

You've probably already thought of a number of things you need to do to prepare for baby's arrival, but there may be some tasks you haven't considered. Of course, the most important thing you should do is see your doctor regularly and follow her recommendations for caring for yourself and your baby.

First trimester

- Take care of yourself and your baby:
 - If you're not already, start taking a prenatal vitamin that includes at least 600 mg of folic acid to help prevent birth defects.
 - Stop smoking and drinking.
 - Reduce the amount of caffeine you consume.
 - Eat well-balanced meals.
- If you already have a doctor, make an appointment to see her. **Note:** Find out at what hospitals your doctor delivers. You may wish to change doctors if she doesn't deliver at a hospital that is convenient for you or doesn't have a great reputation.
- If you don't have a doctor already or decide to change, ask family, friends and colleagues for references. (You may also wish to ask for references for a hospital.) Then check your insurance to make sure the doctor's office accepts your plan.
- Check your medical insurance to determine your coverage for pregnancy.
- If you don't have medical insurance, call your local hospital or Planned Parenthood office to discuss options for receiving medical care.
- In your first trimester, your doctor will likely want to see you during:
 - Month one
 - Month two
 - Month three
- If you don't already have one, get a good calendar, notebook or personal digit assistant (PDA). Use it to keep track of everything – questions for the doctor, weight gain, baby milestones (e.g., first kicks) and all your day-to-day activities.
- Prepare your purse or tote by keeping some crackers and healthy snacks on hand to ward off morning sickness. Keep some gum as well, in case the snacks don't help. Include some hand sanitizer too – and use it regularly.
- If you work:
 - Prepare your work space for your pregnancy:
 - If you sit at a desk, put something under your desk so you can discreetly prop your feet up to help avoid swelling.
 - Keep crackers and other healthy snacks on hand.
 - Keep a toothbrush or gum at work in case you do get sick at work.
 - Keep a little makeup handy to “freshen up” should you get sick at work – especially if you haven't told anyone yet that you're pregnant.
 - Make sure you have plenty of water handy.
 - Look into your company's family medical leave/maternity leave. See the U.S. Department of Labor's online information about the Family Medical Leave Act at <http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla/>.
- Have your spouse check into whether his company offers paternity leave.
- With your spouse, decide when to tell other people.
- Depending on how much weight you've gained, you may need to start shopping for maternity clothes.
- If you'll be putting your child in daycare, you may need to begin touring facilities already. For help asking the right questions regarding a daycare, the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care has produced A Parent's Guide to Choosing a Safe and Healthy Child Care which can be found at <http://nrckids.org/RESOURCES/ParentsGuide.pdf>.

Second trimester

- Continue seeing your doctor. If you're having a healthy pregnancy, the doctor will likely see you just once a month during:
 - Month four
 - Month five
 - Month six
- If you haven't already, you may want to start telling people your good news, especially your employer.
- Look into childbirth classes and begin to think about what type of delivery you want, as well as who you might want present. Discuss delivery options with your doctor.
- If you haven't already secured a daycare, babysitter or nanny, now's the time to finalize your plans.
- Register for baby gifts. Help guide family, friends and colleagues to things you need by signing up at stores with a baby gift registry.
- Start preparing the nursery.

Third trimester

- Continue seeing your doctor. Your doctor may ask you to come in:
 - Once during month seven
 - Every two weeks in month eight
 - Every week in month nine
- If you haven't already, enroll in and attend a childbirth class.
- Prepare a birth plan, if you plan to use one.
- Decide what kind of delivery and medication you'd like to have.
- Decide if you'll want a doula or labor coach and start interviewing early this trimester.
- Choose a name for baby; there are plenty of resources to help you pick one.
- Study up on circumcision and decide with your spouse what you'd want if you do have a boy.
- Decide how you'll feed baby – bottle, breast or a combination of both. If you plan to bottle feed, you may wish to choose a formula before baby arrives. If you plan to breastfeed, there are resources, such as La Leche League at <http://www.llusa.org>, which can help.
- Take a tour of the hospital at which you're planning to give birth and pre-register if you can.
- Prepare your bags, including a camera, for the hospital. You may even want to put them in your car.
- Install the baby's car seat and have it inspected, if possible. Many locations nationwide offer free inspections. To find a certified inspector near you, call 866-SEAT-CHECK (866-932-8243) or visit www.seatcheck.org.
- Wash and put away some of baby's clothes.
- Send out thank you notes for gifts already received as soon as you can. If you have picked out a birth announcement already, go ahead and address the envelopes so you'll have one less thing to do once baby is born.
- If you are religious, check with your church or temple to determine what ceremonies are recommended for your baby and what, if any, preparation classes you must take.
- Make arrangements for older kids and/or pets for when you're in the hospital.
- Consider cooking and freezing some dishes for when you bring baby home.
- Meet with pediatricians. Get references from family, friends and colleagues. During your meeting, ask about vaccines your baby should get during his first year, as well as any possible risks.
- If you plan to bottle feed, make sure you have some bottles sterilized and ready to go, along with whatever formula you've decided to use.
- If you work, keep a log of ongoing projects and update it daily with where things stand so your coworkers can pick up where you left off, if necessary.
- Compile a list of people for your spouse to contact once the baby is born and make sure he knows where it is. You might consider creating an e-mail group with the e-mail addresses of everyone to whom you'll want to send pictures.
- Get as much rest as possible before baby arrives.