

Family Planning

What is family planning?

- Family planning means using birth control to space your pregnancies.
- It's best to wait at least 18 months after giving birth before getting pregnant again.
- There are many different methods of birth control (the pill, patch, shot, sponge, condom, etc.).
- You can choose the method that's best for you.

Why should I use family planning to space my pregnancies?

- It's better for your health.
- It's better for your baby's health.
- It's less stressful for you when pregnancies aren't too close together.

How can I afford family planning services?

- Family planning is covered by Medicaid.

Where can I get family planning services?

- Your doctor's office.
- Planned Parenthood.
- Your local health department.

More information is available online at:

- <http://www.fda.gov/womens/healthinformation/birthcontrol.html>

Prenatal Care

What is prenatal care?

- Prenatal care is the health care you receive from your doctor during pregnancy.

At prenatal care visits, your doctor will:

- Check to see that you are healthy.
- Find out how your baby is developing.
- Let you know what to expect during pregnancy and birth.
- Explain how to take good care of yourself and your baby.

Why should I get prenatal care?

- You and your baby will be as healthy as possible.
- You can get answers to your questions. Don't be afraid to ask!
- If a problem comes up, your doctor can take care of it right away.

Be sure to:

- Keep all prenatal care appointments.
- Follow all of your doctor's recommendations.
- Ask questions.

How often are prenatal care visits?

Weeks 1 – 28:	Every month
Weeks 29 – 35:	Every two weeks
Week 36 – delivery:	Every week

Prenatal Care (cont'd)

What are signs that something could be wrong?

- Persistent or severe headache
- Dizziness or fainting
- Double or blurred vision; seeing spots
- Sudden swelling of face, hands, or feet
- Sudden weight gain
- Vaginal bleeding
- Fever and/or chills
- Severe or constant vomiting
- Sudden gush or steady trickle of water from the vagina
- Steady abdominal pain – not relieved by a bowel movement
- Frequent and/or burning urination

What should I do if I have any of these signs?

- Call your doctor.
- If necessary, call 911.

Learn more online at:

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/prenatalcare.html

Labor and Delivery

Every woman's labor is different. It may be different each time you have a baby. Learning more about what to expect during labor and childbirth and speaking with your care provider can help you feel supported during delivery.

How will I know when I'm having my baby?

- Most babies are born between three weeks before or two weeks after your due date (the day your care provider said the baby would be born).

Signs that your baby is ready to be born (labor is starting):

- Muscles in your belly get tight then relax; this is called a contraction.
- Pain in your belly and lower back.
- Water breaking – rush of clear liquid.
- Contractions get closer together and stronger over time.
 - It is helpful to count the amount of time between contractions (start of one to the start of the next one).

Who should be with me when I'm having my baby?

- This is an important decision that you and your family need to decide to make sure you feel safe and listened to during childbirth.
- Hospitals may only allow three support people in the delivery room with you.

Labor and Delivery (cont'd)

What is labor?

Labor is the process that allows your baby to be born.

- There are three stages to labor, and each will feel different:
 - First Stage: contractions get more intense and closer together, your body is changing to prepare for delivery.
 - Second Stage: the “pushing phase” where the baby is delivered.
 - Third Stage: placenta (afterbirth) is delivered.

Will it hurt?

Labor feels different for everyone and your body may feel things it has never felt before. There are many ways for dealing with the pain in labor:

- Having someone you trust with you the whole time
- Slow, steady breathing
- Moving your body: walking or changing positions in bed
- Medication: talk to your care provider about what options are available for pain during labor

What else should I know?

Asking questions and speaking honestly with your care provider is the most important thing you can do to make sure you feel confident throughout labor and delivery of your baby.

What should I bring with me?

It is important to have your health insurance card. You and your family will likely stay overnight – bringing a variety of items for comfort is a good idea. A few items to be sure to have are:

- Change of clothes and toiletries for you and those who will be with you during labor (toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.)
- Infant car seat
- Infant clothing and diapers

What will happen when I arrive at the hospital/birth center?

- A care provider will speak with you about how you are feeling and how far apart your contractions have been.
- A doctor may check to see how your body is changing and how the baby is doing, which may involve a physical exam.

What is a C-section?

A C-section or Cesarean Birth is a surgery in which your baby is born through a cut that your doctor makes in your belly and uterus. For some women and babies that have medical conditions, a C-section may be the safest option.

