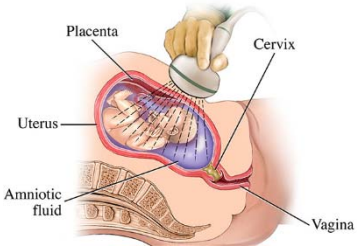
Southwest
CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S CARE

Prenatal Education Curriculum

13 - 20 Weeks



The Anatomy Ultrasound



The anatomy ultrasound is a detailed ultrasound done between 20 to 22 weeks. We take a close look at all of your baby's body parts. This is also the scan where you can discover the gender of your baby, if you so desire. Your sonographer will be taking multiple measurements, and estimating your baby's current weight to compare it to other babies of similar gestational age. Understand that we will need many views of your baby's heart and brain, so don't be alarmed if it seems like they are taking a long time to look at these structures.

If your baby measures especially small or large, we likely will follow up with another ultrasound to check to see how your baby's growth is progressing. The fetal weight is an estimate and some studies show that there can be up to a 15-20% margin of error, so don't worry too much if your baby is measuring slightly on the small or large size.

We will review your anatomy results at your next OB appointment, which may occur the same day.

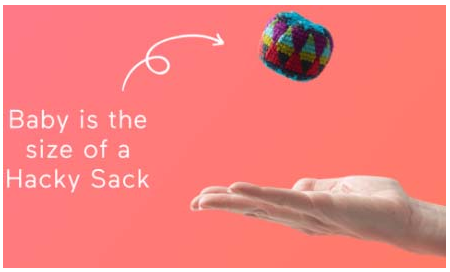
Your sonographer will send you a link via text to access some photos from your ultrasound. Your passphrase to access these images is your last name and 2 digit year of birth, with no capital letters and no spaces.

Your Baby

14 Weeks
Your baby is approximately 3.5 inches and weighs 2 ounces. That's about the size of a Bagel Bite or a navel orange. Your baby is developing fascial muscles and using them to form expressions.



16 Weeks
Your baby is approximately 4.6 inches and weighs 3.53 ounces. That's about the size of a Hacky Sack or an avocado. Your baby is developing taste buds and is starting to be able to hear.



20 Weeks - Official halfway point
Your baby is approximately 6.5 inches long and weighs 10.58 ounces. That's about the size of a troll doll or a banana. Your baby's brain is expanding! You may start feeling some baby flutters.

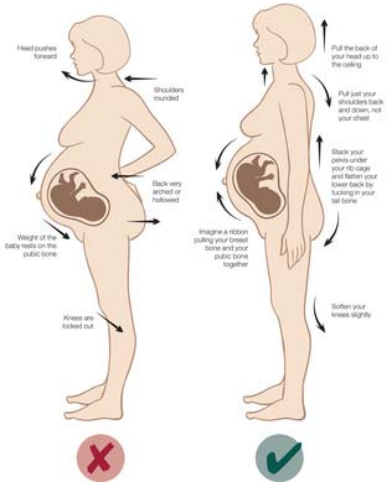


The Aches and Pains of Pregnancy

Your body undergoes a lot of changes to accommodate the growth of your tiny human. It is common to feel discomfort in various parts of your body, and it can be difficult to determine if the pain you are feeling is normal or something to be concerned about. If you are ever worried about what you are feeling, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

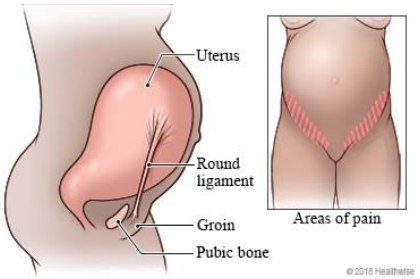
Back Pain

Back pain is one of the most common complaints of pregnancy, with up to 80% of pregnant women reporting this symptom. As your uterus expands, it stretches out your abdominal muscles and changes your posture, resulting in excess strain on your back. Back pain usually worsens as the pregnancy progresses and usually goes away after delivery, but can persist for several months after delivery in some women.



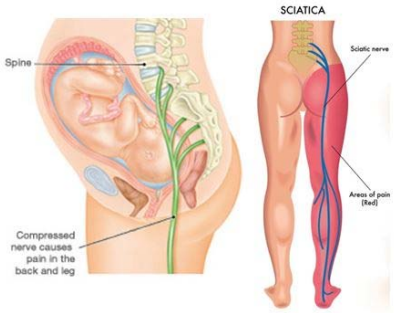
Round Ligament Pain

The round ligament is a thick rope-like structure that attaches the top of the uterus to the front of your pelvis. As your uterus grows, it stretches this ligament, leading to a sharp aching pain that extends from your groin to the sides of your belly and is worse with sudden movements and tends to get better when you lay or sit down.



