



# BABY STEPS

## Baby's Coming!

You've heard all the stories. Your aunt gave birth on the way to the hospital. Your friend delivered her baby in the bathroom. The truth is, you most likely will have plenty of time to get ready, especially if this is your first baby.

Most pregnant women go through practice labor (also called false labor) before they go through the real thing. Learn how to tell what is true labor and what is practice labor.

### Signs of TRUE LABOR:

- Contractions that get stronger, especially when you walk. You can feel them all over your belly and in your lower back.
- Contractions that get regular and closer together. They should come every 5 – 10 minutes.
- Pink or red fluid coming from your vagina.
- Your water might break. This could be a slow trickle or a sudden gush, like you have peed!

Call your doctor or midwife right away if you have any of these signs. They will tell you what to do.

### Some signs of PRACTICE LABOR are:

- Contractions that are not regular and do not get closer together.
- Contractions that go away when you change position.
- Contractions that are felt mostly in the front of your belly.

### Take care of yourself

- Pack your hospital bag at least one month before your baby's due date.
- Practice different ways to relax and relieve pain before the big day. You never know what will work when the time comes.
- Enroll in a child birth class. Call Alliance at **510-747-4577** to find a class near you.



Labor begins the birth process. It means your baby will be here soon!

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## Kick Counts

Starting in the 7th month (28 weeks) you should start doing kick counts. It is exactly what it sounds like. You count how many times your baby kicks in one hour.

### How to do Kick Counts\*:

- Do Kick Counts after a meal. Your baby is most active then.
- Sit with your feet up or lie down on your side.
- Check the time you start.
- Put your hands on your belly.
- Count how many times your baby moves. A “move” is any kick, wiggle, twist, turn, roll or stretch. Do not count baby’s hiccups.
- Count up to 10 moves.
- If your baby moves 10 times in the first hour, you can stop counting.

### If your baby doesn’t move 10 times in the first hour, don’t worry.

- Your baby may be sleeping.
- Eat or drink something
- Walk around for 5 minutes
- Then repeat kick counts for another hour

### Call the doctor or midwife right away if:

- You do not feel 10 moves in two hours
- You feel a sudden change in your baby’s kicks

### Take care of yourself

- Get regular pregnancy checkups.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs.
- Ask family or friends for help. Try not to stress out.

*\*Permission to use granted by the Fetal, Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Community Action Team, a collaboration of organizations in Alameda County.*



Healthy babies  
move many times  
during the day.

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## Born Too Soon

Premature (preemie) babies are born too soon, more than three weeks before their due date.

**While many preemies go on to lead normal lives, they may have problems with:**

- Growing
- Eating
- Breathing
- Staying warm
- Learning

Some preemies have serious health problems and need to stay in the hospital for a long time.

**To help prevent premature labor, watch for certain signs while you are pregnant and tell your doctor right away.**

**These signs include:**

- Pain or pressure in your lower back, or a sudden change in your back pain.
- Feeling like the baby is pressing down
- Contractions that come every ten minutes or less
- Period-like cramps that come and go
- Fluid or blood leaking from your vagina
- For some people, even diarrhea can be a sign of premature labor.

**If you have these symptoms:**

- Rest on your left side for one hour
- Drink 2 or 3 glasses of water or juice

If the symptoms do not go away after one hour, call your doctor or midwife. Do not worry about calling your doctor, office staff or midwife, day or night. It is their job to take care of you and your baby.



The good news is premature (early) labor can sometimes be prevented.

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## Hey Dads and Partners!

### Before your baby arrives

- Go to pregnancy checkups so you can hear the baby's heartbeat. And do not forget to go for the ultrasound. It is very exciting to see your baby for the first time.
- Attend childbirth and parenting classes with your partner. Call Alliance at **510-747-4577** to find a class.
- Help out around the house. If you have other kids, offer to take care of them. If you have a cat, empty the cat litter box because it is not safe for a pregnant woman to do it.
- Remind her to eat healthy foods and walk with her every day.

### The BIG DAY is here!

Whether she has a vaginal birth or c-section, your job is to pamper mom and support her. In case you are wondering what to do, read the Rules below.

**Rule #1:** Make sure to be there at the hospital during labor and birth.

**Rule #2:** Let her make the rules. If she wants a massage, give her one. If she wants you to leave her alone, stand by for a bit. She could change her mind at any time.



