

Congratulations on your pregnancy!

Thank you for choosing us to care for you during this exciting time. Below you will find answers to some of the questions patients frequently ask. We will gladly provide more detailed information on any of these topics and are always happy to discuss any other topic that concerns or interests you. We understand that no single handout will meet the needs of every pregnant woman.

Our Practice:

- Currently, our office is staffed by three physicians: Dr. Sari Kasper, Dr. Janette Walker and Dr. Shannon Sullivan-Cramer.
- In addition to our physicians we have two nurse practitioners dedicated to women's health issues – Heather West and Kathy Koger.
- Our doctors rotate weekend emergency care and deliveries with Drs. Mehrnoosh Almassi, Rosemary Delgado, Christine Riley and Anahat Sandhu.

Important Phone Numbers:

- Office and after-hours calls: 925-945-6600
- During regular business hours, you may call the office and leave a message for one of the nurse practitioners or doctors to call you back. We usually return calls within a couple of hours or at least within the business day.
- If you need to talk to one of the doctors after-hours or on the weekend, call the regular office number and the answering service will have the doctor return your call.
- Labor & Delivery at John Muir Medical Center: 925-947-5330. Please call this number only if you are unable to reach the physician on-call. If you have a true emergency, please call 911.
- Diablo Valley Perinatal Associates: 925-891-9033. Physicians include: Dr. Jeffrey Traynor, Dr. Rosa Won and Dr. Brian Kellert. We encourage you to visit their website (www.diablovalleyperinatal.com) where you will find helpful information including registration forms. Please call promptly to schedule genetic counseling and/or any screening or diagnostic tests that your provider has ordered. All patients should schedule a 20-week ultrasound.

Important Symptoms

- Many women experience various discomforts and physical changes during pregnancy. We are happy to answer your questions and suggest comfort measures and remedies. Please call us promptly, however, if you experience any of the following symptoms:
 - ✓ Bleeding or leaking fluid from the vagina
 - ✓ Severe abdominal pain or cramping
 - ✓ Pain, burning, or difficulty urinating
 - ✓ Fever of 100.4 degrees or greater
 - ✓ Vomiting and inability to keep liquids in your stomach
 - ✓ A noticeable decrease in the baby's movement once it has begun to move regularly, typically after 28 weeks.
 - ✓ More than 4-5 contractions per hour or frequent tightening of the uterus before 37 weeks
 - ✓ Severe or constant headaches
 - ✓ Blurred vision, spots, or flashing lights in front of your eyes
 - ✓ A sudden weight gain of a pound or more per day or significant fluid retention, especially in the face.

Covid-19:

The novel Coronavirus COVID-19 has become a great topic of concern in pregnancy. New information and studies are being published every month. The most important thing is to talk to your provider about your concerns, exposure risk and use of personal protective equipment. Most pregnant women who contract COVID-19 will have minimal symptoms and no lasting effects, however we are aware that certain cases can be severe. Personal and pregnancy related comorbidities will be discussed on an individualized basis.

Routine Visits & Tests:

