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Trimester 1: Weeks 1-13 Providing the Best for Yourself and Your Baby

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Extension Extra

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Family and Consumer Sciences

Pregnancy

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Providing the Best for Yourself and Your Baby...

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The Parents' Emotions

Expectant mothers and fathers have a lot of feelings about the changes a new pregnancy brings. Often good feelings are talked about while the not-so-good feelings are held inside. Fear, feeling unsure of yourself, and just plain worry are normal. Talking about such normal feelings can help you feel better. There is no need to face them alone.

Beginning an exercise program, if you haven't already, may help you deal with these new emotions. Physical activity helps you stay emotionally well in addition to keeping your body in shape. Consult your health care provider about any new exercise program.

Hormonal changes and mood changes go together. We are aware of such changes in the expectant mother, but other things affect her mood also, like pressures from friends, family, and co-workers as she prepares for her new role as a parent. Changing feelings also affect the father as he looks forward to the birth of his child.

When you are expecting to be a parent you should:

- Talk about your feelings.
- Ask for support and give support to your partner.
- If your partner is not in the picture, you still need support. Ask a family member or a friend to help you through the ups and downs you will be feeling.

- Continue to engage in sexual expression with your partner during the pregnancy. If you are not comfortable with this, discuss it with your health care provider.
- Enroll in prenatal classes. You will find others with whom to talk, learn, and share your feelings.

The Mother's Body

When a woman first suspects she is pregnant, she should visit a health care provider, a doctor, nurse, or nurse-midwife and plan for regular visits (every three to four weeks in trimester one) right from the start. By scheduling regular visits, possible medical problems can be avoided or caught early.

The needs of the mother's body include a good diet, strengthening exercises, proper rest, attention to dental health, and awareness of changes in the breasts.

Basically, everything the mother eats she feeds to the baby. The baby is nourished from the mother's blood that passes through the umbilical cord to the baby's blood system.

Mothers-to-be need:

- Whole grain breads and cereals.
- Protein from meat, poultry, fish and dairy products.

- Plenty of fiber from grains, fruits and vegetables.
- Plenty of water and milk.
- Few fats and few sugars.
- Rest. Avoid standing for long periods of time, and put feet up when sitting.
- Healthy teeth and gums. Brush and floss often, and schedule a trip to the dentist.
- A bra that supports your breasts as they get heavier.

The Developing Baby-To-Be

By the fourth week, the embryo is about 1/4 inch long and its heart has started to beat.

By the end of the eighth week, arms, legs, hands, and feet are formed and growing fast; the length has increased to an inch or so. The developing baby begins to be called a fetus after eight weeks.

In week 12, the fetus is about 2 1/2 inches long, and its sex is physically evident.

The developing fetus is affected forever by certain activities of the pregnant woman. It is important for you to get good information about dangers to the fetus during the important first trimester and during the remainder of the pregnancy.

Smoking

Chemicals from cigarette smoke pass from the mother's blood to the fetus's blood and growing body. These chemicals will reduce the number of brain cells the child will have.

Alcohol

Babies whose mothers have had at least two drinks a day or whose mothers have indulged in heavy binge drinking, even once during pregnancy have a one in ten chance of being born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). **Obstetricians don't know what a "safe" level of alcohol is.**

Drugs

Many drugs taken during pregnancy result in babies who are born addicted. Not only illegal drugs, but many over-the-counter and prescription drugs, are dangerous

to the baby. You can protect against such harm by checking with your health care provider before taking any drug or medication.

Developing fetuses need:

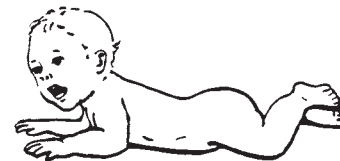
- A safe environment where their blood receives nothing harmful.
- Good nutrients from a mother whose diet before and during pregnancy has been healthy.
- Physical safety, which means that the mother's body must be protected from harm.
- Protection from x-rays and other possible dangers in the home or work environment. Many common household chemicals can be very dangerous. Follow the instructions of a health care provider.

For more information . . .

ExEx 14042 for the second trimester and ExEx 14043 for the third trimester are available. Call the county Extension office in your area of South Dakota for a free copy.

Suggested reading...

- Ting, Rosalind Y. *The Complete Mothercare Manual: An Illustrated Guide to Pregnancy, Birth and Children through Age Five*. New York: Sinin & Schuster, 1992.
- Trimer, Eric J. *Father-To-Be: Questions and Answers about Pregnancy, Birth and the New Baby*. Tucson, AZ: HP Books, 1983.
- Hochschild, A. *The Second Shift*. New York: Viking. 1989.
- Verny, Thomas R. *The Secret Life of the Unborn Child*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1982.
- Jones, Carl. *Secret Life of the Expectant Mother: Nine Months of Mysterious Intuitions and Heightened Perception*. Carol Publishing, 1997.
- Johnson, Robert V., Ed. *Mayo Clinic Complete Book of Pregnancy & Baby's First Year*. New York: W. Morrow and Co., Inc.. 1992.



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