

What to Expect at Your First Prenatal Visit ... and Beyond

Your first visit in our office will take place at approximately 8 weeks gestation. You will meet with either our nurse practitioner or your physician, depending on availability.

During this visit, you should expect to have a discussion of both your health and pregnancy histories, particularly focusing on any pre-existing medical conditions and past and current medications. It is important to share your complete medical history as well as any family history of genetic disorders, which could affect your pregnancy or the health of your baby. There will be a discussion of genetic screening tests to screen you and/or your partner for genetic disorders that you could potentially transfer to your baby. In addition, we will review together genetic screening done during the pregnancy for a variety of chromosomal disorders affecting the baby – trisomies 13, 18 and 21.

The genetic screening tests that we currently offer include **Foresight (carrier screening)** and **Prelude (noninvasive prenatal test)** both provided by **Counsyl**, as well as testing for Cystic Fibrosis and other conditions. (These tests are generally done after 10 weeks gestation. This blood can be drawn in a separate visit, along with routine prenatal labs, at ten weeks gestation). To learn more about these tests and the costs of doing them, please click on the highlighted test names on the Obstetrical Services page to take you to their individual websites. Please note that you are responsible for contacting the testing company to determine if your insurer will cover these tests and what your financial obligation will be, and this should be done prior to your first visit, if possible.

Dietary guidelines, including prenatal vitamin supplementation and healthy eating suggestions, will be provided to you. Our website has references in our Patient Education Library to help you understand your pregnancy, safe medications to take and foods to enjoy or avoid. We encourage you to utilize these tools to answer a lot of your questions.

Our practitioner will do an annual gynecologic exam, including a pap smear, if you have not had one performed in the appropriate time interval. The practitioner may use a doppler or an ultrasound to document the baby's heartbeat. If you have not had a flu shot, we will be happy to give you one at this visit.

Typically, the next prenatal visit is scheduled for 3 to 4 weeks after your first visit. You should anticipate monthly visits to your obstetrician until you reach approximately 30 weeks gestation, then you will come biweekly until you reach 36 weeks, and then weekly until delivery.

Typically, there is an anatomical ultrasound performed at approximately 18 weeks, a glucose tolerance test between 26 and 28 weeks, and a group beta strep test done between 35 and 37 weeks. You will also be given the Tdap vaccine (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) in your third trimester. Occasionally, there are special circumstances which may require additional testing; this is determined on an individual basis.

You will deliver at the Brigham and Women's Hospital. With our coverage partners Brigham/Faulkner OBGYN, we provide 24 hour coverage for emergencies and patients in labor. For emergencies or when you are in labor, day or night, simply call our main phone number (617) 735-8800 and you will be connected to our answering service, who will page the doctor on call.

We look forward to guiding you through a healthy and enjoyable pregnancy.