- A C-section may be planned (also called scheduled), which means you and your medical care provide decide when the surgery will happen.
- A C-section may be required as an emergency procedure that occurs when there is a danger to you or your baby during labor.
 - Talk to your medical care provider about waiting until at least 39 weeks of pregnancy for a scheduled C-section.

Food

Does what I eat while I'm pregnant really matter?

Yes! Your baby needs nutrition to form a healthy brain and strong bones and muscles.

- Eat more healthy food: fruits, vegetables, grains, pasteurized dairy products, lean meats and beans.
- Eat less "junk" food: store-bought cookies, chips, candy, etc. Junk food is high in fat, salt and calories and it doesn't help your baby grow.
- Ask your doctor about foods you should avoid altogether.
- "Eating for two" doesn't mean pigging out. It means choosing nutritious foods for your baby.

How am I supposed to eat healthy food when it costs so much?

- One way to get healthy food is to sign up for WIC food coupons. WIC is short for "Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children."

To find your local WIC agency, call: 1-800-26-BIRTH.

What is WIC?

- A food program for families with low to middle incomes.
- Pregnant women, moms, babies, and children up to age five can get WIC food.
- The food package is worth \$30-\$112 or more per month per person.
- Can help with nutrition education and breastfeeding.
- A great deal for you and your baby!

WIC can also help you learn more about:

- Nutritious food intake during pregnancy
- Gaining the right amount of weight
- The importance of prenatal vitamins
- Breastfeeding
- What to do if you have special nutritional risks (anemia, obesity, gestational diabetes, a food disorder, etc.)

What do I do if I run out of food before I have the money to buy more?

- It's critical to have a back-up plan in case you get low on food. Your baby needs nutritious food every day.
- Find out about food banks and other emergency food programs in your area.

Housing

What if my baby and I don't have a place to live?

There are agencies that can help you find housing

- They can help you find a temporary place to live if you have no place to go.
- They also can help you find a permanent place to live.

What if my house or apartment is in an unsafe neighborhood?

If you live in a high-crime neighborhood, you should have a safety plan.

- This means knowing exactly what you would do if you were threatened – who you would call and where you would go.
- Always lock entry doors, car doors, windows, etc.
- You may be able to get your local police to come and do a safety inspection.

How do I keep my baby safe from environmental hazards in our home?

- Find out how to prevent lead poisoning. Lead can be found in old paint, household dust, soil, and some ceramics.
- Find out how to prevent problems caused by toxic household chemicals. These chemicals are in cleaning products, pesticides, paint, and automotive products.

Asthma

How will my asthma affect my baby and me during my pregnancy?

- During pregnancy, asthma can cut back on the oxygen your baby gets from you.
- If your asthma is properly controlled, it shouldn't be a problem for you or your baby.

What happens if my asthma isn't properly controlled?

If your asthma is not controlled, risks to your health include:

- High blood pressure during the pregnancy.
- Preeclampsia, a condition that causes high blood pressure and can affect the placenta, kidneys, liver, and brain.
- More than normal vomiting early in pregnancy
- Labor that does not occur naturally (your doctor starts it) and may be complicated.

Risks to your baby include:

- Death immediately before or after birth
- Abnormally slow growth of the baby.
- When born, the baby appears small.
- Preterm birth (before week 37).
- Low birth weight.

Asthma (cont'd)

How do I make sure my asthma is properly controlled?

- You need to have an asthma action plan and follow it carefully. This will help you control inflammation and prevent and control asthma attacks.
- Talk with your doctor about your action plan.
- It may include:
 - Drugs to control your asthma.
 - Drugs to control your allergies.
 - Identifying the things that trigger your asthma attacks and ways to decrease your exposure to them.
 - Paying attention to fetal movements so you will notice if there's less fetal activity during an asthma attack.
 - Having an emergency plan in case of problems.
- It's very important to keep your doctor's appointments and follow your doctor's recommendations.

Transportation

How important is transportation now that I'm pregnant?

- It's very important for you to have transportation while you are pregnant.
- You need transportation you can count on.
- You need it to get to prenatal care and WIC appointments.
- You also may need it to get to childbirth classes, mental health, or substance abuse services.

What if I don't have transportation I can count on?

- Your Medicaid Health Plan can get you to pregnancy-related appointments and services.
- Some volunteer groups may provide rides.

