

Great Expectations

The big day is almost here, and so is the baby. Sometimes parenting seems scarier than actually giving birth. Here are some tips for the parents-to-be:

- Be patient with each other - you are all just learning.
- Love and support your baby's other parent - listen to them.
- Spend time talking about your hopes for the baby and parenting.
- Ask what you can do to help.
- Offer hugs, back rubs and help with the dishes.
- Talk with other parents about their roles.
- Watch other parents interact with their children.
- Don't take yourselves too seriously.
- Watch for more information in your post-delivery newsletter.
- Happy parenting!

Special Delivery News

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Practice Makes Perfect

The third trimester is the best time to start birth preparation by attending classes and practicing with your coach regularly. Decide on a birth plan early and discuss it with your coach and doctor.

Finally, enjoy these last three months. Pregnancy doesn't last forever, but great memories will.



Special Delivery News

*A newsletter for parents and parents-to-be from
The Family Care Birthing Center at Memorial*

Those Last Three Months!

The last few months of pregnancy, called the third trimester, can be physically and emotionally challenging. Many expectant parents find that the third trimester offers special joys and concerns.

The Good News.

During the seventh and eighth months, the pregnancy has become very real to all involved. Mom's figure has blossomed and the fetal movements have become more pronounced. In spite of the extra girth, you feel a real connection and amazement as the baby continues to grow.

In the third trimester, you will continue to meet with your healthcare provider regularly. By the end of the 37th week, your baby is considered full term. Your prenatal visits will include being examined for fetal position, cervical changes, as well as the normal assessments of weight, urine, blood pressure and fetal heart rate. Use these visits to ask questions about what to expect during this stage. This will help you prepare for these final weeks of pregnancy.

Special Deliveries Happen Every Day

It's more than just a slogan. You do have special options at The Family Care Birthing Center Memorial. Our birthing suites have been designed so that modern medical technology blends well with comfort, safety, and an attractive home-like environment. When you come here for delivery, you can expect the best!

For more than 50 years, Memorial's approach to maternity care has made us one of this area's leading maternity service providers. You, your baby and your family members are very important to us, and The Family Care Birthing Center is proud to be an integral part of over 1,500 births annually.

Use the time during your prenatal visits to discuss your preferences for birth with your healthcare provider. Be sure to stress the options that are important to you. Our physicians and nurses know that each person has individual needs, so don't hesitate to ask.

The Special Delivery Nurse will call during your third trimester to schedule a pre-admission appointment. She will ask questions about your pregnancy, personal and family medical history. You will have the chance to discuss birth options, make choices for the care of you and your baby and ask questions.

If you need to contact the Special Delivery Nurse, please leave a message at 618-257-6800, Extension 5853.



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A Happy Birth Day

Planning for the actual birth of your baby has been going on for weeks. During the third trimester, your doctor visits give you more opportunities to discuss your plans and ask questions. The doctor sees you more often to help pick up on changes that may affect you or the baby at delivery. You should also bring up your goals for your birth experience. You'll feel your best if you keep up the good work for getting proper food, rest, and exercise for this time of pregnancy. As you enter the last weeks of your pregnancy, try to finalize all the details that you can concerning your birth plan. If you have not heard from the Special Delivery Nurse for a pre-admission appointment to answer medical history questions and discuss your birth plan, leave a message at 618-257-6800, Extension 5853.

- Pre-register at the hospital. This process involves your billing and insurance information. You will need to bring a photo ID, current insurance card and you will be signing consents to treat you and the baby. This process takes place in the Admission & Testing Center in Medical Office Center – One on Memorial's campus. Use Entrance

A near the Emergency Room. Remember to:

- Plan for the care of other children, even if labor starts at 2 a.m.
- Have your supplies for labor ready and practice using them.
- Participate in the classes at The Family Care Birthing Center for expectant families – it's fun and everyone can learn something new!
- In the last month, pack a suitcase for the hospital. You will need a bra (nursing bra if you are breast feeding), clothes for sleeping and for discharge, personal grooming items, and an outfit for your baby's picture and for discharge. Don't forget the infant car seat!

Admission Through Discharge: We're Here For You!

Entering The Family Care Birthing Center's doors may mean you are entering a whole new phase in your life. Delivering a baby with family-centered care is just the start of it! Our labor and delivery nurses know that it is important for you to have a support system and what seems ordinary to them, may be an extraordinary day for you! Ask them if options like using a birthing ball, or warm shower for comfort, or a squat bar for pushing are right for you. Your designated support system may be present as long as you need them, unless there are medical indications.

Choose a labor support team (up to three people) who will be available and helpful to you. Most often, the labor coach is the baby's father or a relative or close friend who is interested and caring. Your labor coach should be someone who encourages you if labor is difficult, and celebrates with you on a job well done - your baby's birth!

Childbirth Education Classes help you learn to work together effectively in labor. Practice is important so that when real labor begins you will know just how to use them for your best comfort. To schedule or inquire about our classes, call 618-257-4826 or visit www.memhosp.com and click on The Family Care Birthing Center page.