Does it seem like everyone's talking about mom and the baby? Do you feel left out?

We think dad/partners are important.

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**Rule #3** Encourage her. Talk about the baby. Tell her when you see that little head coming out.

**Rule #4:** Help her relax. Make her laugh, if you can.

Hold her hand, unless she tells you not to (see Rule #1). If you took childbirth classes, this is the time to try out all the tricks you learned.

**Rule #5:** Keep her comfortable. Help her change positions. Call the medical staff if she needs something.

## Finally, your baby is here. Now what?

As a parent, you hold a special place in your baby's life. Be involved by...

- Singing lullabies and rocking baby to sleep
- Giving baby a massage and bath
- Helping a nursing mom by bringing her food and a tall glass of water
- Helping mom find breast feeding support, if needed. Call Alliance at **510-747-4577** to connect with help.
- Changing baby's diapers
- Going to the Well Baby visits at the doctor's office

This is just the beginning. Stay involved in your child's life as he or she grows. In return, you will get smiles, giggles, kisses, and hugs. There is nothing like it.



## Take care of yourself

- Do not be afraid to ask family and friends for help.
- If you smoke, this is a good time to quit. Being around smoke can hurt all family members, especially your baby.

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## Exercise for Two

Exercise can make you feel better, help you sleep, and it can even prepare you for your baby's birth. Try to exercise most days of the week for 30 minutes.

### Find an exercise buddy and GO:

- Walking
- Swimming
- Stationary (exercise) biking

### Avoid activities where you might fall or get bumped.

These include:

- Step aerobics
- Skating or rollerblading
- Basketball or soccer
- Skiing

### Here are some exercise tips:

- Go for a walk with a friend. It's more fun to exercise with someone else. Take a walk in the mall or in a park.
- Take a prenatal exercise class.
- Get off the bus or train one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
- Take the time to warm up and cool down properly.
- Keep your cool. Wear cool, airy clothes and do not exercise in hot weather.
- Don't forget to drink water.

### Take care of yourself

- Don't overdo it. You should be able to talk while you exercise. If you cannot talk, you need to slow down.
- Stop if you feel sick or dizzy, or if it hurts.



Exercise is great for most pregnant women. But, check with your doctor or midwife before you start.

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## When you are pregnant, take care of your teeth!

Did you know that unhealthy teeth and gums could cause your baby to be born too early or too small? Your baby could even get tooth decay later on, from the germs in your mouth!

### If you don't take care of your teeth, you could have:

- Tooth pain or decay
- Bleeding gums, or
- You could even lose your teeth!

### See a dentist:

- For a checkup
- To get your teeth cleaned, and
- To treat any dental problems you have

### Go to the dentist right away if:

- You have not gone in one year
- You have pain in your mouth or bleeding gums
- You have any unusual lumps or sores in your mouth

Sometimes even pregnant women need x-rays. Be sure to tell your dentist that you are pregnant. They will take special care to make sure your baby is not harmed.

### Useful Resources:

Alliance members have dental coverage:

Medi-Cal members have Denti-Cal.

To find a dentist, call **1-800-322-6384**.

Group Care (IHSS) members have Delta Dental.

Call the Public Authority at **510-777-4201**.



Take care of your teeth!  
Brush your teeth after every meal, don't forget to floss and see your dentist.

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# BABY STEPS

## It's Never Too Late to Quit!

Would you give your baby a cigarette? Of course you wouldn't. You know that sort of thing is bad for babies. But did you know that every time a pregnant woman smokes, or drinks, or does drugs, including marijuana, so does her baby.

### This can cause problems like:

- Miscarriage (when the baby dies during pregnancy)
- Smaller, sicker baby
- Premature birth (when the baby is born too soon)
- Birth defects, like missing fingers or toes
- Learning problems
- Sometimes even death

### IF YOU SMOKE

- Throw away your cigarettes.
- E-cigarettes are not safe for baby either.
- When you feel like a smoke, chew gum, eat carrot sticks, or chew a pen (it's better than a cigarette).
- Drink lots of water.
- Keep busy planning for your baby's arrival.
- Put aside all the money you save by not buying cigarettes, and buy yourself something special.
- Ask your doctor for help quitting.  
You may be prescribed a nicotine patch.



It is not  
too late for  
you to quit!

