

Tips for Expecting Parents

Together, preparing for your precious beginning

Now that you are expecting your first child, a lot of questions typically come to mind. Here are just a few things you can do to prepare for the arrival of your newborn.

Keep your baby as safe as possible

While the dangers posed by chemicals in our daily lives are still not fully understood, we do know that some of the most common—cigarette smoke, alcohol, and illegal drugs—are not safe during pregnancy. Even caffeine is safe only in low or moderate amounts.

Smoking before, during, or after birth affects both your health and your baby's. Living with someone who smokes also affects the health of mothers and infants. Recent studies have shown that secondhand smoke can have an adverse effect on your baby—as well as on you.

Alcohol can cause Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), one of the leading forms of mental retardation and physical abnormalities in the United States. While the risks of drinking large amounts—two or more drinks per day—are well known, it is not known how safe even very low amounts of alcohol are during pregnancy.

Prepare for the birth of your baby

While your baby is growing inside of you, you can take a few steps to prepare for their wonderful birth.

It is best to sign up for childbirth classes at 20 weeks and attend these classes at 30 weeks of pregnancy. The classes offered by St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital are:

- Having a Baby Series 1, 2, and 3
- "Eat at Mom's" Breastfeeding Class
- Family and Friends CPR Class
- New Brother/New Sister Class

You can find out more about these classes on the hospital's web site at www.stanthonyshospital.org/events. You may also call St. Anthony's Community Programs line at (217) 347-1529 to register over the phone.

You can preregister with the hospital between 30 and 34 weeks of pregnancy. If you will be having your child at St. Anthony's, complete our online pre-registration at www.stanthonyshospital.org/register.

Don't forget to make arrangements with a local Pediatrician to care for your newborn. For information on pediatricians on St. Anthony's Medical Staff, visit www.stanthonyshospital.org, click on "Find a Doctor."

If you are planning on breastfeeding, the best time to be fitted with a nursing bra is 4 to 6 weeks before your due date. St. Anthony's Women's Wellness Center can do complimentary bra fittings and offers breastfeeding products. For more information, contact them at (217) 347-1601.



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