- Generally, office visits are scheduled monthly until about 28 weeks, every two weeks until about 36 weeks, and every week thereafter until you deliver. This is a very general schedule and some women may need to be seen more frequently. On your first visit, we will check your blood count, blood type, Rh-factor, immunity to rubella, hepatitis B, and syphilis status, HIV testing, Chlamydia and Gonorrhea testing. We offer genetic carrier screening. We will perform a pap test if you are due for one.
- If you have a personal or family history of diabetes or thyroid disease, we may perform related tests.
- There are multiple screening tests and diagnostic tests available to detect abnormal pregnancies.
- All women are offered the FirstScreen, which helps detect Down Syndrome and Trisomy 18; this includes an ultrasound and blood test performed between 11 and 14 weeks. Alternately, the AFP test (triple screen) is still available through the state of California; this is a blood test done between 15 and 20 weeks.
- If you have a family history of genetic abnormalities or will be 35 or older at the time of delivery, we recommend that you schedule an appointment with a genetic counselor.
- John Muir Perinatal Group offers chorionic villus sampling between approximately 10-13 weeks or genetic amniocentesis between 15-18 weeks for appropriate patients.
- Between 26-28 weeks, we advise all patients to take a glucose tolerance test to screen for pregnancy-related diabetes. Please eat normally the day of the test. Upon arrival, the laboratory will provide you a sugary liquid to drink and one hour later your blood will be drawn to evaluate your blood sugar. Additionally, your blood count will be tested for anemia. If you are Rh-negative, we will also test your blood for antibodies.
- If you are Rh-negative and your antibody screen is negative, at 28 weeks you will receive an injection of Rhogam to keep you from potentially becoming sensitized to Rh positive blood from your baby.
- At about 34-36 weeks we will perform an ultrasound in the office to check your baby's position.
- At approximately 36 weeks we will perform a cotton swab test of your vagina to check for bacteria called beta strep. This organism is normally present in about 20% of women's vaginas and is not considered an infection. However, it can cause infection in the newborn. Therefore, patients who test positive are given IV antibiotics in labor. PLEASE TELL US IF YOU ARE ALLERGIC TO PENICILLIN and specifically, what reaction it causes.
- Throughout your prenatal care, you will meet with all of our physicians and nurse practitioners. We feel that this enhances the quality of care that you receive and allows you to get to know the physicians who might perform your delivery.
- Because of the unpredictable nature of obstetrics, at times we may require your patience and understanding. Physicians may become unavailable and appointments may need to be changed on short notice. We hope you understand that this also allows us to be available for you when you really need us.

Dental Care:

- We encourage regular dental checkups and cleaning during pregnancy.
- X-rays are allowed as long as your abdomen is shielded with a lead apron.
- Local anesthesia, such as Novocaine, is acceptable. We ask that your dentist use local anesthesia without Epinephrine.
- Procedures such as fillings, root canals, and tooth repairs can be performed during pregnancy.
- Many antibiotics such as Penicillin, Erythromycin, and Cephalosporins are safe to use during pregnancy. If your dentist has a question, he/she may call us.

General Medical Care:

- As obstetricians, we are skilled at managing your pregnancy and understanding how medical conditions such as diabetes, anemia, thyroid disease, and high blood pressure can affect your pregnancy. We also know how pregnancy can impact any ongoing medical problem you might have. To best care for your unborn baby, we may involve other medical specialists such as cardiologists, endocrinologists, and kidney specialists in your care.
- During your pregnancy, should you develop a medical problem that is unrelated to pregnancy, we ask that you make an appointment with your regular medical doctor's office for evaluation and treatment. Colds, ear infections, and sore throats are usually best managed by your primary physician.

Exercise:

- We encourage regular exercise of moderate intensity during pregnancy. Physically active women with uncomplicated pregnancies should be able to remain active throughout pregnancy. Women with certain medical conditions such as poorly controlled hypertension, lung problems, or heart disease may be advised not to exercise. Should you develop complications during your pregnancy such as preterm labor, bleeding, high blood pressure, or if your baby is not growing well, we may advise you to reduce your activity.
- Many activities are safe in pregnancy. Yoga, brisk walking (including hiking and backpacking), jogging, swimming, biking, and using fitness equipment such as elliptical machines, treadmill, or Nordic Track are fine. Pregnancy is not a time to take up a new sport that demands significant coordination.
- Walking is a great beginning exercise that you and your baby can continue after delivery.
- As your pregnancy progresses, you will need to adjust your exercise routine and pace to meet the changing needs of your body. Avoid prolonged periods of exercise on your back after your fourth month. You will notice your center of gravity changes as your pregnancy progresses. The weight you gain is not evenly distributed. In addition, pregnancy hormones loosen and soften the ligaments that support your joints. As a result of these changes, your balance becomes less stable and you are more prone to falls. Low impact activities are generally preferable in pregnancy.
- Use common sense to guide you. Stop exercising if you become short of breath, overheated, dizzy, dehydrated, or uncomfortable. Avoid exercise periods in extreme heat and humidity. Modify the pace of your activity according to your tolerance.
- Sports that can result in trauma to the mother or fetus should be avoided. Contact sports such as soccer, basketball, and hockey should be avoided. Activities that increase the risk of falling or abdominal trauma such as gymnastics, water or snow skiing, snowboarding, rock climbing, vigorous racquet sports, and horseback riding should be avoided. **DO NOT** scuba dive because of the potential danger from air bubbles that can form in the blood stream as you surface.

