

You and Your Healthcare Professional

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It is important to have a good working relationship with all your health care professionals during pregnancy. This article describes what subjects may be discussed and what they expect from you.

Be as open and honest as possible with all the members of your health care team—the more they know, the more they can help you.

Choosing a health care professional

At the beginning of your pregnancy you should establish a working relationship with a health care professional. Your chosen health care professional may be a gynaecologist (who also practices as an obstetrician), a primary care physician, a midwife, or a clinic sister. You may also have a doula—someone who, while not providing medical care, offers you emotional and physical support during pregnancy and delivery and who helps you with the child during the period immediately after birth.

The basics of working with a health care professional

No matter what type of health care professional provides your prenatal care, it really means caring for yourself. The professional can only give advice and monitor your self-care. Learning to work well with your health care provider is part of this care. Be as open and honest as possible with all the members of your health care team—the more they know, the more they can help you.

Many women like to see their health care professional soon after they first suspect they are pregnant. The health care professional will perform a blood test to confirm the pregnancy and ask questions about your last period to determine your due date.

The due date is seldom—only in 5% of births—the date on which a woman actually

delivers. Further, although we say that women are pregnant for 9 months, which is about 272 days, a normal pregnancy ranges anywhere from 254 to 294 days.

Your health care provider will ask you questions about past medical problems, about obstetrical problems, about your overall physical and emotional health, and about nutrition and exercise. The health care provider will try to determine if you are at high risk for a complicated pregnancy or delivery. If you are at high risk, and are seeing a midwife, the midwife will then recommend that a physician take over or participate in your care.

The more you tell your health care professional about yourself, the more able he or she will be to advise you about your pregnancy and guide you to a healthy delivery. Although you don't have to take the advice of your health care professional, you should let him or her know, at the beginning of your pregnancy, any preferences you have about aspects of your care, such as prenatal testing or alternative therapies. You should also discuss any objections you have to certain procedures. For descriptions of screening procedures, see Prenatal Testing.

Disclaimer: This content is shared for informational purposes only and not intended to be a substitute for professional/medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. We recommended that you always seek the advice of your healthcare professional for any questions you may have regarding a medical condition/specific situation.

References

1. <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/pregnancy/week-by-week/1st-trimester/week...>
2. <https://www.healthline.com/health/pregnancy/early-symptoms-timeline>

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