



Maternity Health Guide

Having Your Baby with Virginia Mason Franciscan Health



Congratulations on Your Pregnancy!

Use this guide to help you prepare for your birth with Virginia Mason Franciscan Health. Let's get started with the basics:

My name: _____

My due date: _____

My partner's name and phone number: _____

My provider's name and phone number: _____

My baby's health care provider's name and phone number: _____

NOTES

Choosing a Provider

The type of provider you choose depends on many factors including: your age, health and preexisting conditions, as well as your hopes for labor and delivery. Once you determine the type of provider you want, you'll be able to choose the individual caregiver with whom you feel comfortable and confident.

OB/GYNS

OB/GYNs can help you through pregnancy, childbirth and gynecological services through the rest of your life. Women who have had complications with earlier pregnancies, are expecting multiples or have a preexisting medical condition. Many women with low-risk pregnancies also choose OB/GYNs for their prenatal, labor and delivery care..

MIDWIFERY SERVICES

Our highly trained team of certified nurse midwives (CNMs) provide exceptional care for both mother and baby, from prenatal care through delivery and gynecological services through the rest of your life. Midwives provide a more holistic and traditional

approach to childbirth, and are often trained in natural pain management techniques and birthing methods. At Virginia Mason Franciscan Health, we offer certified nurse midwives at several of our locations. Our midwives work in partnership with OB/GYNs and if specialty medical treatment or surgery is needed, you will receive care from a specialist. However, your midwife will continue to manage your care in collaboration with these specialists. Midwives can also care for women who desire to have a trial of labor after cesarean (TOLAC).

FAMILY MEDICINE

A Family Medicine doctor can provide care for your whole family, and some Family Medicine physicians also provide Obstetrical and Newborn care. Their knowledge of your family and health history allow them to provide Prenatal and Obstetrical care that is very personalized — along with the ability to care for baby after he or she is born.



Prenatal Do's and Don'ts

The first best thing you can do for your baby is to practice good prenatal care. This starts with regular prenatal appointments, but encompasses many choices you make throughout your pregnancy. Your caregiver will provide you with guidelines for a healthy pregnancy, but here's a start on what to do—and what not to do—when you're expecting.

✔ **DO take prenatal vitamins.** The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that all pregnant women take 600 micrograms of folic acid and 27 milligrams of iron daily. Eating folate and iron rich foods may be enough, but many women take a prenatal supplement to ensure they get enough. Prenatal supplements contain many other vitamins and minerals, so you should talk to your doctor about the right ones for you.

✘ **DON'T smoke cigarettes, use tobacco, drink alcohol or use drugs, including marijuana,** all of which can cause serious birth defects. Ask your partner to support you by following healthy practices, too.

✔ **DO maintain a healthy diet.** Incorporate plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Opt for lean sources of protein, including meat, poultry, beans, eggs, soy products, nuts and seeds, and low-fat dairy products when possible. You may also need to increase your calcium consumption.

✘ **DON'T lose sleep.** Try to sleep seven to nine hours every night.

✔ **DO exercise.** Most experts recommend maintaining your pre-pregnancy exercise level, preferably at least 30 minutes a day most days of the week. If you don't have an exercise routine, try gentle, nonweight-bearing exercise like swimming or riding a stationary



bike. Walking and modified yoga or Pilates are also safe and healthy options. Talk to your doctor about continuing any higher-impact pre-pregnancy activities.


✘ **DON'T neglect health problems.** Diabetes and high blood pressure can complicate a pregnancy, but your doctor can help you manage them.


✔ **DO talk to the women in your family** about their pregnancies. They are the best resources and may alert you to risks and potential problems, and suggest ways to deal with common pregnancy discomforts.


✘ **DON'T use hot tubs or saunas.** Studies have shown that exposure to high heat during the first trimester can cause birth defects, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians.


✔ **DO drink lots of water** to combat common problems like dehydration and constipation, and to help your body keep pace with increases in blood volume.

Continued ►

 **DON'T eat certain foods.** Some foods can add to your discomfort and may actually harm you and your baby. Caffeine can cause irritability, insomnia, nervousness and dehydration in the mother, and low birth weight in the baby. You may also want to steer clear of raw fish, fish high in mercury, undercooked meat and soft cheeses.

 **DON'T change the cat box.** Cat feces can contain a parasite that leads to toxoplasmosis, which can cause birth defects in unborn children. Toxoplasmosis may also be found in dirt contaminated by cat feces, so wear gloves when gardening.

 **DO watch your weight.** Women near their ideal weight should gain an average of 25 to 30 pounds during pregnancy. Underweight women may need to gain more, while overweight women may be advised to gain less. Pregnancy is not the time to diet. The American Academy of Family Physicians suggests gaining two to three pounds during the first 12 weeks, then one pound per week after that.

 **DON'T expose yourself to toxic substances,** such as cleaning solvents, lead and mercury, some insecticides and paint. Read labels on household products, which warn you if they are harmful to pregnant women.

And last but not least ... **DO make sure to attend your scheduled prenatal checkups and follow your prenatal care provider's advice.**

Pause and Reflect

What other questions or concerns do you have about being pregnant? Jot them down here for your next appointment.

High-Risk Pregnancy

The name might give you pause, but there's no need to worry. "High-risk" is simply the designation for pregnancies that carry an increased risk of complications due to a variety of circumstances, such as:

- Age of the mother
- Mother has a chronic medical condition
- Growth abnormalities in the baby
- Previous premature birth
- Multiple gestations (twins, triplets, etc.)



Our maternal-fetal medicine team of perinatologists are specially trained in high-risk pregnancy care. They collaborate with your provider if complications arise during your pregnancy.



Family Education Classes

We are truly committed to helping you and your family prepare for baby through a wide variety of prenatal and parenting classes. The more informed you are, the better prepared you'll be, and that increases your chances of having the birth and newborn experience you've always hoped for.

CHILDBIRTH PREPARATION

Prepare for labor and delivery. This class includes labor coping techniques, phases and stages of labor, cesarean birth, medication options, newborn care and more.

TOOLS TO BUILD A BETTER BIRTH

This class is taught by trained and experienced childbirth educators and doulas. This class offers hands-on practice of techniques, strategies and tools to increase comfort during labor and birth. You will find this class beneficial even if you are planning to use medications in labor. Class focus is on practical skills that everyone can use.

CHILDBIRTH PREPARATION ONLINE E-CLASS

Ideal for the busy 21st century parent, or women on bed rest, this class is well-suited for families with

limited flexibility to attend classes in-person. Content includes instructive videos, interactive activities and access to handouts.

ESPECIALLY YOURS

This is a personalized three-hour private childbirth education course for the expectant mother and her companion. Registered students personally select class content after arranging the date, time and location that best suits their schedule. A private tour of a Family Birth Center is an option.

WATERBIRTH BASICS

This free online class is required for patients interested in delivering in water. Before registering, interested participants should discuss their intention with their health care provider to determine if they are a good candidate. Please note that this class should be completed before 36 weeks of pregnancy.

For complete details and to register for classes, please visit our website at:
vmfh.org/familyeducation

Your Birth Plan

A birth plan is a simple, straightforward statement of your preferences and wishes for the childbirth experience. When the big day arrives and you're busy with bringing baby into the world, your intentions will already be set in writing for your caregivers and helpers, so you can focus on what matters: a healthy, successful birth.

These are some of the factors you will want to consider when preparing your birth plan:

HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS

Who will be the primary support person in the room?

Will any others be present (e.g., siblings, doula, parent, friend)?

What are your hopes when you envision your childbirth experience?

What are your concerns?

I would like to avoid or repeat these experiences from the past times I gave birth (if applicable):

During the first moments after my baby is born, my caregivers can best support me by:

I want my caregivers to know about what's important to me and what I might need: (Examples: family traditions, dietary preferences or restrictions, religious or spiritual needs)



PAIN RELIEF

Of the various comfort therapies available to help with my pain throughout labor, I plan to use (check any that apply):

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> music | <input type="radio"/> epidural |
| <input type="radio"/> position changes | <input type="radio"/> walking |
| <input type="radio"/> Jacuzzi | <input type="radio"/> shower |
| <input type="radio"/> heat and cold | <input type="radio"/> ice chips |
| <input type="radio"/> massage | <input type="radio"/> birth ball |
| <input type="radio"/> local anesthesia | <input type="radio"/> squatting |
| <input type="radio"/> narcotic analgesics | <input type="radio"/> other |
| <input type="radio"/> nitrous oxide | |
| <input type="radio"/> patterned breathing | |

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

I have these cesarean section preferences:

I wish to explore a vaginal birth after cesarean section (VBAC) option:

- Yes No

If there are any questions you are unprepared to answer, these are good points of conversation for your primary care provider.

“What to Bring” Checklist

It can be fun to pack in advance for your trip to the hospital for baby’s birth—just imagine the next time you open the bag, your little one will be on the way. You don’t need to bring much—but there are some essentials.

FOR YOU

- Health insurance card
- Preregistration forms
- Clothes to labor in—comfortable clothes that are easy to adjust or remove
- Pajamas and slippers—a button-up top if you plan to breastfeed
- Socks—some prefer no-slip socks for added safety
- Treats—breath mints, lollipops or hard candies can help with dry mouth and keep you feeling fresh during a long labor
- Toiletries—toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, lip balm, hairbrush, shampoo, soap, lotion, glasses or contacts, hair ties, barrettes or a headband
- Nursing bra and/or breast pads—a nursing bra will accommodate swollen breasts when your milk comes in, and breast pads absorb leaking milk
- Sports bra (can be useful for laboring in water or to suppress lactation if you choose not to nurse)
- Nursing pillow
- Sanitary pads—your birth center will provide these, but you may have a favorite brand. Choose pads designed for a heavier flow.
- Going-home clothes—choose comfortable clothing. You will still likely need maternity wear, but something that fit you at about six months will be appropriate



FOR BABY

- Infant car seat and infant head support—make sure you bring installation instructions
- Newborn-sized going-home outfit
- Hat, booties and mittens. Mittens keep baby from scratching his or her face if fingernails are long.
- Receiving blankets—for swaddling
- Newborn-sized diapers and baby wipes
- Burp cloths

Pause and Plan

The person who is standing by to transport me to the hospital when I go into labor is:

My other children will be cared for by _____ when I go to the hospital (if applicable).

My other children will be present for the birth:

Yes No

I have transportation arranged for the morning that I am discharged to go home:

Yes No

I have a car seat purchased and installed, ready to transport my baby home:

Yes No

If there is an unexpected outcome or emergency, these people should be contacted (include phone numbers):

I rely on this person for emotional and/or spiritual support (include phone number):

Choosing a Birth Center

Whether you choose to have your baby at a Virginia Mason Franciscan Health Family Birth Center, our Midwifery Birth Center at St. Joseph or at the Virginia Mason Franciscan Health Birth Center in Seattle, you'll have access to the high-quality care of one of the region's largest health care providers. This quality of care combined with personalized support has earned our Family Birth Centers a Designated Blue Distinction Center for Maternity from Premera Blue Cross and a Baby-Friendly Hospital designation from Baby-Friendly USA. As designated Baby-Friendly hospitals, St. Joseph Medical Center and St. Michael Medical Center are recognized for demonstrating optimal care and support for breastfeeding mothers and their babies.

We've evolved and expanded our birthing facilities and options to allow mothers and families to make the right choice for their childbirth experience. Wherever you choose to go, your experience will be designed around your needs and comforts, and baby's safe passage into the world.



Designated
BlueDistinction®
Center
Maternity Care



When You Need Specialized Care

Cesarean section. If a vaginal birth is not possible, our obstetricians may perform a **C-section**, a safe surgery for delivery. Your support person is usually present.

Vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC). Our skilled providers offer VBAC for women who have previously given birth by C-section. Ask your obstetrician or midwife about VBAC.

Special Care Nursery and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Babies born prematurely, critically ill or with special medical needs, will have access to our Special Care Nurseries and NICU. Our

special care nurseries accommodate newborns born as early as 34 weeks' gestation and are located at St. Francis Hospital, St. Anne Hospital, Virginia Mason Franciscan Health Birth Center in Seattle and St. Michael Medical Center-Silverdale. Our NICU at St. Joseph Medical Center cares for newborns as early as 25 weeks' gestation.

Affiliation with Seattle Children's Hospital.

Our Family Birth Centers work in collaboration with Seattle Children's neonatology experts who provide 24/7, round-the-clock care for premature and critically ill infants.

Welcome, Baby!

AFTER BABY IS BORN

Postpartum Care. You'll be well-cared for by specially trained nurses who will monitor you closely to make sure you're recovering and not experiencing complications.

Baby's First Exam! Your baby will be given an APGAR score—a quick test performed at one and five minutes after birth. The score determines how well the baby tolerated the birthing process, measuring breathing effort, heart rate, muscle tone, grimace response and skin color.

Vitamin K Injection. Newborns receive vitamin K injections to prevent the possibility of hemorrhage (particularly in the brain) just after delivery. This is a rare condition, but dangerous enough to warrant precaution.

Hepatitis B Vaccine, The hepatitis B vaccine is given to children as a series of three injections, with the first given to infants before leaving the hospital, the second between 1 and 2 months of age and the third at 6 months of age.

Other Tests. We'll check baby's hearing; screen for congenital heart defects; and look for developmental, genetic and metabolic disorders.

GOING HOME

Many people call the first three months of baby's life the "fourth trimester." This means both you and baby will need ongoing care and support.

Follow-up Care. After the baby is born, the next visit should be two or three days after bringing the baby home (for breastfed babies) or when the baby is 2-4 days old (for all babies discharged from a hospital before 2 days old). For experienced parents, some practitioners will delay the visit until baby is 1-2 weeks of age.

Postpartum Support. Whether you're a new or experienced mom, adding a new family member is a big adjustment. Add to that fluctuating hormones and an upset sleep schedule, and you might find yourself in need of support. Our Balance after Birth program is a drop-in support group, and is a welcoming, nonjudgmental space for new parents to talk about the emotional changes and challenges of parenthood. Come find support, friendship and fresh ideas for your parenting journey.

Breastfeeding Support

EXPERIENCED LACTATION CONSULTANTS

Breastfeeding is natural, but it doesn't always come naturally. Sometimes you and baby need a little help. Our nurses and educators—most of whom are International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants—provide experienced support with a compassionate touch.

While you're still in the hospital, our Lactation Consultants can help you and baby learn the ropes. Our inpatient services are available at:

- St. Joseph Medical Center in Tacoma
- St. Francis Hospital in Federal Way
- St. Michael Medical Center in Silverdale
- St. Anne Hospital in Burien
- Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle

Once you return home, we offer outpatient breastfeeding consultations at:

- St. Joseph Medical Pavilion in Tacoma
- St. Francis Medical Pavillion in Federal Way
- Franciscan Medical Pavilion – Highline in Burien
- St. Elizabeth Hospital in Enumclaw
- St. Michael Medical Center in Silverdale

Birth Center Locations

- ① **Burien:** St. Anne Hospital
- ② **Enumclaw:** St. Elizabeth Hospital
- ③ **Federal Way:** St. Francis Hospital
- ④ **Seattle:** Virginia Mason Medical Center
- ⑤ **Silverdale:** St. Michael Medical Center
- ⑥ **Tacoma:** St. Joseph Medical Center
- ⑦ **Tacoma:** Midwifery Birth Center at St. Joseph



Take a Virtual Tour

Take our [virtual tour](#) and discover the unique features of Virginia Mason Franciscan Health Birth Centers.