

the
healthymama
PREGNANCY STARTER GUIDE

*Evidence-based answers to your most pressing pregnancy questions
from a doctor who has been in your shoes.*

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a note from dr. sarah

My mom was an OB/GYN. She passed when I was in high school, and I made it my life's mission to carry on her work.

After four years of IVF and a lucky pregnancy myself, I know exactly how overwhelming and isolating this journey can feel. I created healthymama because you deserve more than a rushed 10-minute appointment. This guide gives you the essentials I wish every patient had from day one.

You've got this. I've got you. — dr. sarah

01 / PRENATAL VITAMINS

What you actually need

Start folic acid 1–3 months before conceiving. The first 28 days after conception are the most critical window, often before you even have a positive test.

Situation	Recommendation
400 mcg folic acid/day	Standard for all pregnancies
4 mg/day	If prior pregnancy with neural tube defect
MTHFR mutation?	Most still convert enough so there is no proven benefit to switching to methylfolate
Other folate forms	Fine to include alongside 400 mcg folic acid

 **Dr. Sarah says:** The most important prenatal vitamin is the one you actually take. A basic drug store prenatal taken daily beats an expensive one sitting on your shelf.

02 / YOUR DUE DATE

How your EDD is calculated

Your due date starts with your last menstrual period (LMP) and may be confirmed or adjusted at your first ultrasound.



When does an ultrasound change your due date?

Gestational Age at Ultrasound	Measurement Used	Change Due Date If Difference >
Less than 9 weeks	CRL (Crown-Rump Length)	5 days
9 – 13 weeks 6 days	CRL	7 days
14 – 15 weeks 6 days	EFW (biometry)	7 days
16 – 21 weeks 6 days	EFW	10 days
22 – 27 weeks 6 days	EFW	14 days
28 weeks or later	EFW	21 days

CRL = Crown-Rump Length (fetal length, used before 14 weeks) · EFW = Estimated Fetal Weight (head, abdomen, femur measurements)

03 / NUTRITION

Eating for a healthy pregnancy

Eat More Of	Limit or Avoid
 Leafy greens for folate, iron, calcium	⊘ Raw/undercooked meat or fish because of Listeria, Salmonella risk
 Low-mercury fish for DHA, iodine (salmon, sardines)	⊘ High-mercury fish such as swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish
 Eggs (with yolk) for choline, protein, Vitamin D	⊘ Caffeine > 200 mg/day which is about about 1 cup brewed coffee
<input type="checkbox"/> Lentils & legumes for folate, fiber, iron	⊘ Unpasteurized dairy or juice: infection risk
<input type="checkbox"/> Berries & citrus for antioxidants, Vitamin C	⊘ Alcohol: no safe amount in pregnancy
 Dairy or fortified milk for calcium, Vitamin D	⊘ Highly processed/sugary foods — poor nutrient density

04 / SAFE OTC MEDICATIONS

What you can take during pregnancy

Always confirm with your own provider — this is standard ACOG guidance.

Symptom	Safe Option(s)	Notes
Pain / Fever	Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	Safe all trimesters. Avoid ibuprofen, Advil, Aleve.
Nausea	Vitamin B6 + Unisom (doxylamine)	FDA-approved combination. Start B6 alone; add Unisom at bedtime if needed.
Constipation	Colace, Metamucil, MiraLAX	Stool softeners safe. Avoid stimulant laxatives long-term.
Heartburn	Tums, Pepcid (famotidine)	Tums also adds calcium — a bonus during pregnancy!
Allergies / congestion	Claritin, Zyrtec, saline spray	Saline always safe. Avoid antihistamines in 1st trimester if possible.
Cold / Cough	Tylenol, Mucinex, Robitussin DM	Avoid Mucinex in 1st trimester if possible.
Yeast infection	Monistat, Gyne-Lotrimin (topical)	Topical only. Avoid oral fluconazole.
Hemorrhoids	Tucks pads, Preparation H (topical)	Topical treatments completely safe.

⊘ **Always avoid:** NSAIDs (ibuprofen/Advil/Aleve) especially in the 3rd trimester. Aspirin only if prescribed for preeclampsia prevention. Herbal supplements without your doctor's approval.

05 / EXERCISE

Safe workouts during pregnancy

ACOG recommends 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activity, unless your provider advises otherwise.

Safe to Do	Avoid
Walking, swimming, elliptical	Contact sports, horseback riding
Stationary bike	Lying flat on back after 20 weeks
Prenatal yoga / Pilates	Hot yoga / saunas: overheating risk
Light strength training	High-altitude exercise / scuba diving
Kegel exercises	Breath-holding (Valsalva maneuver)

06 / MANAGING NAUSEA

Morning sickness — what actually works

Affects up to 80% of pregnant women. Start with lifestyle changes, then escalate medication as needed.

Try these first (lifestyle):

- Small meals every 2–3 hours & never let yourself get too hungry
- Crackers before getting out of bed in the morning
- Ginger: tea, chews, or capsules 250 mg 3–4 times per day
- Cold or room-temperature meals because hot food produces stronger odors
- Sea-Bands acupressure wristbands

Medication ladder:

Step 1: Vitamin B6 10–25 mg three times per day

Step 2: Add Unisom (doxylamine) at bedtime

Step 3: Still struggling? Call your doctor.

 **Call your doctor if:** You can't keep fluids down for 24+ hours, have lost 5% or more of your body weight, or show signs of dehydration (dark urine, dizziness, dry mouth). This may be hyperemesis gravidarum.

07 / KEY SCREENING TESTS

What gets tested, and when

Pregnancy includes a series of scheduled tests. Here's your at-a-glance timeline:

Test	When	What It Screens For
NIPT / cfDNA blood test	10+ weeks	Down syndrome, trisomy 18 & 13, sex chromosomes. Recommended for all pregnancies.
First trimester bloodwork	8–12 weeks	Blood type, anemia, thyroid, STIs, immunity (rubella, varicella), carrier screening
Nuchal translucency ultrasound	11–14 weeks	Combined with bloodwork to screen for chromosomal conditions and some birth differences
Anatomy scan	18–22 weeks	Detailed fetal anatomy, placenta location, cervical length
Glucose challenge test (GCT)	24–28 weeks	Screens for gestational diabetes
TDaP vaccine	27–36 weeks	Protects newborn from whooping cough before they can be vaccinated
Group B Strep culture	35–37 weeks	Vaginal/rectal swab that determines antibiotic need in labor

 **Dr. Sarah says:** NIPT is a screening test, not a diagnosis. A 'high risk' result means more testing (like CVS or amniocentesis) is needed, not that something is definitively wrong. Call your doctor before spiraling on Google.

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healthymama coaching gives you a doctor in your corner —
trimester by trimester, question by question.

- ✓ Evidence-based guidance personalized to your pregnancy
- ✓ Live group Q&A calls — ask me anything
- ✓ Week-by-week resource library

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