

StarBabies



JULY 2018

A publication of **Texas Children's Health Plan**

In this **ISSUE**

- 2 What to expect the sixth month of pregnancy
- 3 What can I do about these leg cramps?
- 4 Need exercise? Try swimming!
- 5 Beware: Heat exhaustion can be dangerous
- 6 Get the care you need

Watch out for skin infections!

Your family's health is important. That's why we want you to know about skin infections. Learn about them on our website.

TexasChildrensHealthplan.org/skininfections



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 1167
N. HOUSTON, TX

**Texas Children's
Health Plan**



Texas Children's Health Plan
P.O. Box 301011
Houston, TX 77230-1011



What to expect your sixth month of pregnancy...

In the 6th month of pregnancy (23 to 27 weeks), your belly is rapidly expanding and you are probably feeling your baby move a lot. You might even notice when your baby has the hiccups! This month marks the end of your 2nd trimester, but your baby still has a lot of growing to do.

At this point in your pregnancy, your baby:

- Kicks and moves a lot
- Starts to open its eyes
- Has eyelashes and eyebrows and hair on its head
- Has air sacs developing in its lungs
- Continues to grow rapidly

**At the end of this month your baby could be
15 inches long and weigh 2 pounds!**

During your visit in the 6th month, your doctor will check the following:

- Weight and blood pressure
- Urine for sugar and protein
- Belly for its size and position of the baby
- Baby's heartbeat
- Your hands and feet for swelling
- Symptoms you may be having, especially unusual ones

It is time for you to start looking into childbirth classes and to ask your doctor any questions you have about labor and delivery.

Source: *WhatToExpect.com*

What can I do about these **leg cramps**?

Some pregnant women in the 2nd and 3rd trimesters report having leg cramps that keep them up at night. These painful spasms can go up and down your calves and wake you out of a deep sleep.

Although no one is quite sure what causes these cramps, there are a few things you can do to help ease the pain.

- When a leg cramp strikes, straighten your leg and flex your ankle and toes slowly up towards your nose.
- Before you go to bed, do some stretching exercises. Stand about 2 feet away from a wall and put your palms flat against it. Lean forward, keeping your heels on the floor. Hold stretch for 10 seconds, relax for 5. Do this 3 times.
- During the day, put your feet up as often as you can.
- Standing on a cold surface can sometimes stop a spasm.
- Make sure you drink at least 8 glasses of fluids a day.
- Eat a balanced diet that includes calcium and magnesium.



I'm feeling pressure and pain in my pelvis.

What does this mean?

As your baby grows, your uterus expands and puts extra pressure on your pelvic area. The result can be chronic pelvic and abdominal pain, or an achy, swollen, "full" feeling.

The pain could be caused by pelvic varicose veins, which become more common in pregnancy, due to the extra blood your body produces. Or, the pain could be caused by ligaments stretching as they support your expanding uterus.

Sometimes the pain is mild. But sometimes it is a wrenching pain that feels like your pelvis is coming apart. The pain is usually in the pubic area, but it can also be felt in the upper thighs. Sometimes the pain can make it difficult to walk, stand, or roll over in bed.

What can I do?

- Get regular exercise.
- Limit the amount of weight you lift.
- Push down gently during bowel movements.
- Avoid gaining too much pregnancy weight.
- Do Kegel exercises and pelvic tilts, which strengthen pelvic muscles.

When should I worry? Occasional discomfort is normal. But call your doctor if you have constant, severe, nonstop pain with chills, fever, or bleeding.

Source: *What to Expect When You're Expecting*



Need exercise? **Try swimming!**

If you are having a normal pregnancy and your doctor says it is okay, you may want to swim for exercise. While it is a low-impact aerobic activity, swimming is great because it uses both large muscle groups, builds strength and increases muscle tone. And, since you feel weightless in the water, swimming won't strain your joints or ligaments.

On a hot summer day, swimming in a cool pool can help keep your body from getting too warm. If you swim, you burn calories, feel less tired during the day, sleep better at night and helps you keep your weight in a healthy range.

Swimming can help ease pressure on your lower back, which can cause sciatic nerve pain. Some women have reported that it helps ease swelling in their feet and ankles.

Now that you are in your 6th month, you may find that the breaststroke is most helpful to you. Pregnancy forces the spine and shoulders to round forward and the pelvis to tilt out of alignment. This stroke lengthens the chest muscles and shortens the back muscles and gently helps your spine realign.

Sun safety tips for the whole family

Summer is here and it's time to go outside and have fun. While your family is having a great time in the sun, they also need to be safe. The following are some sun safety tips to help protect you and your family.

Cover up

The first and best line of defense against the sun is covering up.

- Wear a hat with a 3-inch brim or a bill facing forward.
- Use sunglasses that block 99-100% of UV rays.
- Wear cotton clothing with a tight weave.

