



Expecting a Baby?

Expect Some Changes

You are excited about the baby, but you didn't expect to feel so terrible. Food makes you nauseated, your clothes are getting tighter, which makes you feel fat, and you are unbelievably tired. Learning about the changes your body and mind may experience during pregnancy will help you adjust to the new you.

Body Changes

Your pregnancy will be unique. Your body will experience changes over each trimester. These changes may range from nausea and tiredness in the first three months, to

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difficulty in sleeping, having sex and controlling your bladder during the last three months.

Getting good prenatal care, taking classes and reading about pregnancy and parenting, as well as talking with your obstetrician, can alleviate worry over your body's normal changes and the impending birth. You'll want to pay particular attention to your diet. Be sure to exercise, rest and avoid alcohol and other drugs. Ask your physician's advice before taking over-the-counter medications.

Psychological Changes

How you feel about being pregnant will affect how much you are bothered by your body's changes. If you're not happy about the pregnancy, it's important to talk to your healthcare provider about your feelings.

If you feel well physically, there are many changes you can think about and plan for during your pregnancy. Will you breast feed? How will the baby change your lifestyle? Will you continue to work? If not, how will you work out the finances? If you plan to work, how much maternity leave will you get? Where can you find good child care?

It's also important to cement your couple relationship during this time. Talking about and sharing the joy of the baby will make you closer to your spouse. Take time to see movies, consider a vacation and pursue hobbies because it may be a long time before you have the luxury of being totally alone again. Having long, serious talks before the baby's born will help you get through those nights when you and your spouse are too tired to talk.

Words for Future Fathers

Your support and participation in the pregnancy and the impending birth is the greatest gift you can give.

At times, a pregnant woman will not feel like herself, in body or in spirit. She may feel the baby has more control over her body than she does. You can offer your support by understanding the changes she's going through.

When to Seek Help

If you as a mother are very sick throughout the pregnancy and find it hard to cope, consider counseling. Nine months is a long time to be sick and you'll need some new coping strategies.

If you and your mate are having trouble accepting the pregnancy, or if you're having unresolved problems in your couple relationship, then talking to a professional can help.

The mixed feelings you might have are natural and a confidential visit with a trained counselor can help you sort out your feelings.