

Planning Ahead

Decisions to make during and after your pregnancy

Pregnancy is a time of planning ahead and looking to the future. This includes planning for the birth of your baby and becoming a parent. Even though delivery may seem far away, there are some things you can start thinking about and planning for.

❑ Prenatal care and clinic check-ups

You will want to get regular prenatal care and check-ups to see how you and your baby are doing. This is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and your baby. Please read the chapter “Your Prenatal Care” in this book.

❑ Childbirth classes

We encourage you to attend childbirth education classes. UW Medicine offers many different classes. They fill early, so be sure to register by the middle of your pregnancy.

We suggest you take the Childbirth Preparation class series in your last trimester and complete it by 36 weeks. We also offer classes on Breastfeeding, Newborn Care, Early Parenting, Baby Safe, and other topics.

For class information or to register:

- Visit www.uwmedicine.org/services/obstetrics/childbirth-classes.
- Or, call 206.789.0883.

Ask your healthcare provider for the Childbirth Education class schedule.



We offer classes to help you prepare for childbirth and care for your newborn.



At UW Medicine, we encourage mothers to breastfeed their babies.

❑ Labor & Delivery tours

Take a tour of Labor & Delivery in your 2nd trimester. Seeing the unit can help answer many of your and your family's questions. We offer daytime and evening tours. To learn more and to register, visit www.uwmedicine.org/services/obstetrics/tour.

❑ Feeding your baby

At UW Medicine, we encourage mothers to breastfeed their babies. We suggest you take some time during your pregnancy to think about how you will feed your baby. Your healthcare provider can answer your questions and support you in making your decision. After your baby is born, your healthcare provider will talk with you about feeding your baby.

Because our hospitals are all baby-friendly, our nurses have been trained to provide breastfeeding support as soon as your baby is born and throughout your hospital stay. UW Medicine also has a team of trained lactation-consultant nurses who can help breastfeeding mothers and babies who need extra support. These nurses can meet or speak with you on the phone during pregnancy, in the hospital after birth, and during your breastfeeding experience at home. Many pregnant women and their partners come to our breastfeeding classes.

Please read more about feeding in other chapters of this book and in the book *Caring for Yourself and Your New Baby*.

❑ Older children

You can do many things to help your children get ready for the new baby. It helps to include them in the pregnancy by talking to them about pregnancy and birth. A sibling preparation class may be helpful. Reading books together about what to expect can also help. Depending on the age of your children, they may want to join you when you take a tour of Labor & Delivery.

It is also important to have a plan for the care of your children while you are in labor and at the hospital. Make a back-up plan in case your first plan falls through.

Your children are welcome to visit you at the hospital and meet their new sister or brother. They must be with an adult when they come to visit you.

❑ **Getting a car seat for your baby**

Your baby needs to have a properly fitted car seat. Choosing a car seat is one of the most important decisions you will make as a new parent. Learn about which car seats are best for your vehicle.

We suggest you buy and install your car seat at least 2 weeks before your due date. To find out where to get your car seat checked for proper installation, call Washington State Safety Restraint Coalition at 800BUCKLUP (800.282.5587) or visit www.800bucklup.org.

Please also read the chapter “Car Seat Safety” in this book.



Your baby will need to be seen for well-baby checkups and immunizations during the first year.

❑ **Choosing a healthcare provider for your baby**

Your baby will need to be seen for well-baby checkups and immunizations at or before 2 weeks, and then at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, and 12 months. Your pediatric healthcare provider will let you know when your infant needs to be seen after 1 year of age.

It is helpful to find a healthcare provider for your baby before you give birth. Check which providers or clinics your insurance plan covers, and find out which ones are near you.

Other important questions to ask the provider are:

- What are the clinic hours?
- How does the clinic handle phone calls and questions?
- If your child had a serious illness, what hospital would your child go to?
- What is the provider’s viewpoint on feeding and newborn care?

You may also want to ask family and friends if they have a provider they recommend. Well-baby checkups are available at many UW Medicine locations. See the chapter “Helpful Phone Numbers” for a listing of UW Medicine clinics. Ask your healthcare provider for more information.

❑ Circumcision

Some UW Medicine providers do circumcisions as an outpatient procedure. We respect a family's choice about whether or not to have their newborn son circumcised. If you have a boy and you would like him to be circumcised, we prefer to see infants within 3 weeks of birth. Please see the chapter "Circumcisions at UW Medicine Clinics" in this book for more information about this procedure.



For your health, we suggest waiting at least 6 months between pregnancies.

❑ Planning for support in the days after the birth

The first weeks at home can be a challenge. You are recovering from the birth, tending to the needs of your new baby, adjusting to being new parents, and not getting enough sleep. This is the time to ask for help. See if family and friends can help out with chores such as shopping, cooking, and doing laundry.

Before labor begins, think about what you may need and who can help. Write it down to help you remember it later.

Many women have "baby blues" or more serious postpartum mood disorders after they give birth. Please see the chapter "Baby Blues and More" in this book for more information.

❑ Family planning for future children

Although family planning and birth control may not be on your mind right now, we urge you and your partner to talk about this during your pregnancy. For your health, we suggest waiting at least 6 months between pregnancies.

Your healthcare provider can answer any questions you may have as you think about your options after this birth. Your provider will want to know your plan when you have decided.

If you decide to use permanent birth control (such as having your tubes tied) let your provider know as soon as you make this decision. Read the chapter "Your Family Planning" in this book to learn more.

❑ Returning to work or school after the birth

Talk with your partner about your plans for after the birth. If you are going back to work or school, ask friends and family for suggestions on day care. It may be easier to make calls and visits to day care centers before the birth.

Questions?

Your questions are important. If you have questions about any of the topics in this chapter, talk with your healthcare provider.