What if I have a ride set up, but it falls through at the last minute?

- You need to have a back-up plan.

Keep phone numbers for:

- Medicaid Health Plan transportation person
- Family, friends and neighbors with cars
- Someone at your place of worship
- Cab companies
- Public transportation
- You should also have a plan in case you need emergency transportation.

Social Support

What is social support?

- Social support means having people to turn to when you need them.

Supportive people:

- Listen to you.
- Treat you with kindness and respect.
- Help you figure out how to solve problems.

Why is social support important during pregnancy?

- We all need social support, especially when we go through big life changes.
- Pregnancy is a very big life change and can be stressful at times.
- It can be extra stressful when you don't have enough money.
- It can also be extra stressful when you don't have a partner, or your partner doesn't support you.

What if I'm not getting enough social support?

- You are not the only one. There are many pregnant women and moms without a supportive partner, family member or friend.
- If you don't have enough social support right now, your MIHP worker can "be there" for you and help you find other people or programs to support you.
- Sometimes, a pregnant woman or mom who doesn't have enough social support can start to feel very alone and down. You need to know who you will call in case this ever happens to you.

Are there different types of social support?

Yes, there are three different types:

- Emotional Support
 - The person listens, shows they understand what you're going through, encourages you, and reminds you that you're a good person.
- Informational Support
 - The person gives you information and ideas, and helps you think through different ways to solve a problem.
- Hands-on Support
 - The person gives you money or food, takes care of your kids, gives you a ride, etc.).

You may or may not get all three types of support from the same person.

Secondhand Smoke Exposure

What is secondhand smoke?

- Secondhand smoke is smoke that other people breathe in when someone else is smoking.
- It is harmful to infants, children and adults.

How does secondhand smoke exposure affect my baby?

- Secondhand smoke during pregnancy can cause a baby to be born at low birthweight. This can lead to life-long health problems and learning delays.
- Exposing your baby to secondhand smoke when you're pregnant is just as harmful as if you were smoking yourself.

Secondhand smoke is also dangerous after your baby is born.

- Babies exposed to secondhand smoke:
 - Are more likely to die from SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).
 - Are at greater risk for asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, ear infections, and respiratory symptoms.
 - May experience slow lung growth.
 - Get more asthma attacks as children

There's no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

- Would you want your baby to smoke a cigarette? Remember that secondhand smoke exposure is just as bad.

What am I supposed to do when just about everyone I know is a smoker?

- As a pregnant woman, you have the right to ask others not to smoke around you.
 - It's hard at first, but you're the mom! You're the one who has to protect your baby.
 - You're the one who will have to care for the baby when he or she has asthma or other problems due to secondhand smoke.
- You need a clear plan to avoid secondhand smoke in your home:
 - Ask family members and visitors to please smoke outdoors.
 - Thank them for smoking outdoors.
 - Tell them you really appreciate it.
 - If someone gives you a hard time about it, say "Sorry, but I'm not taking any chances with my baby's health."
 - Stay away from other places where people are smoking.

Smoking

I know lots of women who smoked while they were pregnant, and their babies are okay.

Why should I have to quit?

- We have lots of proof that smoking while pregnant is very harmful to your baby. In fact, it's one of the worse things you can do.
- Just because another smoker's baby seems to be okay, doesn't mean your baby will be okay.
- Also, you don't really know what long-term health problems another smoker's baby will end up having.

How does smoking while pregnant hurt my baby?

- Your baby's brain gets less oxygen, which can impair your baby's growth.
- It can impair your baby's breathing after birth.
- It increases the risk that your baby will:
 - Be born too early.
 - Have learning problems.
 - Have behavior problems, including hyperactivity.
- Smoking while pregnant also increases the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

I tried to quit before, and I just couldn't do it.

Why should I think it will be any different if I try again?

- This time you have the most important motivation of all - your baby's health is at stake.
- There are different ways to quit and you probably haven't tried them all.
- Smoking isn't the only way to cope with stress – you can learn other ways that won't hurt your baby.
- You will save a lot of money that you can spend on your baby.
- It's always worth it to try to quit - you never know which time will be the time you that you succeed.

How can I quit when most of my family and friends are smokers?

- It's hard, of course, but there are some things you can do:
- Let your partner, family and friends know that you are quitting for your baby.
- Ask for their support.
- Thank them for not smoking around you and your baby.
- Ask them to quit with you.

