baby, bringing the baby to mom at feeding time, and giving bottled breast milk when needed.
- ♥ Want good advice and support on breastfeeding? Contact your local La Leche League.

BOTTLE FEEDING

- ♥ It's easy to see how much baby has taken at each feeding.
- ♥ Dad can share the pleasure of giving baby a bottle.
- ♥ Mom can be away from home and know baby's being well fed. That may be important if you must go back to work soon after baby's birth.
- ♥ The closeness between mother and baby can still be there at bottle feeding time. Just plan to relax, give all your attention to the baby, and savor the time together.



tire you out with lots of talk!

Expect some blues.

You've been through a tremendous experience. Now your body is changing again. And you have so many new responsibilities! Those feelings of depression will pass as you adjust to this new role. If they don't, see your doctor. Get help.

Give yourself every break.

When the baby sleeps, you nap. Or pamper yourself with a soothing shower and a fresh outfit – a welcome break from maternity clothes! It's amazing how much better you feel when you're rested and look your best.