The coach who keeps looking for little ways to add to your labor progress and comfort should be the most important person on your team! A few things a coach might do:

- Keep you focused on special breathing techniques.
- Assist you with positioning for comfort and labor progress.
- Massage hands, feet, back or areas that feel good to you.
- Encourage you with smiles and hugs.
- Suggest relaxation techniques and coach you through contractions.
- Make phone calls and take pictures.

Once your baby is here, our goal is not to separate you and your baby unless medically indicated. The nurses will assist you with bonding, feeding and baby care, as well as your own healthcare needs and recovery.

The Family Care Birthing Center at Memorial provides help with your needs for rest, nutrition, bonding time and information so that you will feel prepared to take your baby home. Memorial's nurses continue the caring touch with follow-up phone calls to answer your questions once you are home. Or, you can call in anytime 618-257-5855 to speak with a nurse about your concerns.

Real Labor and False Starts

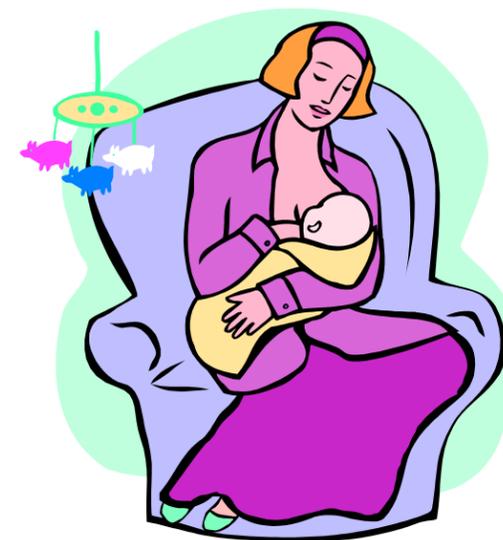
How to tell whether or not you are in real labor can be a concern for many parents-to-be. Many women notice uterine contractions early in the pregnancy. Others may keep waiting for signs of labor right up until the due date. Sometimes those early contractions of pregnancy, known as Braxton Hicks contractions, become so strong that a "false labor" episode occurs. The following tips may help identify whether or not true labor is starting:

- True labor contractions usually become stronger, more regular, and more frequent over a few hours.
- Regular contractions that are five minutes apart or less, lasting about a minute for at least an hour may be early labor. If you can no longer walk or talk through a contraction or focus on a diversion, you may want to go to the hospital.
- Activity, like walking, increases true labor contractions.
- Emptying your bladder, lying on your left side and drinking two glasses of water within an hour may diminish false labor contractions.
- True labor contractions may be felt in the low back, often wrapping around to the lower abdomen.
- False labor contractions are often irregular abdominal cramps.
- The bag of water may break with a "gush" of fluid or a trickle that causes a feeling of constant wetness in your panties. Put a

sanitary pad in your panties and walk around for a short time. If the pad continues to get wet, come to the hospital regardless of contractions.

- Sometimes mothers notice a heavier mucous vaginal discharge a few weeks or days before their due date. This could be the mucous plug releasing from the cervix. It may be blood-tinged after a vaginal exam at the doctor's office or if accompanied by regular contractions, which could be bloody too. You should never experience bright red bleeding (like your period). This is not normal, and you should come to the hospital.

If you are uncomfortable, call your doctor or come to the Family Care Birthing Center to be evaluated. Even if you are admitted, you must often wait for Mother Nature to see if the contractions progress to the real thing. Be patient! And don't worry if you have a false start or two as you get closer to your due date. Think of it as a chance to practice for the real "Birth Day."



Breastfeeding Support Services

Breastfeeding is considered the very best option for babies and mothers. Breastfeeding has many advantages:

- Antibodies from the mother can help fight off early disease or allergies in infants.
- Breast milk is a perfect food and is easily digested.
- Breast milk has a laxative effect to help your baby pass those first thick stools, known as meconium.
- Breast milk is produced at a perfect temperature and is convenient.
- No bottle preparation is necessary.
- Breastfeeding is less expensive than buying formula.
- Breastfeeding encourages mother-infant bonding.
- By breastfeeding, mom gets back in shape quicker by using 500 calories per day to produce milk.

What many expectant parents may not know is that The Family Care Birthing Center at Memorial offers assistance with breastfeeding through our Lactation Consultant Program. Besides getting off to a good start, the consultant can offer help if you experience any problems or have questions once you get home. Just call 618-257-5875 or 618-257-6067 and leave a message.

What's Going On? A Peek Inside!

The end of your pregnancy is near! By now, you may be tired of being pregnant and eager to meet your baby face to face. But your uterus is still a busy place. Fetal development continues during the third trimester. Your baby will open his or her eyes and by 33 weeks they can detect light. Sexual development continues and the pasty white protective coating to the skin has become thicker. Rapid weight gain starts by 36 weeks. You will definitely be aware of the baby stretching, moving, even hiccupping!