Alcohol

What happens to my baby if I drink alcohol while I'm pregnant?

- Alcohol can hurt your baby's brain, heart, kidneys and other organs.
- Your baby could be born with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS).
- They may be low-birthweight, so they may not be off to as good a start in life as other babies.
- Some babies with FAS have mental retardation.
- Others have learning or behavior problems.
- Even if your baby is not born with FAS, he or she still may have learning or behavior problems.
- These problems last a lifetime.

Just because another drinker's baby seems to be okay, doesn't mean your baby will be okay. You don't really know what long-term health problems another drinker's baby will end up having.

What if I just have a beer or a glass of wine and don't get drunk?

- There's no safe level of alcohol you can drink during pregnancy.
- A 12-ounce can of beer has the same alcohol content as a 4-ounce glass of wine or 1-ounce of hard liquor.
- Some drinks, like wine coolers or malt or mixed drinks may have more alcohol than a 12-ounce can of beer.
- The best choice is not to drink at all when you are pregnant.

What if I can't stop drinking while I'm pregnant?

- It can be very hard to stop drinking. But there are many people and programs to help you.
- You can get free help from people who know what you are going through.
- Even if you have tried to stop drinking before, try again. Don't give up.
- Michigan has special treatment programs for pregnant and postpartum women who want to quit drinking.
- Quitting drinking is one of the best things you can do for your baby and yourself.

Drugs

What happens to my baby and me if I use drugs while I'm pregnant?

Drugs can be very dangerous. If you take drugs while you're pregnant, they can result in:

- Premature labor
- Miscarriage
- Low birth-weight (puts baby at risk for illness and delays in development)
- Your placenta can separate from your uterus, causing:
- Your baby's death
- Your death

Some legal prescription drugs:

- Clearly cause birth defects.
- Others may cause long-term effects that are harder to prove, such as behavior problems.
- Still others are necessary for your health or your baby's health.

Always ask your doctor before you start, stop, or change the dosage of a prescription drug. All of these actions can cause big health issues for you and your baby. Always take prescription drugs as directed by your doctor.

Over-the-counter drugs:

- Some of the best-known medicines from the drugstore can be harmful to your baby if you take them while you're pregnant.
- Always ask your doctor before using over-the-counter drugs while pregnant if you have a bad cold, a severe headache, or constipation.

Dietary supplements:

- Dietary supplements include vitamins, minerals, herbs and amino acids.
- Your doctor might have you take certain vitamins and minerals during pregnancy.
- Always ask your doctor before taking any other dietary supplements.
- Most dietary supplements have not been proven to be safe during pregnancy.

I know women who used drugs during pregnancy and their babies are okay. Why should I be worried about using drugs while I'm pregnant?

- Just because another drug user's baby seems to be okay, doesn't mean your baby will be okay.
- Also, you don't really know what long-term health problems another drug user's baby will end up having.

Stress, Depression, and Mental Health

What is Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder (PMAD) or “postpartum”

- It's depression or anxiety that occurs during pregnancy or postpartum.
 - Postpartum means within a year after giving birth.
- It is VERY common.
- It can be mild, moderate or severe.

How do I know if I might be depressed or anxious?

- Women with perinatal depression and anxiety usually sense that “something's not right.”

Would you answer “yes” to any following statements?

- I feel very sad and hopeless more days than not.
- I'm not enjoying life like I used to.
- I blame myself for everything.
- I worry about everything.
- I'm afraid and I don't know why.
- I feel overwhelmed and have a hard time coping.
- I cry a lot.
- I have trouble sleeping because I'm so unhappy. I want to sleep all the time.
- I'm confused and distracted.
- I get angry very easily.
- I don't think I will be a good mother.
- I have thoughts of harming myself or others.
- I hear voices or see things that aren't there.

If you answered “yes” to any of these statements, you may be anxious or depressed. You are not alone. Many pregnant women and new moms have these same thoughts and feelings. Please speak with your care provider about any concerns you may have.

How does Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder affect my baby?

It would be harder for you and your baby to form a strong emotional attachment to each other. Attachment is important to your baby's development.

Your baby could:

- Be born too small or too early.
- Be fussy and jittery, have feeding or sleeping problems.
- End up with learning problems or with behavior problems.

