



## You're pregnant?

Congratulations! Every baby deserves a healthy beginning. You can take steps before your baby is even born to help ensure a great start for your infant. That's why The Empire Plan offers mother and baby the coverage they need, and why The Empire Plan Benefits Management Program provides special services for enrollees whose primary coverage is The Empire Plan.

### 1. Call your doctor

As soon as you think you are pregnant, call your doctor. You can do the most for your baby during the first three months of pregnancy, so try to start your doctor visits as soon as possible. UnitedHealthcare covers your maternity care under the UnitedHealthcare portion of The Empire Plan Medical/Surgical Benefits Program.

Under The Empire Plan, you may choose a participating or non-participating provider for your maternity care.

#### Participating Provider

If you choose a participating provider (obstetrician, family practice physician or certified nurse-midwife), there are no copayments for prenatal visits, delivery or your six-week checkup after delivery. You pay only your copayment for covered services at participating laboratories.

To locate an Empire Plan participating provider or laboratory, call The Empire Plan toll free at 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) and select UnitedHealthcare. Or, visit the New York State Department of Civil Service web site at <https://www.cs.state.ny.us>. Always check with the provider before you receive services to make sure he or she participates in The Empire Plan for New York government employees.

#### Non-Participating Provider

If you choose a non-participating provider (obstetrician, family practice physician or certified nurse-midwife), after the annual deductible is met, UnitedHealthcare pays 80 percent of the reasonable and customary charges for maternity care. You pay the balance. There are separate charges for services at non-participating laboratories.

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## THE EMPIRE PLAN Healthy Babies

NEW YORK STATE  
HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM  
(NYSHIP) for Empire Plan enrollees  
and their enrolled dependents,  
and COBRA enrollees with  
their Empire Plan benefits.

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*This issue of Reporting On is for informational purposes only. Please see your doctor for diagnosis and treatment. Read your Empire Plan Certificate and Empire Plan Reports for complete information about coverage.*



### 2. Call Empire BlueCross BlueShield at 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447)

The Empire Plan Hospital Benefits Program provides your hospital coverage at hospitals or licensed birthing centers through Empire BlueCross BlueShield. You must call The Empire Plan toll free at 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) and choose Empire BlueCross BlueShield for pre-admission certification before maternity and other hospital admissions related to your pregnancy.

The Empire Plan's Benefits Management Program helps identify possible problems and works with the mother and her doctor throughout the pregnancy to ensure both get the care they need. Though doctors report problems in three out of every ten pregnancies, early diagnosis and care can help you have a healthy baby.

As soon as you know you are pregnant, call Empire BlueCross BlueShield toll free at 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) to certify pre-admission and enroll in the Healthy Babies Program. Call early – during the first month of pregnancy, if possible – and tell the representative you're calling about your pregnancy. The maternity specialist will ask you a few easy questions in a confidential five-minute conversation to help determine whether you or your baby is at risk:

- Is this your first pregnancy?
- Have you had problems during previous pregnancies?
- Do you have diabetes?
- Do you have urinary tract infections?

If the maternity specialist identifies potential concerns, and if you agree, a registered nurse

with training in maternity or newborn care will talk with you every four to six weeks about your progress. The nurse will help you develop questions to ask at your next provider visit. She'll also call your doctor to discuss possible follow-up. Under The Empire Plan, you, your doctor and your nurse work as a team.

If you call Empire BlueCross BlueShield within the first six months of your pregnancy, you can receive a free guide on prenatal care that is mailed to your home in a plain envelope. The publication highlights diet and exercise, tests during pregnancy, labor and delivery, basic baby care and what to ask your doctor.

### 3. Be informed

Ask your doctor or nurse-midwife, the doctor's nurse and the maternity specialist all your questions. Community resources and web sites listed on page 12 provide even more information. *Be informed.* Make sure you know how you can have a healthy pregnancy and baby.

### 4. Enroll your baby

Remember to change from individual coverage to family coverage or add your baby to your family coverage.

If you are an active employee, contact your agency Health Benefits Administrator within 30 days of your baby's birth.

If you are a retiree, write to the Department of Civil Service Employee Benefits Division, Albany, New York 12239 within 30 days of your baby's birth.

