

OBSTETRIC VISIT 24 TO 28 WEEKS

HOW IS MY BABY DEVELOPING?

- 24 weeks – the baby weighs 630 grams (1.4 pounds), the skin is red and wrinkled and fat is starting to fill out the skin, the head is large compared to the body and eyebrows and lashes are seen. The lung development including the bronchi and bronchioles start to develop and some surfactant, a chemical that helps the lungs to inflate is made. At this time a fetus is considered viable and if a baby is born preterm at 24 weeks or older some can live and every effort is made to save the baby.
- 26 weeks – the baby weighs 820 grams (1.8 pounds) and the length is about 23 centimeters. The feet measure 5 cm in size. The baby's body is lean. Fingernails are fully formed. Eyes are fused.
- 28 weeks – the baby weighs 1000 to 1100 grams (2.2 to 2.4 pounds) and the length is about 25 centimeters. The feet are 5.5 centimeters in size. Eyes are partially opened. The skin is red and covered with a protective layer of white cheesy vernix. If a baby is born at this time it has more than 90% chance of survival.

WHAT TESTS NEED TO BE DONE?

- The 1 – Hour Glucose Screen should be done from 24-28 weeks
 - You do not need to be fasting for this test
 - This test tells if you are high risk or low risk for diabetes in pregnancy
 - The test consists of drinking a drink high in sugar and then your blood sugar is checked after 1 hour
 - Tests that have results of blood sugar greater than 140 are high risk for diabetes of pregnancy and require a 3 hour glucose screen to tell for sure if you have diabetes of pregnancy

COMMON PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

- Stretch Marks
 - Stretch marks are common changes in pregnant women
 - They are caused by decreased elastic fibers in the skin due to hormonal changes and some people have a genetic predisposition
 - A large weight gain during pregnancy is a risk factor
 - There is no proven way to prevent stretch marks however limiting weight gain to a healthy amount may decrease the number that are formed
 - Vitamin E oil on the skin can help them to itch less
 - Stretch marks will fade over 6 months to 2 years after pregnancy
- Round ligament pain
 - These are usually sharp pains that occur on both sides of the lower abdomen.
 - They can be relieved by taking Tylenol extra strength 2 pills (1000 mg) every 6 hours by mouth as needed.
 - As the baby grows your uterus is supported by ligaments at the top of the uterus that stretch down across the lower part of your abdomen and down into the labia. Stretching on this ligament causes round ligament pain.
- Constipation
 - Occurs because increased progesterone in pregnancy slows down the bowels
 - Can be initially treated with increase in exercise, fiber, and water intake
 - If these don't work use Miralax over the counter one dose daily

- Leg Cramps
 - Are painful muscle contractions in the calves usually occurring at night
 - Stretching exercises may be an effective preventive measure. Stand facing the wall, feet together, about 24 inches from the wall. With the heels firmly on the floor and the body aligned straight at the hips and knees, lean forward to the wall, stretching the back of the calf. Hold this position for 20 seconds. Repeat five times per session, at least two sessions daily.
 - Also, try a hot bath or shower, more hydration, and exercise to condition the leg
 - If this does not work supplementation with Magnesium may help
- Heartburn
 - Tends to worsen with pregnancy as the baby gets larger and pushes up on the mothers stomach
 - You can use TUMS and Maalox along with lifestyle changes below to help. If TUMS and Maalox do not control your symptoms then a prescription acid reduction medicine is needed.
 - Lifestyle changes include:
 - Raise the head of your bed by 6 to 8 inches by putting the bed on wood blocks or putting a Styrofoam wedge under the mattress
 - Stop smoking, if you smoke
 - Eat many small meals instead of 2-3 large meals per day
 - Avoid lying down for a full 3 hours after each meal
 - First avoid foods that are associated with more stomach acid. These include:
 - Coffee
 - Chocolate
 - Peppermint
 - Spicy and greasy foods
- Vaginal Bleeding
 - Some light spotting after a cervical exam or intercourse may be normal
 - All other vaginal bleeding should be evaluated as this can be a sign of preterm labor
- Contractions
 - Regular contractions at this time are not normal and should be evaluated by going to the hospital or office immediately
- Water breaking
 - Water breaking is not normal and is a risk for infection around the baby
 - If you are suspicious that your water is broken you should call the office or go to the hospital immediately if the office is closed.