

What A Woman Should Know

About the Middle Months of Pregnancy

Changes To Your Body Are Only Temporary

He's Having Your Baby!

Does the father of your child seem to be suffering the same symptoms of pregnancy that you do? If so, he could have Couvade Syndrome. It is a real condition marked by nausea or "morning sickness," cravings and weight gain. Also called "sympathy pains," Couvade Syndrome is brought on by a man's concern with the labor and birth of the new baby. And although it can be distressing, it is usually considered a normal condition and no cause for alarm. In many cultures, it is thought that the man's sympathy pains help diminish the woman's pain in the childbirth. ☞

Already Delivered? In Your Dreams!

Have you been experiencing strange dreams lately? Many pregnant women report having vivid and even bizarre dreams, often about the birth of their baby. These dreams don't mean a thing. They are just a result of your apprehension about the childbirth experience. So say goodnight, and don't let the bedbugs bite. Here are some tips for getting a good rest:

- Take daily walks
- Keep evening meals light to avoid indigestion
- Use the breathing techniques you learn in childbirth class to ease your tensions
- Put a pillow under your belly and another between your knees (when lying on your side)

During pregnancy, your entire body undergoes dramatic changes. Fortunately, like your new shape, these changes are only temporary. Here are some symptoms you may be experiencing and what to do about them:

☞ **Stuffy nose** - Many pregnant women experience post nasal drip and a stuffy nose caused by swelling of the mucous membranes. Saline nose drops or a vaporizer can help ease the symptoms. Or, if necessary, your doctor can prescribe medication.

☞ **Complexion problems** - Skin problems are common during pregnancy, including oily skin and hair, dry areas and acne. Dark patches or splotches, called chloasma, or the "mask of pregnancy," can appear on the face due to changes in hormonal balance and exposure to the sun. They will fade after childbirth. Skin care products and protection from the sun can help keep your skin looking its best.

☞ **Stretch marks** - These zig-zagging dark lines on the abdomen, breasts and thighs can't be prevented, but skin lotion can help ease the itching and dryness that can occur as your skin stretches to accommodate your growing baby. Don't worry, stretch marks fade after delivery.

☞ **Varicose veins and swelling** - The increasing pressure of the baby can cause varicose veins in the legs, especially in women with an inherited tendency to get varicose veins. To help reduce the likelihood of varicose veins and keep down the swelling of legs, ankles and feet, try to avoid long periods of standing. Elastic support hose can also help ease the pain. And don't be shy about wearing a bigger shoe size. Comfort is important.

☞ **Heartburn** - One of the most common complaints of pregnancy, heartburn is an irritation of the esophagus and is best treated by taking an antacid, eating bland food, and propping yourself up in bed with extra pillows. Your doctor can recommend over-the-counter medications for your discomfort.

Did You Know?

Your child will never grow faster than he or she is growing during pregnancy.

In the first month of pregnancy, a baby's weight increases 10,000 times.

During the last month of pregnancy, the increase drops to just 0.3 times.

Still, if your baby continued to grow at that rate after delivery,

he or she would weigh 160 pounds in just one year! ☞

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Choose A Pediatrician Now

Now that you are well into your pregnancy, it is time to think about selecting a pediatrician for your baby. Your pediatrician will give the baby his or her first check-up and authorize the baby's discharge from the hospital. Therefore, it is important that you select one well before delivery day.

Ask your friends and relatives for recommendations, but make sure the doctors you consider are included in your insurance health plan. Make sure the doctor's office is convenient to your home or work, too, with plenty of accessible parking. Also, find out whether the office has weekend or evening hours and ask how the office handles after-hours calls. For many parents, the best way to find out is to visit the offices under consideration. Some even interview the pediatricians and talk with the staff before making a final decision. ✂

Checklist for the Middle Months of Pregnancy:

- If you are delivering at a Methodist Maternity Center, fill out and return your "Silver Stork" pre-registration packet and mail it to the hospital. You will find this packet in the maternity information you received from your obstetrician. If you are delivering at another hospital, call their business office for pre-registration information.
- Register for Maternity Classes by calling Methodist Le Bonheur Prenatal Education at 516-6645.
- Find a pediatrician.
- Check on maternity/family leave with your employer.
- Check with your health insurance company to find out about maternity coverage for mom and pediatric coverage for the new baby.
- Shop for an infant car seat. Be sure that it is easy to use and fits in the **back seat** of your car. Read the directions and practice securing it in the car. ✂

Classes Help Make Birth Day Easier

Childbirth classes can help you prepare for the big day. You will learn about labor – what to expect and how to react – and you will worry less, build confidence and even make new friends!

Methodist's maternity educators provide classes, books, newsletters, and other information that will prepare you for childbirth and those first precious days with your baby. It's our way of welcoming new life into your family and your best way to get the most from the childbirth experience. Learn about nutrition and fitness during pregnancy, handling labor pain, including your older children in the birth experience, breastfeeding, choosing a pediatrician and more. Our childbirth educators work with you, your family, birth companions, physicians and nurses to help you every step of the way. ✂



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