Your *NYSHIP General Information Book* has more information about changing your coverage.



## Exercise During Pregnancy

You may wonder if it is safe to exercise during pregnancy. Unless there is a medical

reason to avoid exercise, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes on most – if not all – days of your pregnancy. Exercise can:

- Prevent high blood pressure and gestational diabetes (that sometimes develop during pregnancy).
- Build stamina for labor and delivery.
- Ease common discomforts like constipation, backache, fatigue and varicose veins.
- Enhance well-being and promote early recovery and weight loss after labor and delivery.
- Relieve some emotional strains during the postpartum period when baby blues may begin.

### A few notes about safety

- Before you begin exercising, discuss your plans with your doctor.
- Be careful choosing your exercises. Stay away from activities that may put you at high risk for injury, such as horseback riding or downhill skiing.
- Do not engage in activities like soccer or kickboxing that could injure your abdomen.
- After your first trimester, avoid exercise that requires you to lie flat on your back, which can reduce blood flow to the uterus and endanger your baby.
- Brisk walking, swimming, hiking or dancing are usually safe choices.
- Try aerobics and yoga classes designed for pregnant women.
- Avoid overheating while exercising, and do not exercise on hot, humid days.
- Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise.



## Low-birthweight Babies

Low birthweight is a weight of 5½ pounds or less at birth. One of every 13 babies

born each year in the United States has a low birthweight. This low birthweight is linked to 65 percent of infant deaths and serious risk for long-term health challenges such as mental retardation, cerebral palsy and impairments in lung function, sight and hearing. According to the March of Dimes, you may prevent low birthweight if you:

- Have pre-pregnancy checkups.
- Take a multivitamin containing 400 micrograms of B-vitamin folic acid (the

amount in most multivitamins) every day before and early in your pregnancy. Natural sources of folic acid include orange juice, peanuts, green leafy vegetables, beans, broccoli, asparagus, peas, lentils and enriched grain products. (Folic acid helps prevent birth defects of the spine and brain. A baby's spinal column is formed a few days after a woman first misses her period.)

- Stop smoking. Smokers, on average, have smaller babies than nonsmokers. Exposure to another person's smoking when you're pregnant may decrease your baby's birthweight. Smoking during pregnancy may lead to preterm birth and



## Low-birthweight Babies (cont.)

stillbirth. Babies of mothers who smoked during pregnancy are more likely to have poor lung development, asthma and respiratory infections and to die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

- Stop drinking alcohol, using illicit drugs, or taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs (including herbal preparations) that are not prescribed by a doctor who knows you are pregnant. Drug and alcohol use limits fetal growth and can cause birth defects.

When you are pregnant:

- Get early, regular care.
- Eat a balanced diet with enough calories for a developing baby (usually about 300 calories a day more than a woman normally eats). A fetus is nourished by what a mother eats, and it can suffer if the mother eats poorly.
- Gain enough weight, but not too much. Health care providers recommend that a pregnant woman of normal weight gain 25 to 35 pounds.



## Feeding Your Baby

The most precious gift you can give your baby is a healthy start in life. Whether to feed

your newborn breast milk or formula is one of the first, most important health decisions you make for your baby. Babies fed either breast milk or formula can grow and develop normally, and each offers advantages. Cow's milk is not recommended for the first year.

Feeding time is a wonderful opportunity to bond with as well as nourish your baby and to stimulate intellectual, social and emotional development.

What you feed your baby is a very personal decision. Talk to your doctor early in your pregnancy about whether breast milk or formula is best for you and your baby. Then you'll have time to think about it before your baby is born.

### Breast milk

Breast milk is a complete form of nutrition for almost all babies. And, as an infant grows, the mother's milk changes to adapt to the child's changing needs. Extra ingredients are present

in breast milk, a unique source of food that cannot be duplicated. Breast milk usually is easily digested by a baby, and may reduce gas and discomfort. It naturally provides ideal amounts of protein, sugar, fat, most vitamins, growth factors, hormones and other substances a baby needs for healthy growth and development. Breast milk also contains fatty acids to promote brain development, antibodies and other substances that help protect a baby from illness.

