

Preparing for Birth

& LEAVING FOR YOUR BIRTHPLACE

As your due date/month approaches, feeling prepared can help you feel more confident, relaxed and comfortable. Remember, your due date is an estimated date and your baby could most likely arrive within two weeks of either side of that date. Being ready early on can put you at ease as you go through the last moments of your pregnancy.

FIRST TRIMESTER

- You're pregnant! Let this sink in ♡ (If you have had a previous loss, it's okay to take your time with this acknowledgement.)
- Share with family and friends when you are ready
- Connect with a healthcare provider and know your birthplace options
- Consider enlisting the services of these supports: pelvic floor therapist, chiropractor, acupuncturist, therapist)
- Questions to ask your provider at this point:
 - What prenatal visit schedule is recommended for my pregnancy?
 - Which prenatal vitamins do you suggest?
 - What tests or ultrasounds are available?
 - What over-the-counter medications are safe?
 - Which foods, supplements & medications should I avoid during pregnancy?
 - What are common, normal pregnancy symptoms?
 - What signs or symptoms should I contact you about?

SECOND TRIMESTER

- Find and attend classes for any of the following topics: childbirth, breastfeeding, newborn care, infant safety, etc.
- Start preparing your nursery, complete at your own pace (ideally by 35-36 weeks, though keep in mind that you do not use this as much when baby is still sleeping in your room for the first 6-12 months)
- Start working with a massage therapist (they typically will start working with you after the first trimester, until then you can work with a reiki practitioner)
- Research and consider hiring a doula if you haven't already (it is beneficial to have a doula going into your third trimester)
- Plan for your baby shower and/or plan a "blessingway" or [Bless the Mama](#) ceremony
- Consider having a prenatal lactation consultation with a lactation specialist; a lot of insurance companies cover this visit and it can be a great way to prepare and establish a relationship with someone you might need to call postpartum
- Questions to ask your provider at this point:
 - What are common, normal pregnancy symptoms?
 - What signs or symptoms should I contact you about?
 - Who might you recommend for a pelvic floor therapist?
 - Do you work closely with any doulas?
 - How often should I feel my baby moving?
 - What do I need to know about "go-time" so that I can store that info ahead of time? (ie. phone or pager numbers to call, directions)

Preparing for Birth

CONTINUED

THIRD TRIMESTER

28-34 WEEKS

- Start to keep tabs on what position baby tends to be in most, ie. "belly mapping." Optimal fetal positioning techniques and body balancing techniques can be especially helpful at this point as you help make the most room for baby to be head down and meet the path of least resistance (Great resource: Spinning Babies)
- Questions to ask your provider at this point:
 - What position is baby in?
 - Could I share my birth plan with you now?
 - What lactation support is available through your office or my birth place?
 - What are common, normal pregnancy symptoms?
 - What signs or symptoms should I contact you about?
 - When do I need to stop flying? When should I stop all traveling?

36 WEEKS -- 4 WEEKS BEFORE DUE DATE

- If you have the opportunity, take short naps
- Keep up with your stretches, yoga and optimal fetal positioning. Add in pelvic rocks/tilts if you haven't yet (2-3x/day for 15-20 min, can help prevent back labor)
- Listen to calm, relaxing music every day (consider making a playlist to bring to birthplace)
- Touch base with your doula after each of your appointments/provider visits
- Remember to stay hydrated (dehydration can cause pre-term labor)

37 WEEKS -- 3 WEEKS BEFORE DUE DATE

- Make sure your bags are packed (see What to Pack Checklist for details and ideas)
 - If you are having a home birth and even a birth center birth, you may want to prepare a "hospital bag," just in case you need to transfer and you want some important items with you for a few days
- Consider your route to your birthplace and prepare an alternative route just in case
- Install your car seat and have it checked by a car seat technician (most fire departments have certified car seat inspectors, call your local dept for guidance)
- Review any preparation for labor or birth education and know that you are ready

38 WEEKS -- 2 WEEKS BEFORE DUE DATE

- Have contraction timer app accessible on your phone (explore and get familiar with it)
- Consider any natural induction methods you may want to try if you are interested (consult with your provider and check out [Evidence Based Birth](#) for research)
- Use the remainder of your pregnancy to simply *rest*, my friend... you deserve it!

LEAVING FOR YOUR BIRTHPLACE (if you aren't giving birth at home)

- After you've labored at home, make sure all your bags and the car seat are in the car
- Put down a towel or pad on your seat (your water may break or you may be leaking)
- Remember to bring your insurance card, driver's licenses and wallets
- Continue to monitor and track things with your contraction timer (then relay to staff)