

HEALTH TRACKS

A Newsletter From Local Public Health to Improve the Health of Families in NW Minnesota



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

THIRD TRIMESTER

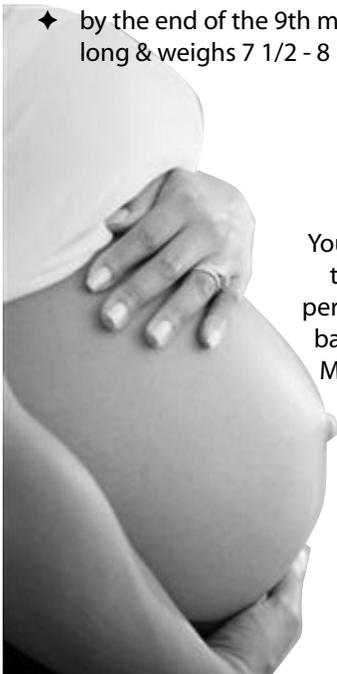


GREETINGS!

Welcome to your third trimester. This newsletter contains information about your last several weeks of pregnancy and preparing for your baby. It won't be long before you are holding your baby in your arms. After your child is born, you will receive more newsletters that provide information on parenting, your baby's growth and development, and when to take your baby for well-child exams and immunizations.

YOUR BABY'S GROWTH

- ◆ by the end of the 7th month, baby is about 16 inches long & weighs 3 1/2 pounds
- ◆ all the organs are developed
- ◆ baby's lungs can breathe
- ◆ baby has wrinkled skin & is covered with hair called "lanugo"
- ◆ baby's body has whitish protective covering called vernix
- ◆ by the end of the 9th month, baby is about 19 inches long & weighs 7 1/2 - 8 pounds



HEALTH TIP

You can pack a small suitcase to take to the hospital. Include personal items, baby clothes and baby blankets. Remember that Minnesota State Law requires all children less than 4 years old ride in an approved car seat.

PHYSICAL CHANGES IN YOUR BODY

Here are some changes that are occurring in your body:

- ◆ your breasts are still growing larger
- ◆ you may notice some "pre-milk" on your nipples
- ◆ your abdomen is growing larger
- ◆ breathing may become difficult because your lungs have less room to expand
- ◆ you will go to the bathroom more frequently when you are closer to your due date because your baby will get lower in your abdomen

Preterm Labor

Some women start having contractions that could lead to a baby being born too early. Pay attention if you have any of the following:

- cramps that feel like a period, may come & go
- abdominal cramps with or without diarrhea
- backache below the waist that stays or comes & goes
- pelvic pressure that feels like baby is pushing down on vagina
- 4 or more uterine contractions in 1 hour
- increase or change in vaginal discharge

If you have any of these signs:

1. Drink 2-3 glasses of water or juice
2. Lie down on your left side
3. Count how often you have contractions

If you have contractions every 10 minutes or less, have more than 4 contractions in 1 hour, or continue to have any of the other symptoms, call your health care provider, clinic, or emergency room at the hospital right away!

YOUR HEALTH CARE

In the 8th month of pregnancy, most women visit their health care provider every other week. In the 9th month, visits are every week.

Childbirth Classes

There are many things to learn about your pregnancy, labor & delivery. It's very helpful to take childbirth classes with someone who will be with you during labor in the hospital. Classes are offered at your hospital, college or public health agency.

Decisions

There are some decisions you should make before your baby is born:

- ◆ who will be your baby's health care provider?
- ◆ are you going to breast or bottle feed? (see information below)
- ◆ if you have a boy, will he be circumcised?
- ◆ have you discussed pain medication during labor & other labor plans with your health care provider?
- ◆ will you use cloth or disposable diapers?
- ◆ will you need daycare?
- ◆ do you need your Tdap vaccination? It is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that you receive a Tdap vaccination in the 3rd trimester during each pregnancy. It is also recommended that family members should also receive the Tdap vaccination if they have not received a booster in the last 10 years.

Labor & Delivery

How do you know when you are in labor? You may have one or more of the following:

- ◆ regular, progressive contractions at least every 5 minutes & last more than 45 seconds
- ◆ rupture of membranes or "bag of water" (should be clear in color. Tell your health care provider if it is any color)
- ◆ small amount of blood stained mucous on your underclothes
- ◆ very bad backache or unusual pain in your abdomen

Call your health care provider if any of these happen to you.

Postpartum

It takes at least 6 weeks to fully recover from having a baby. During that time you may notice:

- ◆ cramps when you breastfeed
- ◆ sore "bottom" if you delivered vaginally
- ◆ sore abdomen if you had a C-section
- ◆ full breasts
- ◆ you feel tired

Be sure and schedule your postpartum exam 4-6 weeks after your baby is born.

YOUR BABY'S HEALTH CARE

Your baby will need several checkups & immunizations (shots) during the first 2 years. The first shot for Hepatitis B (HBV) might be given in the hospital. Otherwise, it will be given before your baby is 2 1/2 months old. Your baby will need 3 of these shots in the first year.

YOUR BABY'S SAFETY

There are many things you can do to make your baby safe:

- ◆ have smoke alarms
- ◆ use a car seat
- ◆ turn hot water heater down to 120 degrees F
- ◆ do not smoke
- ◆ it's nice to know CPR

Crib Safety

- ✓ Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep.
- ✓ Use a firm mattress in a safety approved crib. Cover mattress with a fitted sheet.
- ✓ Do not use pillows, blankets, or crib bumpers anywhere in your baby's sleep area.
- ✓ No sheepskin, toys, or stuffed animals should be used in the crib.
- ✓ Crib slats should be no more than 2 3/8 inches apart. Be sure to have no missing or cracked slats.
- ✓ Never lay baby on a water bed.
- ✓ Baby should not sleep in an adult bed or on a couch alone, with you, or with anyone else.

I hope you found this letter to be useful. Please call me if you have any questions. Remember to call or write if you change your address or phone number so you can continue to receive these newsletters. In the meantime, take care of yourself.



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218-281-3385
www.co.polk.mn.us

Codi Jo Lehmann, RN, PHN
Email: codi.lehmann@co.polk.mn.us



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Polk County Public Health
PO Box 403
Crookston, MN 56716

Address Service Requested

TO:

Third Trimester