Studies show that babies fed breast milk may have a lower incidence of vomiting, diarrhea, ear infections, lower respiratory infections, urinary tract infections and bacterial meningitis, and that breastfeeding may protect against sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Breast-fed children may have fewer childhood cancers and allergies, stronger bones, lower blood pressure, better pain relief and stress reduction and higher intelligence than formula-fed children. Later in life, diabetes, asthma and obesity are less common among adults who were fed breast milk as babies. Breastfeeding also promotes correct development of jaws, teeth and speaking abilities.

Breastfeeding increases the mother's production of hormones that help reduce her risk of uterine bleeding after delivery. These hormones may calm and relax her, which may protect her from postpartum depression. Breastfeeding mothers may lose weight gained during pregnancy more easily, have less chance of developing anemia after delivery and are less likely to develop osteoporosis later in life. Mothers who breastfeed are at reduced risk for ovarian, uterine, endometrial and breast cancer.

### **Economic Advantages of Breastfeeding**

- Breast milk is almost always available and has no charge.
- Breastfeeding helps babies fight off disease and infection and, therefore, lessens medical bills.
- Breastfeeding is good for the environment: no disposable bottles, cans or boxes, and no energy demands like those created for the production and transport of formula.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends feeding a baby breast milk exclusively (no water, juice, nonhuman milk, formula or food) for the first six months of a baby's life, and continuing breastfeeding throughout the baby's first year.

### **Formula**

Formula is a satisfactory alternative to breast milk, and particularly appropriate when the baby is adopted or maternal illness, breast abnormality or breast surgery prevents breastfeeding.

A variety of formulas are available and each offers essential nourishment and different compositions for the digestive and dietary needs of babies.

If you decide to feed your baby formula, be sure the one you choose provides DHA and ARA, nutrients that build healthy brains and eyes. Ask your pediatrician for a recommendation about which formula is best as your child grows and changes.

Calcium, iron, easy-to-digest protein, a healthy level of calories and vitamins and minerals are vital to the baby's health and development and should be in any formula you choose.

Certain formulas are very similar to breast milk. Some mothers combine breast milk and formula feeding, which benefits the baby by providing special nutrients and enables the mother and other caregivers to take advantage of the conveniences and other benefits of formula feeding.

*Based on information from the American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control, March of Dimes, National Cancer Institute and WebMD.*

### **Childbirth Education Classes**

In the sixth or seventh month of your pregnancy, you and your partner (or a family member or friend who will be your labor support or coach) may want to start taking a childbirth education class. These classes usually run for six or eight weeks and include:

- information about what you can expect during pregnancy, labor and delivery;
- suggestions of proper diet and exercise during pregnancy;
- relaxation and breathing techniques to use during labor and delivery;
- how your partner or labor coach can best help you during delivery; and
- a chance to meet and spend time with other expecting parents.

Taking a childbirth education class can reduce your stress by preparing you to deal with what might happen during pregnancy, labor and delivery. Contact your doctor's office or your local hospital or birthing center for more information about childbirth education classes. Call early in your pregnancy to make a reservation. Note: Any charges for these services will not be reimbursed by The Empire Plan.



## Baby Blues

Feeling blue after having a baby is normal for many women. About 90 percent of

cases improve without treatment.

Symptoms of baby blues may begin and end within the first seven to ten days after the baby is born. Symptoms include crying, mood swings, sadness, anxiety and difficulty sleeping.

Rest and support from family and friends help lessen baby blues.

### Postpartum depression

In an estimated 10 percent of cases, baby blues will develop into a severe illness similar to depression. Most of these severe cases will develop within the first six weeks after the baby is born, but others may not develop for up to one year. The mother and her family should be especially sensitive to the possibility of depression during this time. The combination of hormonal shifts and the mother's demanding role can place her at risk for postpartum depression.

Signs of depression may include:

- Excessive concern about the baby's health, which may take on the characteristics of obsessive-compulsive disorder.
- Self-criticism of her own parenting skills.
- Detachment from her child.

If these feelings continue for more than two weeks, the mother should talk to her obstetrician/gynecologist. Early diagnosis and treatment are important for mother and baby. Studies show that children of depressed mothers do not get enough stimulation, which is vital for intellectual and emotional growth.

Postpartum depression is often treated as major depression. A combination of psychotherapy and medication may help.