Sex & Sexual Intercourse:

- Most women can have sexual intercourse until shortly before the baby is born. You should feel free to enjoy sexual relations as long as you are comfortable. The baby is safe and well cushioned by the amniotic fluid within your uterus.
- If your pregnancy is complicated by premature labor, bleeding, or an abnormal location of your placenta, such as placenta previa, we may advise you to refrain from sexual activity.
- You should also avoid intercourse if you think that you are leaking amniotic fluid.

Childbirth Classes & Labor and Delivery Tours:

- John Muir Women's Health Center offers a comprehensive assortment of *classes on childbirth, newborn care, breastfeeding, and infant CPR. Please refer to the booklet you received at your first visit or their website for details: http://www.johnmuirhealth.com/index.php/womens_resources.html. Birth Center *tours can also be arranged through this contact.

*During Covid-19 restrictions classes and tours are offered online.

Travel During Pregnancy:

- Always wear your seatbelt and shoulder harness. Some women worry that the belt will hurt the baby if the car stops suddenly or there is a crash. Studies show that the baby almost always recovers quickly from seat belt pressure and that proper seat belt use reduces morbidity and mortality among pregnant women and their unborn infants. Correct use of the seat belt during pregnancy requires that the lap belt be placed across the upper thighs and under the abdomen, and that the shoulder belt be placed to the side of the uterus, between the breasts, and over the mid-portion of the clavicle. Risks to the mother and her baby who are not protected by seat belts during an accident are usually far more serious than those caused by a seatbelt.
- Generally, the best time to enjoy a special trip is during the middle months of pregnancy. Please tell us if you will travel out of the country so that we can let you know if we have any special recommendations.
- Usually, the quickest form of transportation to your destination is best. Air travel is fine, but some airlines restrict pregnant passengers after a certain month of pregnancy, typically 34 weeks. Check with the airline.
- We discourage motorcycle travel during pregnancy.
- During travel, stay well hydrated and allow for plenty of stops to use the restroom and to walk around. If you are on an airplane, get up and walk up and down the aisle for a bit if you can. You can flex your feet, stretch your calf muscles, rotate your ankles, and wiggle your toes while you are in your seat.
- It is safe to walk through metal detectors at security checkpoints.

General Nutrition Guidelines:

- We encourage a healthy diet during pregnancy. The typical weight gain for a woman who is of a normal BMI (18.5-25) is 25-35 pounds.
- If your BMI is outside this range (below 18.5 or above 25), you are encouraged to meet with a nutritionist in early pregnancy and discuss customized weight gain goals with your practitioner. Although strict dieting is not encouraged, you may significantly reduce risks in your pregnancy by limiting your weight gain through better food choices and increased exercise.
- During pregnancy, you need more iron, protein, and folic acid to meet your needs and those of your baby. A balanced diet and a high-quality vitamin/mineral supplement will help you meet those needs. The principles of a good diet in pregnancy are not much different from those of an everyday healthy diet. Plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- A woman who begins her pregnancy at a normal BMI only needs about 300 calories per day beyond her normal intake. This is the equivalent of:
 - A medium apple with 12 almonds and an ounce of cheddar or Monterey jack cheese
 - 3 large carrots with half a cup of hummus
 - A cup of homemade oatmeal with 1/3 cup Greek yogurt, 1/3 cup fresh blueberries, and 2 tbsp pumpkin seeds
 - A 4-oz fillet of baked or steamed salmon with 1 cup steamed broccoli and 1/2 cup basmati rice
- Use caffeine sparingly – one cup of coffee per day (about 200 mg of caffeine) is generally considered safe in pregnancy.
- Avoid all artificial sweeteners (e.g. NutraSweet, Splenda, Equal and aspartame) that are common in diet beverages.
- Try to take your prenatal vitamin every day. Sometimes it is better tolerated on a full stomach. If one brand of vitamin does not agree with you, please let us know so that we can suggest another.
- We are sometimes asked for suggestions about food choices that provide good nutrition but minimize extra calories. Here are a few recommendations:
 - Make sure that every meal and snack is balanced with a healthy carbohydrate (fruit, vegetable, legume, whole grain), a protein (legume, meat, fish, poultry, tofu, dairy, egg), and high-quality fat (animal product, nuts, seeds, avocado, egg). This will help keep your blood sugar levels and energy stable, which helps reduce fatigue.
 - Try to avoid processed foods and instead select foods that look like their original form – whole fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and (ideally organic) dairy, eggs, and animal products.

General Food Safety:

- Be sure to cook all meat and poultry above safe minimal internal temperatures (145°F for cuts of beef, pork, veal, and lamb, 160°F for ground meats, and 165°F for all poultry).
- Avoid raw and undercooked meat and fish.
- Avoid deli meats (cold cuts) or, if unable to avoid, cook until steaming to reduce risk of listeriosis.
- Avoid raw (unpasteurized) milk or dairy, which includes some soft cheeses such as queso fresco, feta, raw goat cheese, and some types of brie, blue, and camembert – check ingredients whenever you are uncertain.
- Avoid high-mercury fish like tuna, shark, and swordfish.
- Be sure to wash all fruits and vegetables before eating or preparing, and ensure that hands, knives, and cutting boards are always thoroughly washed after handling uncooked meats.

Miscellaneous Information:

- This may seem obvious, but:
 - NO smoking
 - NO drinking alcoholic beverages, there is NO safe amount in pregnancy
 - NO recreational drugs
- Please do not take any extra vitamins or herbal supplements without checking with us first.
- Avoid hot tubs and whirlpool baths. Indoor and outdoor swimming pools, warm tub baths and showers are safe.
- It is acceptable to color and perm your hair while you are pregnant.
- It is permissible to paint with latex paints while you are pregnant. Work in a well-ventilated room and leave the area if you do not feel well while you are working.

Disability Forms:

- Disability forms can be dropped off at our office 2-4 weeks prior to your due date or date of surgery.
- Please allow at least 2-3 business days for us to complete your forms.
- Before dropping off your forms, please fill in your
 - name
 - date of birth
 - first date of disability
 - last day worked
- For your convenience, our business office can mail or fax your forms to the appropriate agencies at your request. Otherwise they may be picked up at our front desk once they are completed.
- Our business office will be happy to answer any questions regarding your disability forms, please contact them at **925-494-9127** to schedule a mutually convenient time to discuss your needs.

Fees for Completion of Forms:

- There is a \$35 charge per form to complete forms such as disability or FMLA. However, we will complete **one** State Disability Form (EDD Form only) per patient at no charge.
- Lost Forms/Prescriptions: There is a \$15 processing fee for all lost forms and a \$10 fee for all lost prescriptions.

Fees for completion of forms and lost forms/prescriptions are due and payable in advance and cannot be billed to your insurance carrier.

Insurance:

If your insurance carrier or coverage changes during the term of your pregnancy, please notify our business office immediately: **925-494-9127**.