

## PRENATAL CARE

Prenatal care consists of periodic visits to the doctor during the course of pregnancy. Information is collected and tests are performed during these visits so potential problems can be detected early.

Your first prenatal visit includes a history taken by the nurse. You will also have several lab tests done at this visit. These tests include a complete blood count to check for anemia, a blood type, rubella and hepatitis screen, an antibody screen, urine culture and a test for syphilis. Additional tests may also be done or offered.

Your second visit will be a complete physical examination including a pelvic exam. The pelvic exam determines the size of the uterus and the amount of room in the pelvis. Cultures will be taken to screen for gonorrhea and chlamydia. Other tests may also be done.

Routinely, you will be seen every 4 weeks until you are 26 weeks pregnant. Then every 2 weeks until you are 35 weeks, then weekly until you deliver. Forty weeks is considered a full term pregnancy.

Each time you come in for a routine visit, your visit will include the following things:

1. Blood Pressure
2. Weight
3. Urine check-we ask you to bring the first morning urine specimen with you to every visit. Try to refrigerate your specimen until your appointment. Your urine is checked for sugar and protein. These tests screen for diabetes, kidney function and infection.
4. Fetal Heart Tones.
5. Abdominal Exam. The height of the uterus is measured in centimeters and the baby's position will also be checked.

From 35 weeks until you deliver you will have a pelvic exam to detect changes in the cervix such as softening, thinning, and dilation.

During your visits it is important to ask your doctor or nurse any questions you have about your pregnancy, your general health, your examination or your tests. Write down your questions and bring your list to your appointment.

Your physician delivers at more than one hospital. Please be aware that on occasion we require our patients to go to a specific hospital, based on physician availability.