If a woman experiences one episode of postpartum depression, she has a 50 percent chance of another episode with another pregnancy.

If you think you or a loved one is suffering from postpartum depression, or if you have questions, call The Empire Plan toll free at 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) and select OptumHealth.

*Based on information by Josepha Cheong, MD; Michael Herkov, PhD; Wayne Goodman, MD © 1999 University of Florida Brain Institute*

### Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAAccount)

For eligible employees of the State of New York Executive Branch who are Management/Confidential or represented by CSEA, PEF, UUP, NYSCOPBA, Council 82, DC-37, PIA, PBA; Unified Court System; Legislature

Will you need child care for your baby? The Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAAccount) could help save you money by allowing you to pay for your child's care with pre-tax dollars. Under this program, you may set aside up to \$5,000 in pre-tax salary for eligible child care. See your agency Health Benefits Administrator for details.

Employees of Participating Employers and employees of Participating Agencies: Ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator if a similar benefit is available to you.



## Choosing Your Baby's Doctor

Choosing a pediatrician is an important part of planning for a new baby. This is the

doctor who will care for your child as he or she grows and develops. A good time to start looking is about six or seven months into your pregnancy. Ask relatives and friends for recommendations. Talk to parents in your neighborhood or get referrals from your own doctor. Most pediatricians, despite busy schedules, will be willing to set up a short meeting with you so you can ask questions about the things that are most important to you. By talking to the pediatrician and office staff, you can get to know whether they have the same opinions on care and raising children as you do.

Questions to consider before deciding on a doctor for your baby:

- Is the doctor an Empire Plan participating provider?
- Where is the office located? Is it convenient to my home and/or work place? Is parking close by?
- What are the office hours?
- How do I contact the doctor after office hours, on weekends and during emergencies?
- Who covers for the doctor if he or she is unavailable?
- With what hospital is the doctor affiliated? Is the hospital in The Empire Plan network?
- Are sick appointments made on the same day?
- Will my child like the doctor?
- Will my child see the same doctor for all visits?
- What's the doctor's position on breastfeeding, vaccinations and prescribing antibiotics?
- How available is the doctor if I have questions? When is the best time to call? If I can't speak with the doctor, who will handle my questions?
- What is the doctor's training and experience? Is he or she board certified?
- Does the doctor seem to know about current issues and advances in pediatric medicine?
- How friendly and helpful is the office staff?
- Is there anything about the doctor or the office that bothers me?



## Fathers and Baby Care

Many new moms hesitate to let dads care for the baby, but dads are parents, too and

have a lot to offer their babies.

Some dads jump right in to baby care. Others aren't sure what to do. Many men – like many women – have never cared for a baby until their own is born. So, for both dads and moms, a baby can be exciting and unfamiliar at the same time.

Dads may initially feel shy about helping out. Changing diapers, bathing and dressing the baby are great ways for dads to get to know their babies.

Dads may also feel that doctors, nurses and visitors pay more attention to mom and the baby than to them. Dads need to remind others that they too want to provide good care for their babies.



## Fathers and Baby Care (cont.)

### Suggestions for Dad

- Ask questions.
- Care for your baby. Children need to know that men take care of children, too.
- Hold your baby and talk to her. Your baby will like your deeper voice and feel safe in your arms.
- Your partner needs your help and support. Tell her she's a good mom and that she's doing a good job with the baby.

- Offer to help with feedings. Give your baby a bottle or arrange the pillow when mom is feeding the baby.
- Cook or clean up after meals. Even ordering pizza or take-out helps. Your support at mealtimes is important and reduces stress for the mom.
- Encourage mom to get plenty of rest.

**Remember:** Your baby needs your love and attention right from the start. A dad's love and care make a baby feel good and secure.

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## Questions and Answers

**Q.** Will my dental work pose a risk to my unborn baby?

**A.** Routine dental work should continue throughout your pregnancy and should not cause concern. In fact, delaying needed dental work could be risky. Badly decayed teeth or impacted wisdom teeth can cause infection that could spread and endanger both you and your baby. When your body is fighting to stay healthy, by-products and chemicals are produced and travel through your bloodstream. If these chemicals reach your uterus, they may cause premature labor. Research suggests that women who have gum disease or periodontitis may be seven times more likely to have a baby born too early and too small.

