

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PREGNANCY!

You've started out well - seeking out the finest prenatal care during your pregnancy. Dr. Hickner has over 25 years of experience working in a large metropolitan area and has delivered thousands of babies. He is Board-Certified and received many awards for his work as a student, resident, and professor at Michigan State University. He, along with every member of our staff, would like to do everything he can to make your experience with us as pleasant as possible, utilizing a combination of state of the art equipment, modern techniques, and old-fashioned concern for your well-being.

Dr. Hickner and his staff are committed to promoting healthy living while affirming the dignity of all women. This includes a method of regulating fertility without the use of artificial contraception, the use of hormones, or permanent sterilization. We would like to assist you in learning more about this. We believe that having knowledge about your body, and taking charge of it, is TRULY being in control! We will be discussing this more as your pregnancy progresses. Feel free to bring it up any time.

We are a pro-life office, and Dr. Hickner does not perform or refer for abortions. Therefore, we do not order routine genetic tests on your baby, which may lead to the consideration of an abortion. If you have reason to believe that such testing is indicated in your situation, please discuss this with Dr. Hickner.

We have prepared this folder for your use during your pregnancy. It contains much of the information we will review with you throughout your pregnancy. Please read through this information and feel free to discuss any questions you have with your other health care providers or our staff. Our goal is to provide you with the best medical and emotional support through your pregnancy, delivery, and after the birth of your child.

CARE IN THE OFFICE

Typically, a pregnancy lasts 40 weeks. The pregnant women without complications see their obstetrician every month through week 32, then every two weeks from weeks 32 to 36. Finally, you will be seen every week from weeks 36 to 40. If you would like your husband other support person or family members to accompany you to your appointments, they are certainly welcome.

Doctor Hickner would like to be available for each of his patients whenever he is needed. However, it is impossible for him to be on call every day. He will be sharing call with Dr. Seibersma from the Lander Medical Clinic. In the event that Dr. Hickner is not on call on the day you go into labor, your baby may possibly be delivered by Dr. Seibersma. If you care to at some time during the last weeks of your pregnancy, you may feel like meeting Dr. Seibersma at the Lander Medical Clinic. Please inform the women in our front desk areas to assist you. If you have concerns with this, please talk with Dr. Hickner.

EMERGENCIES and SERIOUS CONCERNS

Our office is open from 9-5 Monday through Friday, and closed for lunch from 12-1. Our staff will assist you with any concerns during those hours. If you have a serious concern during your pregnancy, or think you may be in labor, please call the Labor and Delivery Department at the hospital at 335-6397. The nurses there will assist you and will contact the doctor who is on call. Please *do not* leave messages of an urgent nature on our office answering machine, as they may not be heard until the following business day.

In order to receive the best care, you should be able to recognize an emergency and know what to do about it. Any of the following should be considered emergencies, and you should seek medical help immediately.

- Any vaginal bleeding
- Sharp or persistent abdominal pain or cramps
- Persistent headaches
- Extreme nausea and vomiting, or vomiting after the fifth month of pregnancy
- Blurred vision
- Unusual swelling of hands, feet, or face
- Sudden weight gain (a gain of 1 lb per day over 3+ days in the 7th to 9th month)
- Loss of fluid from the vagina
- Infection, fever, chills
- Fainting
- Pain or difficulty with urination
- Hard or regular contractions prior to 36 weeks
- Any concerns about fetal movement

BLEEDING

Twenty-five percent of all pregnant women have bleeding problems during the first three months of pregnancy. Many things can cause this, and it may be harmless, but it may also signal a miscarriage. Bleeding during the later months is unusual and serious. If you have ANY bleeding, call for assistance. If possible, save any clots so that they may be examined.

A HEALTHY BEGINNING

We are very concerned about the best possible start for your baby. Here are a few necessary and important ways you can take charge of your health and contribute to your baby's good health as well.

- Abstain from ANY tobacco use, and also avoid second-hand smoke.
- Abstain from consuming alcoholic beverages.

