

# DOING ALL YOU CAN DO

If you're expecting, you want to do your part to have the healthiest pregnancy possible. That means seeing your doctor regularly for prenatal care and having any tests that are recommended.

Here's a closer look at three screenings that can help your provider detect common pregnancy issues. The next time you're at a prenatal appointment and sliding your arm into a blood pressure cuff, you'll know why it is so important.



Screenings  
for safety's  
sake



## Anemia

### What is it?

A condition characterized by low red blood cell count or decreased hemoglobin levels preventing the body from delivering proper amounts of oxygen to organs and tissues. There are over 400 types of anemia, but the most common in pregnancy are iron-deficiency anemia and folate-deficiency anemia.

### HOW COMMON?

Approximately 15–25% of pregnant women develop iron-deficiency anemia.

### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Feeling tired or weak
- Rapid heartbeat
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty concentrating

### SCREENING

- First trimester
- 28 weeks

**Complete blood count:** A blood sample will be taken, and hemoglobin, hematocrit, and red blood cell counts will be evaluated.

### TREATMENT

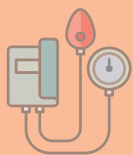
- Daily iron supplement

### RISKS

Untreated or severe anemia can increase the risk for low birth weight and premature birth.

### PREVENTION

**Good nutrition:** Eat foods that are high in iron, like dark green, leafy vegetables; red meat; eggs; and peanuts.



## Gestational hypertension

### What is it?

Gestational hypertension, also known as pregnancy-induced hypertension (PIH), is blood pressure above 140/90 that develops after week 20 in pregnancy.

### HOW COMMON?

Approximately 6–8% of pregnant women develop gestational hypertension.

### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- High blood pressure
- Edema (swelling)
- Visual changes, such as blurred or double vision
- Nausea and vomiting
- Presence of protein in the urine

### SCREENING

- Every prenatal appointment
- Blood pressure reading
- Urine sample

### TREATMENT

- Increased prenatal checkups
- Rest
- Medication may be prescribed

**Good nutrition:** Eat less salt and more protein, and drink at least eight glasses of water per day.

### RISKS

High blood pressure can impede blood flow to organs, preventing them from functioning properly. Gestational hypertension can lead to preeclampsia and eclampsia, which can result in serious, life-threatening complications for both mom and baby.

### PREVENTION

- Reduce salt in meals and make healthy nutrition choices.
- Drink 6–8 glasses of water a day.
- Get enough rest.
- Exercise regularly.
- Elevate your feet several times throughout the day.



## Gestational diabetes

### What is it?

A temporary form of diabetes that prohibits a pregnant woman from producing adequate amounts of insulin to regulate sugar levels.

### HOW COMMON?

Approximately 2–5% of pregnant women develop gestational diabetes.

### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Unusual thirst
- Nausea
- Frequent urination
- Blurred vision
- Fatigue

### SCREENING

- 24–28 weeks
- Glucose tolerance test: You will consume a sweet drink and have your blood drawn one hour later to see if your body is producing enough insulin to properly process sugar.

### TREATMENT

- Close monitoring of mother and baby
- Self-monitoring of blood glucose levels
- Insulin therapy, if necessary
- Diet and exercise management

### RISKS

If gestational diabetes is not treated, it can increase the risk for large birth weight and premature delivery, and a cesarean delivery may be needed.

### PREVENTION

**Good nutrition:** Choose foods that are high in fiber and low in fat and calories. Watch your portion sizes and consume a variety of foods.

**Exercise:** Aim for 30 minutes of daily activity before and during pregnancy.

## ▼ EXPECT THE BEST

For a happy birth day, you want a provider you can trust to keep you and your baby in the best health. Find an OB/GYN by visiting [ketteringhealth.org/obgyn](http://ketteringhealth.org/obgyn)