Use sunscreen

Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or greater whenever you are in the sun.

- Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going outside.

- Re-apply sunscreen every 2 to 3 hours and after your child has been sweating or swimming.
- Apply waterproof sunscreen if you or your child will be around water or will go swimming. Waterproof sunscreens may last up to 80 minutes in the water.

Plan ahead to avoid peak sun hours

- You should avoid sun exposure during peak hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Plan your outdoor activities during a cooler time of day. Take frequent breaks to cool off if you're outside during peak sun hours.

Drink up

- Drinking water is an important part of staying healthy, especially when it's hot outside. Don't wait until you or your child is thirsty. Drink before you are thirsty because it replaces the water your body needs.

Beware: Heat exhaustion can be dangerous

It is really hot outside and being pregnant can make you sweat more than usual. This can make you become overheated, dehydrated or develop heat exhaustion. If you develop heat exhaustion, it can hurt you and your baby if you don't treat it right away.

If you have been sweating a lot, it means your body is losing fluids. Early signs that you are dehydrated include thirst, dry or chapped lips, dry skin, fatigue, constipation. You may also notice that your baby is less active than usual. If you have any of these symptoms, go somewhere cool, sit down, and drink cool water or fruit juice.

If you feel dizzy or lightheaded, lie down on your left side and put a cool cloth on your forehead and neck.

Heat exhaustion can happen if you have been in the heat for too long or haven't had enough to drink. It is more serious than being dehydrated.

If you develop heat exhaustion, your skin may feel cool and moist (clammy) and look pale. You may also have a headache, nausea, weakness, exhaustion, dizziness, confusion, and a fast heartbeat. Your breathing may also become shallow and your blood pressure might drop.

If you think you have heat exhaustion you should get medical help right away.

You're pregnant. But it doesn't mean you can't enjoy a frosty "Mocktail". Here are a couple of simple and delicious recipes.

Mom-garita

Ingredients:

½ cup lime juice
¼ cup agave syrup
1 tablespoon orange juice
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Slice of lime to garnish

Instructions:

Combine the ingredients in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake vigorously. Strain and pour into a margarita glass. Garnish with a slice of lime.

Cool Watermelon Slushes

Ingredients:

6 ice cubes
2 cups seeded watermelon
1 teaspoon honey

Instructions:

Place the ice cubes in a blender. Cover, and pulse until crushed. Add the watermelon and blend for about 1 minute, until slushy. Add the honey, and blend for about 10 seconds. Pour into a chilled glass and enjoy!





We're giving away school supplies

Save the date
Saturday, July 28

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Alameda Mall, 12200 Gulf Fwy.

Backpacks4School.org



Get the care you need

We want our expecting moms to have a great pregnancy. And that means it's important for you to go to the doctor. After all, a healthy mom and a happy baby begin with quality prenatal care!

Don't wait. Get seen right away. As soon as you think you're pregnant, you should schedule your first prenatal visit. Your OB/GYN will want to see you in your first trimester or within 42 days of joining Texas Children's Health Plan.

Don't forget about your postpartum checkup. It is also important for you to go for a postpartum checkup after having your baby. Your OB/GYN MUST see you within 3 to 6 weeks after delivery. To sign your newborn up for Medicaid, call 2-1-1 and report the birth of your child to Health and Human Services Commission or visit yourtexasbenefits.com.

Cervical Cancer Screening. Routine pap smears are a key to the prevention and early detection of cervical cancer. Women ages 21–29 years should be tested every 3 years. For women ages 30–65, a pap smear with testing for human papillomavirus (HPV) every 5 years is preferred but screening with just a pap smear every 3 years is OK. Plan a visit with your doctor or local community clinic.

Mammography. Women are encouraged to talk with their doctor about screening for breast cancer with a mammogram. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends annual mammograms beginning at age 40. Early detection can lead to improved outcomes in women diagnosed with breast cancer. Plan a visit with your doctor or local community clinic.

For help finding a doctor visit TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org under "Find a Doctor" or call Member Services at **1-866-959-2555 (STAR)**.

For help scheduling an appointment, you can call Member Services, email us at HealthPlan@texaschildrens.org, or we can offer a 3-way call with you and the provider.

Nurse Help Line

Call our
Nurse Help Line
24 hours a day,
7 days a week at
800-686-3831

to speak with a registered nurse.

Call Member Services at
866-959-2555 (STAR)
for help picking a doctor,
midwife, or OB/GYN.

StarBabies

is published monthly by
Texas Children's Health Plan.

Send comments to:

Star Babies
Texas Children's Health Plan
PO Box 301011
Houston, TX 77230-1011

Creative Manager,
Member Engagement
David Barras

Editor
Sara Ledezma

Layout designer
Scott Redding

©2018 Texas Children's Health Plan.
All rights reserved.

PO Box 301011
Houston, Texas 77230-1011

07/2018