

Taking Care

- Stop taking hormonal birth control. If you are on the pill, ring or patch, discontinue using it as soon as you find out you're pregnant.
- Take Folic Acid, a B vitamin that can help prevent birth defects (1.0 mg/day). Folic Acid can also be found in foods such as dried lentils and beans, nuts, dark green leafy vegetables and whole grain breads.
- Eat well. Try to select foods from the 4 major food groups: dairy products; meat, fish, poultry and protein alternatives; breads and cereals; and fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid alcohol, over-the-counter and prescription drugs (that are not recommended by your healthcare provider), cigarettes and caffeine.
- If you are HIV positive, there are things you can do to significantly reduce the risk of passing on the virus to your fetus. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information.

Other Resources

- **Toronto Public Health:** www.city.toronto.on.ca/health
- **Women's College Hospital:** www.womenshealthmatters.ca
- **Motherisk** (The Hospital for Sick Children): www.motherisk.org

For further information or to book an appointment:

For youth ages 13-29

Planned Parenthood Toronto Health Services
416-961-0113
Offers drop-in and scheduled appointments
www.ppt.on.ca

Planned Parenthood Toronto's Teen Sex InfoLine
416-961-3200

www.spiderbytes.ca

Live chat through MSN messenger at spiderbytes@hotmail.com

For women of reproductive age

Women's Programming at the Bay Centre for Birth Control
416-351-3700

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Having a Baby

What You Need to Know

Finding Prenatal Care

Prenatal care is the care that you receive from a healthcare provider during your pregnancy. It is important that you find prenatal care as soon as you find out you're pregnant.

Under 29 years of age?

Planned Parenthood Toronto provides pregnant youth ages 13-29 with prenatal services up to 28 weeks of pregnancy. Call 416-961-0113 for more information.

Over 29 years of age?

You need to decide if you would like a doctor OR a midwife to be your primary caregiver during your pregnancy.

Doctors

Your first step is to determine if you would like a family doctor who has the ability to provide prenatal care and delivery (obstetrics) or if you would like a doctor who specializes in obstetrics (obstetrician).

If you would like a family doctor who can provide obstetrics, then go to the College of Physicians and Surgeons website at www.cpso.on.ca and use the "Doctor Search" tool to find a doctor in your area. Call to ask if the doctor provides obstetrical care.

If you already have a family doctor, ask if they provide obstetrical care. If not, they may be willing to provide "shared care" which means they share the care of their pregnant patients with an obstetrician. The obstetrician takes over the

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complete care towards the end of the pregnancy and for the delivery.

If you would like an obstetrician, you need a referral from a family doctor. You cannot book an appointment with an obstetrician directly.

Midwives

A midwife is a registered health care professional who provides primary care to women with low-risk pregnancies during their pregnancy, labour and birth and provides post-natal care to both mother and baby. If you would like a midwife as your primary caregiver, contact one as soon as you find out you're pregnant. To find a midwife, visit the Association of Ontario Midwives website at www.aom.on.ca. Note that many midwifery agencies have a catchment area (the midwifery agency determines the area of the city you need to live in to receive service from their agency). Midwifery services are free for women with a health card; if you do not have health coverage, see the information below.

Other Support: Doulas

Doulas are not medical professionals but are women who provide practical and emotional support to a woman during childbirth. Doula services are not covered by OHIP but some doulas offer sliding scale fees. Visit www.doulacare.ca.

Women who are not insured in Canada

Without a health card (OHIP) or coverage from another Canadian province or country:

Under 29 years of age?

Planned Parenthood Toronto can provide prenatal check-ups and care free of charge up to 28 weeks of pregnancy. For more information call 416-961-0113.

Over 29 years of age?

Community Health Centres (CHCs) in the greater Toronto area that provide free prenatal care:

- **Immigrant Women's Health Centre** (immigrant women): www.immigranthealth.info or 416-323-9986
- **Women's Health in Women's Hands** (women of colour/black women): www.whiwh.com or 416-593-7655
- **Access Alliance Multicultural CHC** (newcomers, immigrants, refugees): www.accessalliance.ca or 416-324-8677

Your neighbourhood community health centre may also offer services for you, although many have limited space and have catchment areas. To locate the CHC in your area, visit www.aohc.org.

Midwives can provide free prenatal and homebirth care to uninsured women with low-risk pregnancies who have a postal code in Ontario. You may have to pay for some costs and supplies and if there are any complications with your pregnancy, you will have to pay for the physicians who see you.

If you prefer to see an obstetrician and are experiencing financial hardship, you may be able to arrange a payment plan through the financial department of the hospital at which you will give birth. See pages 1 and 2 for instructions on how to contact physicians and midwives.

In the first few months of your pregnancy, you may experience:

- Frequent urination, due to pregnancy hormones
- Nausea and vomiting (or morning sickness)
- Tender breasts
- Moodiness
- Fatigue