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## IF YOU SMOKE

Would you like help quitting?  
Call the California Smokers' Helpline at  
**1-800-662-8887**  
[www.nobutts.org](http://www.nobutts.org)

## IF YOU DRINK ALCOHOL

- Stay away from alcohol during your pregnancy. If you cannot stop, call Alcoholics Anonymous at **510-839-8900**.
- If your friends tell you to drink, tell them "No thanks. I want a healthy baby!" You could even say that drinking makes you feel sick – another great reason for a pregnant woman not to drink alcohol.



## IF YOU USE ILLEGAL DRUGS

You are having a baby. It is time to get clean, or your baby could be born addicted, or worse. Don't be scared to ask your doctor for help. Or you could call **1-800-491-9099**. There are special programs for moms.

Even drug store medicines that are okay for adults can be bad news for your baby. Check with your doctor or midwife before taking ANY medicines!

## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- Hang out with people who support your decision to quit.
- Get help. You are not alone.
- Stay away from other people's smoke. It can harm you and your baby.

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# BABY STEPS

## Breastfeeding

### Breast milk: The perfect food

Breast milk is amazing food. It is custom-made to help your baby grow strong and healthy. It even changes when your baby's needs change! Since it's custom-made for your baby, it is easy to digest. Breastfeeding (also called nursing) helps build a special bond between mother and baby.

### Babies who breastfeed may:

- Get sick less often and for a shorter time
- Have fewer ear infections
- Be less likely to get overweight
- Have less chance of getting chronic diseases, like asthma and childhood diabetes

### Benefits for the parents include:

#### Convenience

Breast milk is always ready. No need to boil bottles or warm up formula. This is great at night, especially if you learn to nurse while lying down. There is also less stuff to take with you when you leave the house with your baby!

#### Saving money

Baby formula can be very expensive.

#### Rest

Breastfeeding allows the mom to slow down and relax.

#### Weight loss

Moms who nurse usually lose their pregnancy weight faster.

#### Medical benefits

Breastfeeding reduces a woman's chance of getting certain diseases, like breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and diabetes.

Breastfeeding is one of the most natural things in the world, once you learn how to do it! Sometimes it can be hard to get started. This is because many women do not have the information and support they need.



Best for you,  
best for  
your baby

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## Nurse, nurse, nurse

The more you nurse, the more milk you will make. Nurse as soon as you can after your baby is born. For the first few days, you will make a thick, yellow milk called colostrum. This is full of antibodies that help keep your baby from getting sick (breastfeeding helpers call it “liquid gold!”). That’s really ALL a baby needs until your milk comes in. If your baby is not getting enough milk, it is probably because she isn’t feeding properly. If so, get help right away from a breastfeeding helper.

## Get a breastfeeding helper

All over the world, women learn how to nurse from experienced moms. Here in the United States, we may not always have family or friends nearby to help us out. Luckily, we have breastfeeding helpers instead! These are professionals who are trained to help moms breastfeed.

A breastfeeding helper will help you learn how to position your baby and get the baby to feed properly. Talk to a breast-feeding helper while you are pregnant, and ask her to come to the hospital after your baby is born. You should also take a breastfeeding class during your pregnancy.

You can call Alliance Health Programs at **510-747-4577** to find out how to contact a breastfeeding helper or to sign up for a class. We support breastfeeding moms and we will pay for these services.

## Get a breast pump

If you plan to go to work or school, you may want to pump milk for your baby. If you need a breast pump, the Alliance will pay for one. For more information, call Alliance Health Programs at **510-747-4577**.

## Support a breastfeeding mom

When you see a mom nursing her baby in the mall or any other public place, smile and tell her what a great job she’s doing.

If a friend or relative is nursing a newborn baby, help out by dropping off meals or offering to babysit her older kids.

## Be confident

Remember that formula companies want you to buy formula. That’s why they give free samples! Almost any mom CAN breastfeed, with the right help and education. Don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t do it!

Women who are HIV positive or women who use certain drugs should not breastfeed. The HIV virus and some drugs can be passed on to the baby. You should check with your doctor if you have any concerns or are on any medications.

You know those pictures of mothers nursing their babies, gazing lovingly into their eyes and smiling peacefully? You may not get that feeling right away. It takes a bit of work to get there, but when you do, it is a beautiful thing!