Be sure to tell your dentist or hygienist you are pregnant so necessary precautions are taken. Avoid X-rays unless they are absolutely necessary. The American Dental Association recommends brushing teeth thoroughly twice a day with fluoride

toothpaste to remove plaque and prevent tooth decay and periodontal disease and cleaning between teeth daily with floss or interdental cleaners.

**Q.** My friend told me I shouldn't touch raw meat or clean my cat's litter during my pregnancy. Is she right?

**A.** Germs that cause only mild or no symptoms at all in adults can be deadly to an unborn fetus. The parasite that causes toxoplasmosis is found in raw meat and cat feces and can cause severe brain damage in the fetus. Pregnant women should practice good hygiene when handling raw meat, avoid contact with sandboxes and litter boxes and wear gloves when gardening.

**Q.** I am a victim of domestic violence. Where can I go for help?

**A.** Call the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence hotline toll free at 1-800-942-6906; for a Spanish-speaking representative, call 1-800-942-6908. And, talk with your doctor. Your baby's health is at stake.

**Q. Is it safe for me to use household cleaning products while I'm pregnant?**

**A.** Some cleaning agents may cause birth defects after prolonged direct contact with your skin. Be careful not to use cleaners with strong fumes, like oven cleaners. Wear gloves and facial protection and work in a well-ventilated area. Read labels to check if the substance is dangerous for pregnant women. Contact the manufacturer, talk with your agency health and safety officer or ask your doctor if you have questions.

**Q. If a woman is HIV-positive, will her baby be born HIV-positive too?**

**A.** Women who are HIV-positive can help protect their babies. New drugs can reduce to 2 percent or less the risk of HIV-positive mothers passing the virus onto their babies, compared to a risk of about 25 percent for untreated mothers. It is important for a woman considering pregnancy or who is already pregnant to have a simple blood test to determine if she is HIV-positive. The New York State AIDS Hotline provides information about free anonymous testing. Call toll free 1-800-541-2437; for a Spanish-speaking representative, call toll free 1-800-233-7432.

It is better to be tested for HIV during pregnancy than to wait until delivery. If a woman without prenatal HIV test results declines HIV testing during delivery, hospitals are required to conduct expedited HIV testing on her newborn. Treatments for mom during or shortly after delivery can reduce transmission from mother to baby by up to two-thirds. If you are HIV-positive, do not breastfeed your baby. The HIV virus can be carried in breast milk.

**Q. I never had chicken pox, measles, mumps or rubella as a child. Should I be concerned about getting them during my pregnancy?**

**A.** If you are thinking about getting pregnant, check with your doctor about vaccines you might need. If you are exposed to chicken pox, measles, mumps or rubella, tell your doctor immediately. You may not develop the disease, but if you do, infection in early pregnancy may cause birth defects. Women

of childbearing age should be sure that their immunizations are current before becoming pregnant.

**Q. Is there any reason to limit fish intake during my pregnancy?**

**A.** Yes. Although fish and shellfish are an important part of a healthy diet, certain types of fish may be contaminated with high levels of mercury or industrial pollutants, which can be harmful during pregnancy. When a pregnant woman consumes large amounts of mercury, her baby may suffer brain damage. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends that women who could become – or who are – pregnant avoid eating swordfish, shark, king mackerel or tilefish, which can contain high levels of mercury. Instead, the FDA recommends eating up to 12 ounces (two average meals) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury such as shrimp, salmon, pollock, catfish and canned light tuna. Because tuna steak and albacore (“white”) tuna generally contain higher levels of mercury than canned light tuna, the FDA recommends limiting intake of tuna steak and albacore tuna to six ounces (one average meal) per week. Talk with your doctor about diet recommendations.

**Q. Is it possible for me to transfer a sexually transmitted disease (STD) to my unborn baby?**

**A.** Sexually transmitted diseases in pregnant women may cause spontaneous abortion and/or infection in the newborn. Complications may include pneumonia, eye infections and permanent neurological damage. If you think you have a sexually transmitted disease, see your doctor as soon as possible. Most STDs are treated easily. The earlier a woman seeks treatment, the less likely she is to pass the disease on to her baby.

