

Mom & Baby

Expectant mom's healthy ways benefit Baby

BY JENNIFER PLANTIER
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The pregnancy test has spoken and emotions have seesawed between excitement and anxiety. Now is the time for expectant moms — and dads — to learn all they can about the basic elements of a healthy pregnancy.

Even if you have already adopted a fairly healthy lifestyle, pregnant women need to pay more attention to their diet, activities and other elements of their daily routine that could affect the health of their baby.

The knowledge gained from books, magazines and well-meaning friends on the subject is surely invaluable. Most importantly, you'll need to find a good doctor (OB-GYN or a family practitioner) to provide your prenatal care. The baby's critical formation stage ends around the 10th week, so see your doctor as soon as you suspect you might be pregnant — or even before if you intend to try and become pregnant.

At the first visit you will be asked to provide a detailed medical history of both parents. The doctor will perform both internal and external physical exams, order additional lab tests and determine the baby's official due date based on the first day of the last menstrual period. Your weight will be recorded so the physician can keep track of weight gain as the pregnancy progresses. Many doctors will also prescribe prenatal vitamins to boost nutrition.

Normally, prenatal visits begin at once a month until the last trimester, then they will increase to every two weeks and then weekly during the last month.

It's important to choose a doctor you feel comfortable with,

See MOM & BABY, A15



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Prenatal care for many mothers-to-be includes ultrasound monitoring of the fetus.

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