Jump Starts: Inducing Labor

Sometimes pregnancy goes past 40 weeks and that's okay. Sometimes, though, factors during the pregnancy make it necessary to deliver the baby before the mother goes into labor on her own. If she has diabetes with pregnancy, pregnancy-induced hypertension (high blood pressure), a very large baby, lives a long distance from the hospital (especially with a history of a previous rapid labor) or has significant cervical dilation prior to labor then pregnancy may be induced. If your bag of water has broken and you have not begun regular, effective contractions, the doctor may suggest stimulating your labor.

If induction of labor is indicated during the last few weeks of pregnancy, your doctor or health-care provider will discuss it with you during a prenatal visit. The method of induction would be determined by your cervical exam and health history. There are several methods used to ripen (soften and thin the cervix),

and others to help dilate your cervix. Contractions may be stimulated with medication. Pros and cons exist concerning induction and certain methods may affect your birth plan options. Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns about induction of labor.

Testing... 7, 8, 9

Fetal Fibronectin test

If you are at high risk or are experiencing symptoms of preterm labor before 36 weeks, the fetal fibronectin test can be used to rule out preterm labor.

Fetal fibronectin is a protein that acts as "glue" during pregnancy, attaching the amniotic fluid sac to the lining of the uterus. This is often present in the cervical secretions during early pregnancy.

If your healthcare provider is concerned about preterm labor, he or she may swab the cervical canal for the presence of fetal fibronectin. If the test is positive, they may take steps to address premature birth. Medications may be given to enhance the baby's lung maturity.

Group B Strep Culture

During the third trimester, you will screen for Group B Streptococcus (GBS) which is a common bacteria that is usually harmless in adults. However, babies who become infected with GBS can become seriously ill. Your healthcare provider will use a sterile swab in the vagina and rectal area to test for GBS. If you test positive for GBS, you will be given antibiotics during labor to protect your baby at delivery.

Cesarean Section

When a delivery must be a cesarean section, many special options



are available for a satisfying birth experience at The Family Care Birthing Center at Memorial. Family-centered care is provided for any type of delivery and your baby's birth day is very special. Our goal is for you to be with your baby and support persons as much as your medical condition allows. We want you to share in all of those special "firsts" - bonding, feeding, weighing and bathing.

When your healthcare provider schedules the date and time of your cesarean, they will also schedule a date for a visit with our Special Delivery Nurse. She will ask pertinent questions about your pregnancy, personal and family medical history.

An explanation of the surgery preparation, birth and recovery process will be given. Blood work may be done that day as well as a visit from the anesthesia department. You will also have the opportunity to make choices for you and your baby's care. Questions are always welcome. If you need to contact the Special Delivery Nurse, please leave a message at 618-257-6800, Extension 5853.

Exercises for Labor and Birth

Kegel Exercises - Tone pelvic floor muscles by starting and stopping the flow of urine. These muscles need help to prepare for delivery.

Tailor Sit - Sitting "tailor" or "Indian-style" several times a day will stretch your pelvis and thigh muscles, keep pelvic joints flexible and increase blood flow to the lower body.

Low Back Stretch and Pelvic Tilt - Get down on your hands and knees and round your back up towards the ceiling. Hold this position and then relax to flatten your back. Repeat each exercise several times, as long as it's comfortable.

Normal Discomforts

During the last two months, some discomforts may arise that usually are perfectly normal for this time of pregnancy.

- Most women experience some shortness of breath, while others find that pressure on the bladder from an enlarging uterus is a greater problem.
- Nature seems to slow some women down. Naps and resting during the day are a good idea. Lying down can alleviate the



swelling of feet and ankles that some women experience.

Another common theme during the third trimester is concern about life changes after the baby comes.

- Think about time management and planning how the "baby work" and household duties will be divided.
- With all the joys a new baby brings, there are also new roles of the family. It is normal to wonder about these changes, and even better to plan ahead for them.
- Plan to make time for yourselves - something new parents never seem to do enough of!
- Spend extra time together now and share those personal concerns.
- It helps to spend time alone with children in the family too, because they may have even more questions about the next few months.

Anesthesia Options

How do you spell relief? Many parents aren't sure what they might need when labor happens to them. Preparing for childbirth with popular techniques like those learned in Prepared Childbirth classes helps every mother cope with sensations of labor and birth. Often the different options you will learn are all that a mother needs to meet her goals for birth and comfort.

Some women need more pain relief than others. Medications and pain relievers (such as narcotics) may be helpful to relieve labor sensations. Epidurals are a form of regional anesthesia that may also be an option. Since any drug or anesthesia can have side effects, they should be used wisely and only when the benefits outweigh any risks.

Discuss the timing and route of administration with your doctor. Some good advice is to wait and see how you are feeling in labor before making up your mind about using medication or an epidural. You, your coach, the doctor and nurses should all work toward a safe and satisfying birth.

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• For more information about Childbirth Education classes, •
• visit the Family Care Birthing Center page at www.memhozp.com. •
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