**Q. How can I prevent exposing my baby to dangerous levels of lead?**

**A.** Renovating a home built before 1978 may expose you, your baby and young children in your home to high lead levels. Be aware of



## Questions and Answers (cont.)

lead paint on surfaces such as windowsills, railings and stair edges, especially at a height that a child may chew or mouth. Before renovating, consider testing the painted surfaces for lead. Your local health department can recommend experts. Pregnant women exposed to high levels of lead may be at increased risk for miscarriage, preterm labor or having a baby with developmental delays. If lead is found, hire an expert who follows safety precautions (such as blocking off the room) to remove it. Stay out of the home until the paint is gone and cleanup is completed. Have workers wet-mop dust or chips from the paint to prevent them from becoming airborne. After your baby is home, make sure painted surfaces are in good condition, especially those your baby can touch.

To minimize levels of lead in tap water, the Environmental Protection Agency recommends running your tap water until it is cold – at least 60 seconds – and a minimum of two minutes if the tap has not been used for more than six hours. Use only cold tap water for drinking, cooking and making infant formula. Call your local health department or your doctor if you have questions.

**Q.** I have heard of babies dying of SIDS. What is it and how can I reduce my baby's risk?

**A.** SIDS is "sudden infant death syndrome," the diagnosis for the sudden unexplained death of an infant under one year of age. SIDS is the leading cause of death in infants between one month and one year of age. Most SIDS deaths occur between the ages of two and four months. While there is no way to predict which babies will die from SIDS, there are ways to lower your baby's risk:

- Put your baby to sleep on his or her back (unless advised otherwise by your doctor), even for naps.
- Place your baby on a firm mattress and not a soft surface (like a waterbed).
- Do not use fluffy pillows or comforters, or put soft pillow-like toys in your baby's crib.
- Keep your baby's face and head uncovered during sleep.
- Do not let your baby get too warm during sleep.
- Take your baby for regular well-baby checkups and routine immunizations.
- Do not smoke during pregnancy or allow smoking around your baby.



## Prenatal Testing

Prenatal tests are medical tests you receive while you are pregnant. They help your doctor

monitor your health during pregnancy and the health of your developing baby.

Some prenatal tests are given to almost all pregnant women. These include blood pressure checks and blood and urine tests.

The Empire Plan covers in full all routine pre and postnatal visits and urinalyses received from Empire Plan participating obstetricians/gynecologists. Additional testing, based on medical necessity, is also covered but may be subject to a copayment. The Empire Plan Basic Medical Program covers services received from non-participating providers. (See your *NYSHIP General Information Book and Empire Plan Certificate* for more information about the Basic Medical Program.)

Your doctor will listen to your baby's heartbeat at each visit (beginning when your baby's heart is developed enough to be heard – usually by about 12 or 13 weeks). After about 20 weeks, your doctor will begin measuring your abdomen to follow your baby's growth. A normal heartbeat and growth rate are important signs that your baby is developing properly. Prenatal care also usually includes tests for:

- Hepatitis B, syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases that could be dangerous to a developing baby. A Pap smear to rule out possible cancer of the cervix is given and a test for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is offered.
- the presence of antibodies in your blood to show immunity to rubella (German measles) and varicella (chickenpox), which can cause birth defects if you are infected during pregnancy.
- Anemia (low red blood cell count) to make sure you are getting enough iron. Too little iron could cause you to feel especially tired and possibly increase your risk of delivering your baby too soon.
- your blood type, including whether or not you carry a protein called the Rh factor. Women who do not have the Rh factor are considered Rh negative and usually need a series of injections to protect their babies from a possible blood problem.
- bacteria in your urine, which could indicate an infection that can pose a serious risk for both you and your baby.
- sugar in your urine, which can be a sign of diabetes. Your doctor may suggest additional tests if sugar shows up in your urine.
- protein in your urine, which can indicate a urinary tract infection or, later in pregnancy, a pregnancy-related condition that includes high blood pressure. Your doctor may suggest additional tests if your urine has protein in it.
- gestational diabetes. A glucose tolerance test that is usually performed at about 28 weeks identifies this condition.