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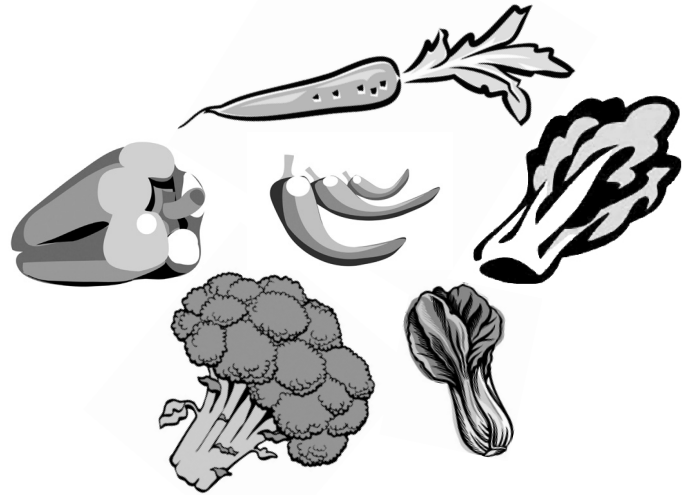
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# My Healthy Eating Plan

For Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women

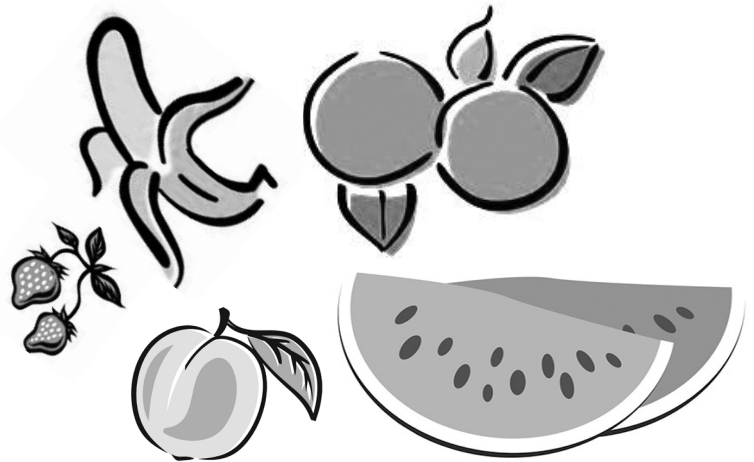
## Vegetables

- ❑ The more vegetables you eat, the better.
- ❑ Choose some that are dark green or orange.
- ❑ Choose fresh, frozen or canned with **no added sauce**.



## Fruits

- ❑ Eat fruits of many colors.
- ❑ Choose fresh, frozen or canned with **no added sugar**.
- ❑ Choose 100% fruit juice. Limit to one small cup a day.



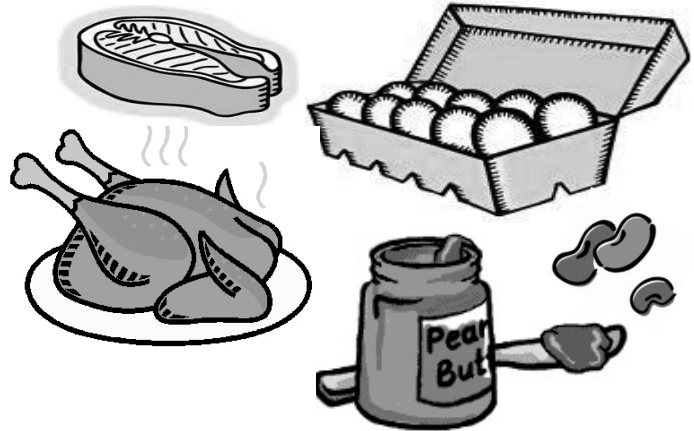
## Milk Products

- ❑ Choose milk or yogurt, nonfat or low-fat (1%).
- ❑ Try low-fat cheeses.
- ❑ Try soy milk with calcium.