Please speak with your care provider about any concerns you may have.

Abuse/Violence

What is domestic violence?

It's physical, emotional, or sexual abuse by your current (or past) partner.

Domestic violence:

- Is about getting control over another person.
- Can result in serious injuries and life-long disabilities.
- Happens to people who are or have been dating, living together, or married.
- Happens to people of all ages, races, income levels, and faiths.
- Happens over and over again, even if the abuser promises it won't.

How does it affect my baby if I'm abused while I'm pregnant?

Risks to your baby:

- Brain damage
- Broken bones
- Slow growth
- Hears, reacts and feels the violence the mother experiences

More information is available at the National Domestic Violence Hot Line. They can link you to the domestic violence program in your area.

How do I know if I'm really in an abusive relationship?

Does your partner:

- Embarrass you?
- Call you names?
- Put you down?
- Shove you, slap you, kick you, or hit you?
- Say "I'm sorry," but then do it again later.
- Look at you or act in ways that scare you?
- Say it's your fault, or blame you or others for everything?
- Control what you do, who you see or talk to, or where you go?
- Stop you from seeing or talking to friends or family?
- Take your money or refuse to give you money?
- Tell you you're a bad parent?
- Threaten to take away or hurt your children?
- Destroy your property or threaten to kill your pets?
- Threaten to kill himself or herself?
- Threaten to kill you?

If you answer "yes" to one or more of the following questions, you are probably in an abusive relationship.

1-800-799-7233 or TTY 1-800-787-3224.

Diabetes

Diabetes occurs when your body doesn't make enough insulin, or your insulin doesn't work right. So, blood glucose (blood sugar) levels get too high. A woman may have diabetes when she gets pregnant. When diabetes is found in the second or third trimester it is called gestational diabetes. Often, but not always, gestational diabetes goes away after delivering the baby. Regardless of when it is diagnosed, during pregnancy it is important that blood glucose is kept at a safe level. Too much glucose in your blood can be harmful to you and your baby.

Risks to your health include:

- Hypertension (High blood pressure).
- Having a large baby and needing a C-section at delivery
- Higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes. It is important to get tested 4-12 weeks after delivery to make sure the gestational diabetes went away.

Risks to your baby's health include:

- Being born very large and with extra fat. This can make delivery difficult and more dangerous for your baby. This also increases the chances your baby will have weight problems later in life.
- Low glucose levels right after birth.
- Breathing problems.
- Increased chance of having type 2 diabetes later in life.

What are signs something could be wrong?

- Vaginal bleeding
- Sharp back pain
- Burning or painful urination
- An infection
- Dizziness or fainting
- Rapid weight gain
- Swelling in the hands, face or feet
- Severe nausea with high blood glucose
- A decrease in your baby's movement

What should I do if I have any of these signs?

- Call your doctor.
- If there is an emergency, call 911.

High Blood Pressure

What is high blood pressure?

Arteries are blood vessels that carry blood away from your heart to your body. Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries. High blood pressure means the pressure in your arteries is higher than it should be. High blood pressure is also called hypertension.

You may have had high blood pressure before you became pregnant, or you may develop it during your pregnancy. If your high blood pressure is diagnosed before you became pregnant or during the first half of your pregnancy, it is called chronic hypertension. It doesn't go away after you deliver your baby. If you develop high blood pressure in the second half of your pregnancy (after 20 weeks), it usually goes away after delivery. This doesn't mean it's any less serious, though. High blood pressure can cause serious problems. However, these problems can usually be prevented with proper prenatal care. Most women with high blood pressure have healthy pregnancies.

How will I know if I have high blood pressure?

High blood pressure usually has no obvious symptoms; in fact, many people don't even know they have it. The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to get it checked. Getting your blood pressure checked is quick and painless, and it can be checked at your healthcare provider's office. It's best to have your blood pressure checked regularly while you're pregnant.

How will high blood pressure affect my baby and me?

There are many risks to both you and your baby if your blood pressure is not controlled.

High Blood Pressure (cont'd)

Some of these risks are:

- You could have a heart attack or stroke.
- Your baby could be born too soon (pre-term delivery).
- Your baby could weight too light (low birth weight).
- You may have to have a C-section.
- Your placenta could separate from your uterus during delivery. This can cause heavy bleeding and shock and place you and your baby in danger.
- You could develop a serious blood pressure condition called preeclampsia.

What is preeclampsia?

Preeclampsia is a serious condition related to high blood pressure. It happens when your blood pressure is high and you have other signs that your liver, kidneys, lungs, or other organs are not working normally.

It can happen to any pregnant woman. It usually occurs in the second half of pregnancy. It can also occur after delivery. If it is not controlled, you can have seizures. This is called eclampsia. These seizures can cause serious harm, including coma and death.

What are the warning signs of preeclampsia?

- Headache that won't go away
- Nausea during the second half of your pregnancy
- Vision changes
- Quick weight gain
- Swelling of the hands or face
- Pain in the upper belly or shoulder
- Difficulty breathing

What can I do to help control my blood pressure and prevent preeclampsia?

- Attend all your prenatal appointments.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way for you to manage your blood pressure.
- Eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.
- Avoid gaining too much weight while you are pregnant.
- *Contact your healthcare provider immediately if you have any of the warning signs of preeclampsia or your blood pressure is too high.*

Interconception Health

What is interconception health?

- Interconception is the time between pregnancies.

Use this time to make sure you are healthy. This is especially important if you ever had a:

- Baby with low-birthweight or health problems
- Miscarriage
- Stillbirth

What can I do to improve my health so my next baby will be as healthy as possible?

Your doctor can look at your risks and help you get the care you need before you get pregnant again.

This will give you the best chance to stay healthy yourself and deliver a healthy baby.

It's important to:

- Keep your interconception care appointments.
- Follow your doctor's recommendations.

What does interconception care include?

- Family planning services (waiting at least 18 months after giving birth to get pregnant again.)
- Updating vaccinations.
- Treating infections.
- Controlling chronic conditions, such as asthma, hypertension, and diabetes.
- Limiting contact with toxic substances, such as lead, mercury and pesticides.
- Counseling and support:
 - To eat right and take folic acid.
 - To gain or lose weight.
 - To get more exercise.
 - To quit smoking.
 - To avoid secondhand smoke. For possible genetic risks.
 - For alcohol problems.
 - For drug problems.
 - For depression, anxiety or stress.
 - For domestic violence.

How do I get interconception care when my Medicaid ends?

Information regarding the Healthy Michigan Plan, which you may be eligible for after pregnancy: www.michigan.gov/healthymiplan/

Infant Health

How do I keep my baby healthy?

- Baby's routine is important (including sleep/wake schedule, feeding strategies, hunger cues, hydration, physical activity, bathing)
- Don't let anyone smoke in your home, car, or anywhere near your baby. Secondhand smoke can cause breathing, learning, and behavior problems.
- Keep your baby away from people who have colds. Make sure that people who hold your baby have clean hands and wash your hands after every diaper change.
- Clean your baby's gums with a cloth dampened with water twice a day. This will help prevent tooth decay when her teeth come in. Also, don't give your baby sugary drinks or let her fall asleep with a bottle in her mouth.
- Gently hold, hug, cuddle, and comfort your baby. You can't overdo it. This is how your baby gets emotionally attached to you. Attachment is very important to your baby's long-term health and development.

When do I take my baby to the doctor?

- Take your baby to the doctor for well-child visits. These visits are usually at 1, 2, 4, 6, 9 and 12 months. Medicaid pays for them.
- Keep your baby's immunizations up to date to protect against terrible diseases.

Call the doctor if your baby:

- Has a fever over 100.4 degrees
- Refuses to eat
- Has persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- Is fussier than usual
- Is sleeping more than usual
- Is wheezing or has trouble breathing
- Is pulling on his ears a lot
- Follow the doctor's recommendations
- Ask the doctor before you give your baby over-the-counter medicine
- Always keep your doctor's phone number where you can find it. You might need it in a hurry.

Your MIHP worker can help you find a baby doctor if you don't have one.

Feeding and Nutrition

Why do doctors say that breastfeeding is best for my baby?

- Breast milk helps your baby's brain grow.
- It's easier to digest - your baby will have less diarrhea and won't spit up as much.
- Your baby will be healthier, with fewer colds, ear infections, and allergies.
- Your baby will be less likely to have asthma or juvenile diabetes.
- It's a special experience that strengthens the bond between you and your baby.
- There's no cost.
- You don't have to sterilize bottle and nipples.
- It burns calories and can help you lose weight.
- NEVER lay your baby down and prop her bottle.

What about bottle feeding?

- Ask your doctor what kind of formula is best for your baby.
- Follow formula mixing instructions carefully.
- Never heat formula in the microwave – it can get too hot.
- Always check the temperature by shaking a few drops on your wrist.
- Hold her head up a little higher than her tummy.
- Hold the bottom of the bottle up so that the nipple stays full of formula.
- Throw out any formula that's left after a feeding.
- Do not give your baby fluids other than breast milk – no fruit juice or other sugary drinks.
- Do not let your baby fall asleep with the bottle in his mouth.

Breastfeeding

Why should I breastfeed?

- Breast milk is the best food for babies in the first year of life. It helps them grow healthy and strong and protects them from infections and illness.
- Breastfed babies have fewer health problems than babies who don't get any breast milk.
- Mothers who breastfeed have a lower risk of these health problems: Type 2 diabetes, certain types of breast cancer and ovarian cancer.

How long am I supposed to breastfeed?

- Exclusive breastfeeding, where the baby gets nothing, but breastmilk is recommended at least through 6 months of age. After that breastfeeding should continue along with age appropriate solid foods.
- Any amount of breastfeeding is good for your baby's health and development—even breastfeeding for a short time is great.

Breastfeeding takes practice and patience. For some women, learning to breastfeed can be frustrating but others have no problem at all!

- There are many in-person and online supports for breastfeeding women, if you have questions or concerns please seek out expert support and information.

How do you know if your baby is getting enough milk?

- Many women and families worry that their baby is not getting enough milk. It is important to know that a newborn's stomach is very small.
- At birth, the baby's stomach can only take in about 1 to 2 teaspoons (size of a cherry) during a feeding.
- And two week later, the baby's stomach has grown only to take in about 2 ounces (size of an egg).
- The more often your baby breastfeeds, the more milk your breasts will make. Newborns eat every 2-3 hours, but each baby is different.

Breastfeeding (cont'd)

Tips for making breastfeeding work for you:

- Learn your baby's hunger cues, your baby may:
 - Becoming more alert and active
 - Putting hands or fists to the mouth
 - Making sucking motions with the mouth
 - Turning the head to look for the breast
- Crying can be a late sign of hunger, and it may be harder for the baby to latch if he or she is upset.
- Follow your baby's lead – every baby feeds differently and that is ok
- Keep your baby close to you – skin-to-skin contact
- Avoid using pacifiers or bottles for the first few weeks, unless for a medical reason, to help your baby get used to breastfeeding
- Make sure your baby sleeps safely and close by
- Open and honest communication with your work/school/family about breastfeeding

Who can help me with breastfeeding?

- Local WIC Provider: all WIC providers have lactation consultants (IBCLC) who can help and support breastfeeding
- Local Breastfeeding Support Group – La Leche League
- You or your infant's medical care provider

Take Care of Yourself...

So you can take care of your baby!

You are the most important person in the world to your baby. You need to take good care of yourself, so you can take care of your baby.

- **See your doctor for your postpartum visit.**
- **Use family planning (birth control).**
- **Wait at least 18 months after giving birth before getting pregnant again.**
- **Find someone to care for your baby so you can take breaks.**
- **When you feel down or alone, reach out for support.**

General Development

Your MIHP worker will complete developmental screenings for your baby. This screening will cover different areas of development:

- Gross motor
- Fine motor
- Communication
- Problem-solving
- Personal-social
- Social-emotional

Your baby's first relationship is with you. There are many things you can do to promote your baby's development.

- Teach them that their little world is a safe place and that they are loved.
- Quickly respond to their needs and be very gentle and loving.
- When your baby is fussy or crying, try to uncover the real reason for their behavior (scared, hungry, thirsty, cold, hot, etc.).

Doing these things will help form a strong emotional attachment between you and your baby. This is the most important thing you can do to help your baby's development.

What signs should I watch out for that could indicate my baby needs a developmental evaluation?

From birth to 12 months:

- Has eating difficulties; is not gaining weight or is losing weight; not growing physically
- Has sleeping difficulties (sleeps too much or too little)
- Shows little preference for any adult
- Resists holding
- Cries for prolonged periods
- Is hard to console
- Rarely makes eye contact with others
- Doesn't show interest in people or things going on around him or her
- Doesn't respond to simple games like peek-a-boo