- the presence of Group B streptococcus (GBS). Your doctor performs a cervical test at about the sixth month of your pregnancy. If the bacteria is present (common for many women and considered a normal part of a woman's reproductive system), you may receive treatment during labor to protect the baby from becoming infected during birth.

- cystic fibrosis (CF), an inherited disease that can severely affect breathing and digestion.

Your doctor may perform other prenatal tests, depending on your medical and family history and that of the father, as well as the course of your pregnancy. These tests include a blood screening for alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) given between the 16th and 18th weeks of pregnancy. This screening determines a baby's risk for certain disorders including Down Syndrome. One or more ultrasounds may also be offered. An ultrasound uses sound waves to create a picture of the baby and helps the doctor date the pregnancy and follow the baby's growth and development. This test also helps determine the presence of more than one baby, the level of fluid around the baby, the health and location of the placenta and the sex of the baby.

Women at increased risk of certain pregnancy problems may be offered additional tests. These tests include amniocentesis, a test of the fluid surrounding the baby that detects certain genetic abnormalities; chorionic villus sampling (CVS), a sampling of the baby's tissue from the fingerlike projections in the placenta; and/or a fetal non-stress test that measures the frequency of a baby's movement in the womb and how the baby's heart rate relates to the movement.

If you have any questions about prenatal tests or the terms used in this article, talk with your doctor. If you are unsure whether a test will be covered, call The Empire Plan toll free at 1-877-769-7447 (1-877-7-NYSHIP) before you receive the test.

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## Resources for Healthy Babies

All 1-800, 1-877 and 1-888 telephone numbers are toll free.

### Alcoholism and Substance Abuse

NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services .....1-800-522-5353

**Cancer**/National Cancer Institute .....1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

**Diabetes**/American Diabetes Association .....1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)

### Domestic Violence

NYS Coalition Against Domestic Violence Hotline ..... 1-800-942-6906

Spanish NYS Coalition Against Domestic Violence Hotline .....1-800-942-6908

**Environmental Health**/NYS Department of Health .....1-800-458-1158

### Food and Nutrition

Growing Up Healthy Hotline, NYS Department of Health .....1-800-522-5006

**Heart Health**/American Heart Association .....1-800-AHA-USA-1 (1-800-242-8721)

**HIV/AIDS**/NYS AIDS Information Hotline, NYS Department of Health .....1-800-541-2437

NYS Spanish AIDS Information Hotline, NYS Department of Health .....1-800-233-7432

### Lead Exposure

National Lead Information Center Hotline,

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency .....1-800-424-LEAD (1-800-424-5323)

### Oral Care

American Dental Association .....312-440-2500

**Pregnancy and Birth Defects**/March of Dimes .....1-888-MODIMES (1-888-663-4637)

This *Reporting On* is based in part on information from:

- American Academy of Pediatrics ([www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org))
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists ([www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org))
- American Dental Association ([www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org))
- American Medical Association ([www.ama-assn.org](http://www.ama-assn.org))
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))
- March of Dimes ([www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com))
- National Institutes of Health ([www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov))
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ([www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov))
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration ([www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)) and
- WebMD ([www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)).

Visit the web sites of the sources listed here for more details. The Empire Plan NurseLine<sup>SM</sup> at 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) offers health information and support from an experienced registered nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can call the same number to reach The Empire Plan NurseLine's Health Information Library. Enter PIN number 335 and a four-digit topic code from The Empire Plan NurseLine brochure. If you do not have your brochure, ask the NurseLine nurse to send you one.

State of New York Department of Civil Service, Employee Benefits Division, Albany, New York 12239 • <https://www.cs.state.ny.us>

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It is the policy of the State of New York Department of Civil Service to provide reasonable accommodation to ensure effective communication of information in benefits publications to individuals with disabilities. These publications are also available on the Department of Civil Service web site (<https://www.cs.state.ny.us>). Click on Benefit Programs then NYSHIP Online for timely information that meets universal accessibility standards adopted by New York State for NYS agency web sites. If you need an auxiliary aid or service to make benefits information available to you, please contact your agency Health Benefits Administrator. COBRA Enrollees: Contact the Employee Benefits Division at 518-457-5754 (Albany area) or 1-800-833-4344 (U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands).