

# THE 38 WEEK VISIT

Women that receive prenatal care early and often have healthier babies.

Antepartum care is a comprehensive program of medical care and support that starts with pregnancy and continues through the postpartum period.

## VISIT COMPONENTS

- assessed well-being of mama/baby
- addressed concerns and questions
- reviewed new symptoms
- physical exam
- reviewed genetic screening, lab and ultrasound results
- reviewed pertinent education
- offered reassurances
- reviewed warnings signs and where to seek care after hours



## MY EXAM

blood pressure \_\_\_\_\_  
weight gain \_\_\_\_\_  
fundal height \_\_\_\_\_  
baby's heart rate \_\_\_\_\_

## FETAL HEART RATE MONITORING

- There are three types of monitoring for your baby during your labor.
- Intermittent auscultation:** A doppler is used to listen to the baby's heart every 30-60 minutes in latent labor, every 15-30 minutes during active labor, and every 5 minutes during pushing. Contractions are felt by your care team.
- Continuous monitoring:** Two circle shaped monitors called a toco and an ultrasound are placed on your belly. The toco is placed at the top your belly and senses when your belly is hard or soft (this traces contractions on the paper). The ultrasound is placed on your belly where the baby's back is palpated and traces the baby's heart rate on the paper.
- Internal monitoring:** Internal monitors are placed through your vagina and cervix to monitor the baby. An intrauterine pressure catheter is a long thin plastic tube that more accurately measures the strength of your contractions. A fetal scalp electrode a small wire that is placed on the baby's head to measure the heart rate.

## EATING IN LABOR

- Policies for eating and drinking during triage and labor vary from unit to unit.
- A 2013 Cochrane study examining 5 studies, 3130 women, found no harm or benefit to low risk women that ate or drank in labor. Studies have not examined eating and drinking in high risk women ([Singata, Tranmer, & Gyte, 2013](#)).
- While you are at home in early stages of labor, small snacks like popsicles, toast, soups, or light sandwiches are usually well tolerated.
- Most hospitals allow liquids in labor: water, tea, black coffee, juice, ginger-ale, or clear broths. Some hospitals have jell-o or popsicles.
- Most hospitals have policies that are more stringent for women desiring a TOLAC or women with high risk disorders (pre-eclampsia, HELLP).
- Be sure to ask about the policies are your place of birth!

## WHAT IS A MEMBRANE SWEEP?

- A membrane sweep is a cervical exam with one or two of the provider's fingers. If the cervix is open, the provider sweeps a finger in a circular motion to release the amniotic sac (the bag of water) from the cervix.
- A membrane sweep cannot be done if your cervix is closed.
- The sweep is typically done at 39 to 40 weeks. Women that undergo a sweep are more likely to go into spontaneous labor and less likely to need an induction ([Finucane et al., 2020](#)). Sometimes a sweep is done at the start of an induction.
- A membrane sweep is uncomfortable for most women.
- After a sweep, some pink or bright red discharge and bleeding is common. Contractions are also common up to 24 hours after a sweep if performed. If there is some bleeding on the provider's glove after the visit, you will likely have some discharge or bleeding when you get home.
- Discuss whether this intervention is appropriate for you with your provider!

## HYDROTHERAPY IN LABOR

- Hydrotherapy is the use of water to provide comfort to women during labor or birth. Immersion in water is a non-pharmacologic pain intervention that provides women comfort and relaxation while supporting physiologic birth.
- Evidence supports that water used from 0-10cm dilation (the first stage of labor) does not decrease a woman's chance for a vaginal birth or increase her risk of vaginal tearing, but use of water may reduce use of an epidural. Evidence for use of water in the second stage of labor (10cm to pushing) is limited. The systematic review noted no increased adverse effects for baby or mother from laboring or giving birth in water ([Cluett, Burns, & Cuthbert, 2018](#)).
- Women should be given the opportunity to use hydrotherapy as permitted by the risk factors of their pregnancy, shared-decision making and unit policy ([ACNM, 2014](#)).