- Do not use over-the-counter medications without contacting us.
- Do not change kitty litter.
- Limit your use of caffeine to two servings or less per day.
- Take prenatal vitamins as prescribed.
- Avoid saunas and whirlpool hot tubs.
- Avoid undercooked meat, and try to eat as much healthy fresh food as possible.
- Wear your seatbelt at all times.

MEDICATIONS

Do not use any over-the-counter medications during your pregnancy without first consulting with our staff.

The following is a list of commonly needed over-the-counter medications which have been proven to be safe to use at any time during your pregnancy:

- Tylenol (Acetaminophen) 325-650mg every 4 hours, or 1000 every 6 hours, for fever, pain or headache
- Sudafed (Pseudoephedrine) 30-60mg every 6 hours for nasal congestion
- Robitussin (Guaifenesin Syrup) 2-4 teaspoons per package directions for cough
- Robitussin DM (Guaifenesin and Dextromethorphan Hydrobromide) 2 teaspoons every 4 hours for cough and as an expectorant to loosen phlegm, making cough more productive
- Tums, Maalox, Mylanta or Gaviscon per package directions for indigestion or heartburn

Be aware that Tylenol, Sudafed and Robitussin come in combination formulas, such as Tylenol PM, Sudafed Cough and Cold, Robitussin CF, etc. and some of these are not safe to use unless their other ingredients have been approved by our staff. Always read the “active ingredients” on the medication and do not use unless they are specified in the list above.

EMOTIONS

In our aim to provide complete care for our patients, we recognize the importance of the emotions you may experience during pregnancy. It is not uncommon for you and your family to experience additional tension and stress during this time. Pregnancy and/or birth of a baby can strain relationships with loved ones, create budget problems, hamper careers, or force changes in identity and body image. Please remember, we are here to help. Feel free to discuss these problems with us any time. We can also make arrangements for you to visit with a counselor to help you and your family adjust to the many changes pregnancy may create in your life.

EXERCISE

Exercising during your pregnancy is not only safe but also important. Exercise helps to keep a balance between the fuel your body gets and the use of that fuel, to avoid problems associated with gestational diabetes and other disorders.

However, it is necessary to follow some general guidelines for a healthy workout. Please check with our staff before starting an exercise program.

- Drink fluids before and during exercise – even in winter.
- Follow a slow warm-up routine for at least 15 minutes before starting.
- Follow a mild stretching routine before exercise (but not to your limit).
- Remember, your ligaments are looser now and can be more easily injured.
- Avoid exercises with jerky or bouncing motions.
- Be sure your exercise area is clear (avoid rugs that may slide), adequate in size, and has a stable floor.
- Exercise regularly (3 or 4 days a week), not just once in a while
- This is not the time to be competitive! Exercise at your own pace and comfort level.
- Do not exercise during hot, humid weather or if you have a fever.
- After the fourth month, do not exercise lying down on your back.
- Do not take part in any exercise including lifting weights where you hold your breath and strain. Lifting weights is good; just remember to breathe!
- Adjust caloric intake to your level of activity. But remember, during pregnancy, calorie levels need to be over and above your usual amount.
- Avoid strenuous exercise at higher levels of altitude than those you are accustomed to.
- Monitor your activity so your pulse does not exceed 140 beats per minute.

BREAST VS. BOTTLE FEEDING

Breastfeeding has been proven to be the best choice for both the mother and the child's health and well-being. As a new mother, you know that proper nutrition is vital to your baby's proper growth and development. By breastfeeding, you will be joining billions of women throughout the history of the world who find it simply ideal.

It is an amazing thing to be a woman, especially a new mother whose body is producing food for her growing child. Along with the perfect combination of nutrients, nature has provided breastmilk as an excellent source of antibodies which will protect your child from illness. It is perfectly matched for your baby's needs. It is convenient, and free! Also, the contact made by the act of breastfeeding will contribute to your infant's emotional well-being. As long as you choose to breastfeed, your body will benefit as well. It has been shown to reduce the incidence of breast cancer and will help your body resume your pre-pregnancy weight.