

## **Congratulations on your pregnancy!**

We look forward to working with you to make your pregnancy and birth a healthy and fulfilling experience. We encourage your participation in all aspects of prenatal care, labor and delivery. Good communication is also very important. If at any time you have concerns or questions, feel free to discuss these with us. You might find it helpful to keep a list of questions to bring to your appointments, or call and talk to a nurse.

Please review the following information carefully. We are also providing the book *Your Pregnancy and Childbirth: Month to Month* from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists for you to use throughout your pregnancy. It contains comprehensive, practical information about pregnancy, childbirth, labor and delivery, breastfeeding, and the postpartum period. Please let us know if you have any questions!

### **Prenatal visits**

Regular prenatal care is important. A complete history, physical and pelvic exam will be done after your pregnancy is confirmed. Early prenatal care helps us determine your due date, uterine size, weight and blood pressure accurately. Monthly visits are done until 28 weeks of pregnancy, every two weeks until 36 weeks and then weekly until delivery. At each prenatal visit, we will check your urine for sugar and protein, your weight, blood pressure, and uterine growth, and we will listen to the baby's heartbeat.

A variety of routine lab tests are standard for all pregnancies. Other tests may be ordered as indicated. Genetic screening is something you may or may not want to do, and we will discuss these options with you.

### **Due date**

Your due date is calculated from the first day of your last period. Pregnancy is generally 40 weeks, but can be between 38 and 42 weeks. If you are not sure of your last menstrual period date, an early ultrasound will provide a good due date.

### **Financial information**

Please provide all your insurance information to us so we can review your coverage. Your insurance company will be billed for the entire obstetrical package after you deliver. If your insurance changes during your pregnancy, be sure to let us know. If you do not have medical insurance, we are happy to make appropriate arrangements.

### **Childbirth education**

We enthusiastically urge expectant parents to attend childbirth preparation classes to learn about pregnancy, the birth process, the role of the support person, newborn care and parenting. If both parents are not able to attend, a trusted family member or friend can provide needed support.

- **Bellingham Technical College:** Register online, [btc.edu](http://btc.edu) or call (360) 752-7000.
- **Skagit Valley Hospital:** Register online, [skagitregionalhealth.org](http://skagitregionalhealth.org) or call (360) 814-2424.
- **Island Hospital:** Register online, [islandhospital.org](http://islandhospital.org) or call (360) 299-1309.

## When to call your doctor

Please call any time you are concerned about something you are experiencing. Not all symptoms indicate a problem for your pregnancy, but calling to discuss these concerns with us is important to ensure you and your baby are healthy. Other symptoms we need to know about include:

- Fever over 101°
- Pain or burning with urination
- Vaginal bleeding
- Cramping or contractions – more than 4 in an hour
- Constant abdominal pain
- Severe headache
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Significant decrease in baby's movement
- Rupture of membranes – clear watery discharge from the vagina

## Pre-Admission Hospital Registration

Complete within two months of your due date.

- **Childbirth Center at St. Joseph Medical Center**  
Register online: [peacehealth.org](http://peacehealth.org)  
More info: (360) 788-7724
- **Family Birth Center at Skagit Valley Hospital**  
Register online: [skagitregionalhealth.org](http://skagitregionalhealth.org)  
More info: (360) 814-5155
- **Birth Center at Island Hospital**  
A packet with pre-registration forms will be provided by your physician.  
More info: (360) 299-1331 or [islandhospital.org](http://islandhospital.org)

## Hospital stays

Most women who have a normal delivery and a healthy baby will be discharged from the hospital within 24 hours of delivery. If your baby is delivered by cesarean section, you will go home when your pain is well controlled and your bowels are functioning again, usually within 2-3 days. Hospital stays are extended when necessary.

## Car Seats

We recommend installing your car seat prior to your due date. Visit [safecar.gov](http://safecar.gov) for comprehensive car seat information. Free car seat checks are available in multiple locations.

- **Whatcom County:** Contact Erica Work at South Whatcom Fire Authority, (360) 220-2994 or [ework@whatcomes.org](mailto:ework@whatcomes.org). Information is also available online at [safekids.org](http://safekids.org).
- **Skagit County:** Safe Kids Northwest offers regularly-scheduled car seat checkup events at Whidbey General Hospital, Island Hospital, and Skagit Valley Hospital or by appointment. Learn more at [safekidsnorthwest.org](http://safekidsnorthwest.org) or email [safekidsnorthwest@gmail.com](mailto:safekidsnorthwest@gmail.com).

## Digital resources

Many of our patients find the following apps useful:

- My Pregnancy Today
- BabyBump Pregnancy Pro
- I'm Expecting
- Ovia Pregnancy
- Sprout Pregnancy
- The Bump