## LABOR POSITIONS

- During labor, consider moving through these positions to help with pain, coping and labor progress:
  - Squatting
  - Side lying (use a pillow between yours legs; add back or belly support as desired)
  - Standing, swaying or slow dancing
  - Leaning (onto a bed, a chair, or a partner)
  - Lunging
  - Hands and knees
- Other considerations:
  - Use a birthing ball (exercise ball) or a peanut ball.
  - Try walking up/down stairs in between position changes to help labor progress.
- [Read more about birth positions here.](#)
- [Review this slideshow on labor positions from the Mayo Clinic.](#)

## PACK YOUR HOSPITAL BAG!

- Most hospitals provide (and these are included in your hospital bill): infant diapers, wipes and a onesie or shirt; postpartum underwear, dermoplast, tucks pads and postpartum pads for the mama; pain medication; hospital socks; hospital gowns; lanolin nipple cream or similar; bobby pillow or pillows for nursing; towels.
- The minimum recommended items for your bag: toiletries (ponytail holders, deodorant, travel size shampoo/conditioner, mouthwash, floss); a heating pad; chapstick; a comfy couch blanket; preferred pillow; book to read; an outfit to wear in labor if you don't want to wear hospital gown; comfy sweats or PJs after birth.
- Other items to consider packing: slippers; 1-2 infant onesies; infant pacifier; phone charger; nursing bras; nipple ointment or balm; bathrobe; snacks; aromatherapy/diffuser; TENS unit; LED candle lights; car seat.

# THE 38 WEEK VISIT



## WHAT DO I NEED TO DO AFTER MY VISIT?

### LABORATORY TESTS

complete lab work: today asap before next visit

### SCHEDULE ULTRASOUNDS

growth scan

### MEDICATIONS

pick up RX at pharmacy obtain medication OTC

### GET VACCINATED

flu vaccine COVID vaccine Tdap vaccine (>27wks)

### REQUEST MEDICAL RECORDS

call medical records department at prior place of care  
go to medical records for assistance

### REFERRALS/CONSULTATIONS

genetic counselor social worker chiropractor  
maternal fetal medicine (MFM) nutritionist physical therapy  
lactation consultant mental health

### SCHEDULE YOUR NEXT APPOINTMENT IN...

1 2 3 4 days/week

## MY PREGNANCY GOALS

### DAILY

take a daily multivitamin  
take a daily folate supplement  
limit daily caffeine to <300mg/day  
eat a diet rich in fatty acids  
moderate exercise for 30min.  
stop smoking

### WEEKLY

get restful, adequate sleep  
aim for stress reduction  
aim for work-life balance  
150min/week cardio/strength  
training  
read books about pregnancy/birth

### MONTHLY

aim for healthy weight gain  
go to prenatal appointments  
connect with pregnant women  
monitor your mental health  
make a budget:  
[ramseysolutions.com](http://ramseysolutions.com)

### OTHER

visit dentist  
review/obtain vaccine record  
obtain recommended vaccines  
read books on pregnancy  
visit [findhelp.org](http://findhelp.org)

## CALL OR SEEK CARE FOR...

- A slow down, change or stop in your baby's movements
- Vaginal bleeding or leaking fluid from the vagina
- Severe abdominal pain
- Problems with your vision (flashing lights or spots)
- Persistent headache that does not resolve with Tylenol
- Severe pain just below the ribs, on the right side of your belly
- Nausea or vomiting and are unable to eat or drink
- Fever greater than 100.4F
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby

References: American College of Nurse-Midwives. (2014). Hydrotherapy during labor and birth. Position Statement. <http://www.midwife.org/acnm/files/cclibrary/files/filename/000000004048/hydrotherapy-during-labor-and-birth-april-2014.pdf>; Cluett, E., Burns, E., & Cuthbert, A. (2018). Immersion in water during labour and birth. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD000111.pub4>; Finucane, E., Murphy, D., Biesty, L., Gyte, G., Cotter, A., Ryan, E., Boulvain, M., & Devane, D. (2020). Membrane sweeping for induction of labor. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD000451.pub3>; Singata, M., Tranmer, J., & Gyte, G. (2013). Restricting oral fluid and food intake during labor. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD003930.pub3>

## MY CERVICAL EXAM

Score	Dilation	Cervix Position	Effacement (%)	Station (-3 to +3)	Cervical Consistency
0	Closed	Posterior	0-30%	-3	Firm
1	1-2 cm	Mid-position	40-50%	-2	Medium
2	3-4 cm	Anterior	60-70%	-1 to 0	Soft
3	5-6 cm	---	80%	+1 to +2	---