Sciatica

The Sciatic nerve is a large nerve that begins in your lower back and travels through the buttocks and down the backside of your leg. During pregnancy weight gain, fluid retention, compression from the uterus, or even the baby's head can pinch this nerve leading to sharp shooting pains or tingling numbness that begins in your low back and radiates down one or both legs.



Management

There are several things that can help alleviate the various pains of pregnancy, including stretches such as cat/cow or pigeon pose, prenatal yoga, warm baths, using hot/cold packs, pregnancy support belts, taking Tylenol, and avoiding standing for prolonged periods of time. We have found that many patients have success with prenatal massage.



Cat/cow pose



Pigeon pose



Travel In Pregnancy

As long as there are no specific complications to your pregnancy, you are safe to fly up to 36 weeks if pregnant with one baby and up to 32 weeks if pregnant with multiples (i.e. twins, triplets, etc.). Make sure to check your airline's website as many companies require a letter from your provider saying that you are fit to fly after 28 weeks, which we will happily provide for you! If you are traveling by car, follow the same cut offs if traveling greater than 4 hrs.

Pregnancy in general increases the risk of you developing a blood clot in your legs or lungs. Here are tips to help avoid these risks:

- Move around whenever possible/allowed (at least every 2 hours)
- Drink lots of water (avoid caffeine)
- Do in-seat exercises to stretch your legs and move your muscles
- Wear compression socks

Traveling to high altitudes

Avoid traveling to places with altitudes greater than 8,000-12,000 feet when pregnant unless you are adapted to that altitude. The reason why we recommend you avoid this is because high altitudes can reduce the amount of oxygen that you, and theoretically the baby, get. The most common complications that can occur with travel to high altitude include preterm delivery and bleeding. Typically, this only becomes a problem if you exercise at these high altitudes, but to be on the safe side, try to avoid if possible.



Other Helpful Travel Tips

- Attempt to reserve an aisle seat for ease of getting up and moving around and more frequent bathroom trips
- Bring a pillow for long journeys
- Pack nutritious snacks and water
- Bring a pair of loose-fitting shoes in case your feet swell
- Make sure to wear your seatbelt **below** your bump. If you are in a car, consider buying a pregnancy seatbelt adaptor (pictured below) for safer travel.



- Travel with a copy of your insurance card, a paper listing your due date and OB provider, list of medications you are taking, and a note about any complications you have in your pregnancy (i.e. diabetes, high blood pressure, twins, etc.).

Skin Changes in Pregnancy

Everyone always talks about the "pregnancy glow" but never mentions the spots, dots, and other annoying skin changes that occur with pregnancy.

Acne

Half of women will unfortunately experience acne due to changes in hormones leading to increased skin oil production. To make matters worse, many of the remedies you use to treat blemishes are not safe to use in pregnancy. You will want to avoid any prescription strength medications, washes, and creams. Additionally, avoid products containing retinoids, as these have been linked to birth defects. Products containing salicylic acid can be used as long as they are 2% or less in strength and only applied one to two times daily. Check with your provider before use. The good news is that your acne should clear up significantly in the first few months postpartum.

Linea Nigra

Another mark you may notice on your belly is a dark line at midline that runs from your pubic bone up towards your ribs. This line is called the linea nigra and is a common mark due to increased estrogen levels. It does not cause an irritation to the skin and will fade in the weeks after delivery.



Melasma

Melasma, also known as the "mask of pregnancy," is the visible darkening of the skin during pregnancy that is especially prominent on your face. It is also due to changes in hormone levels, and should get better with delivery. However, it can take a while to improve. You can help prevent or reduce melasma by judicious use of sunscreen, especially on your face. If you are especially bothered by melasma, you may use hydroquinone containing products after you deliver.



Dry Skin

Ironically, while some women respond to their changes in hormones with excessive skin oil production, others respond with insufficient oil production leading to dry and flaky skin, especially during the first trimester. Additionally, your body is now diverting any excess body fluid that was once hydrating your skin towards your growing little one and its fluid filled home. While use of topical moisturizers will help, the best treatment for dry skin in pregnancy is drinking lots of water. Aiming for 8-12 glasses of water daily will do wonders for skin and also have the added benefit of preventing and alleviating morning sickness, constipation, swelling of the hands and feet, and heart burn. Its nature's magic elixir!