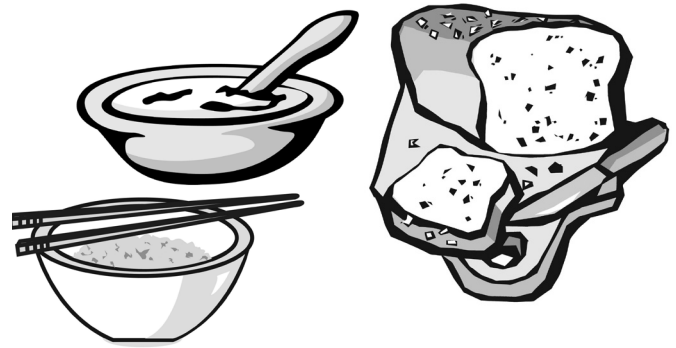
## Meat and Beans (protein foods)

- ❑ Eat beans and lentils instead of meat at some meals.
- ❑ Eat lean meat (90% lean or higher).
- ❑ Limit high-fat meats like sausage, hot dogs and bologna.
- ❑ Grill, broil, or bake instead of frying.
- ❑ Choose water-packed canned light tuna (not albacore).



## Breads, Grains and Cereals

- ❑ Choose whole grains at least half the time.
- ❑ Choose oatmeal, brown rice, corn tortillas and 100% whole wheat bread.
- ❑ Avoid sugary cereals.



## Oils and Fats

- ❑ Use small amounts of healthy liquid oils such as **canola** or **olive**.
- ❑ Avoid solid fats such as lard, shortening, stick margarine or butter.
- ❑ Limit fried foods.



## Drinks

- ❑ Drink plenty of water.
- ❑ Avoid sugary drinks like soda, fruit punch, sport drinks or energy drinks.
- ❑ Limit coffee to one cup a day.
- ❑ Do not drink alcohol while pregnant.



# We want you and your baby to be Healthy and Safe



## Safe Sleep

**There are many things you can do to help lower your baby's chance of a sudden or unexplained death also known as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or SIDS.**

- Always put your baby on their back when they are sleeping, for naps, and at night.
- Place your baby on a firm mattress. Do not use bumpers, blankets, pillows or place stuffed animals near baby.
- Keep baby's sleep area in the same room where you sleep. Use a safety-approved crib, bassinet or portable play area next to where you sleep.
- Your baby should not sleep in an adult bed, on a couch, or chair alone, with you or with anyone else.
- Do not let your baby get too hot during sleep. Dress your baby in sleep clothing, such as a one-piece sleeper. Do not use a blanket.
- Do not smoke, or allow anyone to smoke around you during your pregnancy. After your baby is born, do not allow anyone to smoke around your baby.
- Teach anyone who cares for your baby about safe sleep.
- Breastfeeding can lower the chances of SIDS – another great reason to breastfeed.



**Always  
remember,  
safe sleep is  
back to sleep**

To learn more about Safe Sleep, please go to: [www.nichd.nih.gov/sts](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sts)



**Questions?** Call Alliance Health Programs

Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm

Phone Number: **510.747.4577** • Toll-Free: **1.877.932.2738**

People with hearing and speaking impairments (CRS/TTY): **711/1.800.735.2929**

[www.alamedaalliance.org](http://www.alamedaalliance.org)



# BABY STEPS

## It's not just the baby blues

Maybe it's just the "baby blues." Some women get these feelings for a few weeks after the baby is born.

Sometimes it's not just the "baby blues." It is something more serious, known as postpartum depression (also called PPD).

### Are you:

- Feeling tired all the time?
- Having trouble sleeping, even though you are exhausted?
- Crying for no known reason?
- Thinking you are not good enough?
- Forgetting things?
- Feeling like everything is going wrong and there is nothing you can do to stop it?
- Losing interest in eating, or in sex?

These are some signs of PPD. If this sounds like you, get help right away. There is no need to suffer. Ask your doctor for advice. Some women find it helpful to go to therapy to talk about their problems. Others take medicines called antidepressants. Your doctor will help you decide the right treatment for you.

Don't wait – get treated so you can start to feel better and enjoy your baby.

*If you ever feel like you might hurt your baby or yourself, GET HELP right away!*

### Take care of yourself

- Talk to someone you trust. It's worse to keep it all inside.
- Try to get a break from your baby, even if it's just for an hour. Take a walk. Even a bath can help.

### Useful Resources

For help if you are a parent: Call Family Paths Parent Support Hot Line at **1-800-829-3777**.

If you feel like you may hurt yourself or others:

Call the Crisis Support Hotline at **1-800-309-2131**.



It doesn't make sense.  
 You have this darling little  
 baby in your arms. Your  
 baby looks just like you, and  
 even smiles. Everyone else is  
 going crazy over your baby.  
 Why aren't you happy?

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