### MY BISHOP SCORE:

## RESOURCES FOR YOUR 38 WEEK VISIT

### Birth

- VIDEO: [Positions for birth](#)
- VIDEO: [What to expect in labor](#)
- VIDEO: [What to expect in birth](#)
- VIDEO: [The vaginal exam](#)
- VIDEO: [Caring for yourself and baby after birth](#)

### Breastfeeding

- [Firstdroplets.com](http://firstdroplets.com)
- [kellymom.com](http://kellymom.com)
- VIDEO: [Breastfeeding in the First Hour](#)

### Group Beta Strep

- [Group B Strep: Fast Facts \(CDC\)](#).
- [How GBS is Collected \(CDC\)](#).

### Eating in Labor

- [Cochrane Study \(2013\)](#).

### Induction

- [Position Statement on Induction \(ACNM\)](#)
- [FAQs on Labor Induction \(ACOG\)](#)
- [Induction of Labor \(ACNM\)](#)

### Labor Pain Management

- [Coping with Labor Pain \(ACNM\)](#)
- [Healthy Birth Practices \(Lamaze International\)](#)
- [Managing Pain in Labor \(American Family Physicians\)](#)
- [Medications for Pain Relief During Labor and Delivery \(ACOG\)](#)
- [Using Medication to Cope with Pain \(ACNM\)](#)
- [Using Water for Labor and Birth \(ACNM\)](#)
- VIDEO: ["Three R's of Labor" by Peggy Simkin](#)

### Membrane Sweep

- [What is a membrane sweep? \(Cleveland Clinic\)](#)

### Vaginal exam

- VIDEO: [The Vaginal Exam \(Global Health Media\)](#)

## BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POSTPARTUM, BREASTFEEDING & MEAL PREP

### For the postpartum period

- [The Fourth Trimester: A Postpartum Guide to Healing Your Body, Balancing Your Emotions, and Restoring Your Vitality](#) by Kimberly Ann Johnson

### For breastfeeding

- [Breastfeeding in Combat Boots](#) by Robin Roche-Paull
- [Ina May's Guide to Breastfeeding](#) by Ina May Gaskin
- [Making More Milk: The Breastfeeding Mother's Guide](#) by Diana West & Lisa Marasco
- [The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding](#) by Marianne Neifert

### For meal prep

- [From Freezer to Table: 75+ Simple, Whole Foods Recipes for Gathering, Cooking, and Sharing](#) by Polly Conner, Rachel Tiemeyer
- [From Freezer to Cooker: Delicious Whole-Foods Meals for the Slow Cooker, Pressure Cooker, and Instant Pot: a Cookbook](#) by Polly Conner, Rachel Tiemeyer

## OTHER RESOURCES

- [A Healthy Pregnancy](#) (in English and Spanish)
- Apps for Mental Health: [Calm](#), [CBT-I Coach](#), [Mindshift](#), [MoodTools](#), [Stop-Breathe-Think](#), [Nobu](#)
- [Are You and Your Baby Safe?](#)
- Birthing Classes (FREE!): [Tucson Medical Center \(YouTube\)](#); [Pampers](#)
- Breastfeeding Courses (FREE!): [Breastfeeding Housecalls](#); [Stanford's Newborn Nursery](#); [Milkology: Milk & Love \(course/free workbook!\)](#); [First Latch](#); [Medela](#); [Three Bird Nest](#).
- Breastfeeding Resources: [kellymom.com](#); [firstdroplets.com](#); [illi.org](#); [pumpspotting.com](#)
- [Essential Information for Mums to Be](#) (Mama Academy - in multiple languages)
- [Find a midwife](#): <https://www.midwife.org/find-a-midwife>
- [Having a Baby \(ACOG\)](#)
- [HEAR Her Concerns \(CDC\)](#).
- [Intimate Partner Abuse \(ACNM\)](#)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224, or live chat at [thehotline.org](http://thehotline.org)
- Postpartum Resources: [The 4th Trimester Project](#); [The Blue Dot Project](#); [Postpartum Support International](#); [Postpartum Education for Parents](#); [The Period of Purple Crying](#) (video)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or 1-800-487-4889
- [Teratogens in Pregnancy \(Fact sheets by MotherToBaby\)](#).
- [Weight Gain and Pregnancy \(ACNM\)](#)
- [Vaccines and Pregnancy \(ACNM\)](#)