Stretch Marks

Stretch marks form when your expanding belly or rapid weight gain stretches your skin to the max, causing damage to the elastin and collagen proteins in your skin. As your skin heals it forms a scar that can be discolored leading to a stretch mark. This mark fades with time but leaves a white indentation in the skin that tends to be permanent. You minimize your chances of developing stretch marks with vigorous hydration, both with body butters and creams, and drinking lots of water. Whether or not you get stretch marks in your pregnancy is highly genetic, so unfortunately no amount of prevention or treatment will stop some women from developing them.



Varicose Veins

Varicose veins can be seen beneath the skin as dilated dark blue or purple spider like lines that appear mostly on the legs. They are due to the uterus preventing the veins in your legs from draining into your major vessels, causing blood to pool in the veins of your legs. Varicose veins can be asymptomatic or they can be itchy, painful, or cause leg cramps. The best way to avoid varicose veins is to use medical grade (very tight) compression socks that help improve the blood circulation in your legs. Additionally, making a conscious effort to elevate your legs while resting, will not only help prevent varicose veins but also help to alleviate symptoms caused by them.



Shortness of Breath in Pregnancy

Shortness of breath is a very common symptom occurring in 60-70% of women that can occur at any trimester of pregnancy, but is especially common in the third trimester. It is caused by several factors: rising hormone levels that change your breathing pattern; compression of the uterus on the diaphragm (a band of muscle that separates the heart and lungs from the belly and aids in breath movements); compression of the uterus on major blood vessels when you lay flat on your back; increased workload on your heart as your blood volume increases to support the pregnancy.

That being said, shortness of breath can be a symptom of serious medical issues such as a blood clot in the lung, heart disease, or exacerbation of chronic lung disease. If you find that the shortness of breath is so severe that you have trouble talking while at rest or accompanied by severe chest pain, call our office immediately or just go straight to OB triage at Banner Desert to be evaluated.

Pre-Registration @ Banner Desert Medical Center

It is important to pre-register at Banner Desert Medical Center. This will save you time on the actual day of delivery. Banner Desert offers this convenient service to make your baby's birth as smooth as possible.

To pre-register with Banner Desert call 480-412-3184.

Sleep in Pregnancy

Now that you are starting to sport a little baby bump, you may find that it is getting a bit more difficult to get comfortable while sleeping at night. Add in the anxieties of pregnancy and impending motherhood and it makes for a perfect recipe for insomnia. Here are some resources for how to get a little shut eye while gestating.

Sleep Hygiene



Sleeping Positions in Pregnancy

The best position for sleeping in pregnancy is on your left side. This position optimizes the amount of blood and nutrients that flow to the placenta and baby. Sleeping on your right side is also an acceptable option. If sleeping on your side is not especially comfortable for you, try placing a pillow between your legs and/or under your baby bump.

One position you want to avoid after 20 weeks is sleeping flat on your back. Your growing uterus puts pressure on the major blood vessels when lying recumbent. This can limit the blood flow to your heart and baby resulting in difficulty breathing, low blood pressure, and stress to your baby. However, if you wake up on your back, don't stress. Your body will naturally wake you up when it begins to feel stress from the interruption in blood flow. Just roll to your side and snooze away!

There are multiple pillows that are available to make sleeping on your side more comfortable. Here are some of our favorites.



Leachco Snoogle Original Maternity /Pregnancy Total Body Pillow, 60 inch





hiccapop Pregnancy Pillow Wedge for Belly Support

Safe medications for sleep aid

The most studied sleep aid medications that have been found to be safe for use in pregnancy, even for extended use, include medications containing doxylamine and diphenhydramine. Products that contain these agents include Benadryl, Unisom, and Zzzquil. Medications and substances that you want to avoid in pregnancy include Ambien (limited data in pregnancy), benzodiazepines such as Xanax and Valium (cross the placenta and have multiple harmful effects), and marijuana and CBD products (cross the placenta and have a negative impact on the baby's brain development).

There has been a lot of research in the use of melatonin in pregnancy recently. Currently there are not enough human studies to give a definitive stamp of approval for melatonin use in pregnancy. However, animal studies show that exposure to high levels of melatonin does not appear to have major negative effects on a developing fetus. As such, it most likely is safe in pregnant humans as well. Interestingly enough, there has been recent research suggesting melatonin may serve as an antioxidant and may help prevent neurologic damage in babies born preterm and potentially decrease the risk of pre-eclampsia and growth restriction. Hopefully these new studies will yield more information soon on these promising findings





The foundation of these educational materials has been created by Dr. Beienburg.