

Pregnancy a Time for Joy and Anticipation

By Dr. John F. Montione

Many young couples, on first learning that the wife is pregnant, are filled with fear and misgivings. Pregnancy, especially the first, should be filled with joy and anticipation. Take away fear and substitute understanding of the process of formation of a new life and the nine months of pregnancy become happiness.

In a few words, I will try to state the usual and common changes that occur with pregnancy without confusing medical terms that are difficult to understand.

The first indication that a woman may be pregnant is the absence of her usual monthly menstrual period. In some rare cases, especially with newly married couples, a bride may miss a period without being pregnant. When you have missed two periods, call and make an appointment with your Obstetrician. The diagnosis of pregnancy can be done by examination and finding the uterus womb enlarged and soft. If there is any doubt about pregnancy, a test on the urine can be done easily and readily within twenty-four hours.

What are some of the symptoms and physical changes that occur with pregnancy, Nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up). This may occur during the first two or three months. Call your doctor and he will

prescribe for you the usual medication to relieve the physical symptoms. This is safe to use and has no effect on the baby.

Breast enlargement. You will find that the breasts become enlarged and tender. The nipple will become darker in color and small white pimples form around the nipple. These are normal physical changes that occur with pregnancy. If you need a larger bra, be sure to get one that will give firm support to the breasts preventing tenderness. If any secretion comes from the nipple, wash them with soap and water and keep the nipple soft with any good skin cream.

Inguinal or Groin pain. Another symptom that many experience is a pulling type of pain in the groin and back. This may be due to the pulling of the ligaments that hold up the uterus. As the uterus becomes bigger and higher the pull may be more.

Frequency of Urine. As the uterus becomes larger, the urinary bladder is compressed, so the capacity is small. This causes the expectant mother to urinate often. This is normal.

Increase in vaginal discharge. When this occurs, avoid using abrasive wash cloths. Cleanse by pouring water over the pubic area and patting dry, not rubbing.

On or about 4 to 5 months, the growing baby will begin to move. At first, it will feel as if something is scratching inside and then there will be active movement. This onset will vary with each pregnancy.

The baby now is fully formed and will grow in size until at term. The baby does not obtain nourishment from the mother by direct connection. The afterbirth or placenta which is formed in the lining of the uterus, by the union of the uterine membrane and the membrane of the baby provides nourishment for the baby and eliminates waste products. Therefore the diet, vitamins and other nourishments prescribed by the doctor are for the mothers' well being.

Mother's weight should be controlled and should not exceed 15 to 20 pounds extra.

Danger signs of pregnancy are bleeding from the uterus, severe uterine pain, temperature elevation, premature rupture of the waters, sudden increase in weight, swelling of feet and hands, severe headaches, and blurring of vision. If any unusual symptoms occur notify your doctor and allow him to make the decision to see you.

When labor begins, what do you look for? After nine months of pregnancy labor will start. In the last three

months of pregnancy, false labor may occur. False labor is irregular contractions of the uterus. There is no regular pattern to these contractions. When labor starts, the contractions (labor pains) will occur with regularity. When the contractions occur every five minutes or less and last for thirty to forty seconds, this is active labor. When this happens for one hour, it is time to go to the hospital.

On admission to the obstetrical floor, you will be examined by the hospital doctor to determine your progress of labor; and he will notify your doctor. The nurse will shave the pubic hair and give an enema. As labor progresses you may become uncomfortable. The doctor will order medication to ease your pain. When the baby is ready to be born, anesthesia will be administered and no pain will be experienced.

I will not describe the technique of delivery in detail but will mention that instruments may be used and the perineum may have to be cut to facilitate the delivery. Any discomfort will be relieved by medication following the delivery. Often medication will be given to dry up the breasts if you do not intend to breastfeed. Hospitalization is usually three to four days.

Pregnancy should be a healthy, happy time for every couple.

Check - Off List For Wedding

1. Visit your parish priest at least six weeks before your intended wedding date. Do not arrange reception, vacation, etc., until you have confirmed your date with the priest.
2. If you share floral expenses with the other couples being married on the same day, it will save costs and avoid confusion between weddings. Be sure that the church is decorated according to the parish customs and traditions.
3. Inquire about the manner in which the organist is contacted and the customary offering. Do not insist on your own music as some is not suitable or permitted in church.
4. Instruct the photographer to consult the priest on what is permitted.
5. Impress the necessity of promptness on the part of the wedding party for both the rehearsal and wedding.
6. It is also suggested that you and the members of the wedding who will be receiving Holy Communion, go to confession beforehand. However, if this is not possible, the priest will hear confessions on the night of the rehearsal.
7. The Eucharistic Regulation:
No solid foods or liquids for one hour before Communion.
Water and medicine may be taken at any time.
The bride and groom may receive Holy Communion under both species.
8. The bride and her attendants should be most conscious of the rules of modesty and decency of dress. It is quite inconsistent to be asking God's blessing while ignoring His rule of modesty.
9. Each parish has its own regulations for the conducting of weddings. You will be expected to follow these rules as this will insure uniformity, dignity and propriety. Do not ask for exceptions to these as they are for your benefit. If you are not sure of the parochial customs and rules, inquire of the priest with whom you are making your arrangements.
10. It is now possible in this Diocese for couples in a Mixed Marriage to be married at a Nuptial Mass. It must be mutually agreeable to both parties and is to be requested by the couple, otherwise the ceremony will take place at kneelers in the sanctuary without Mass.
11. A non-Catholic Clergyman may be invited to participate in the Marriage ceremony. Arrangements for this should be made in advance with the priest marrying you.
12. The marriage should take place in the parish of the bride; for a justifying reason, it may take place in the groom's parish. Permission must be obtained from the pastor of the bride or groom to be married in another church.
13. A Baptismal Certificate, issued not more than six months before the wedding, must be presented to the priest by both bride and groom.
14. No marriage may be performed immediately before or after a regular scheduled Mass on Sunday or Holy Days.
15. The following is the schedule of offerings: Low Nuptial Mass \$15; Sung Nuptial Mass \$20; Wedding without Mass \$15.
16. Applicants for marriage license must present physician's statement certifying to a pre-marital blood test, signed by physician and applicant. Statement must show date the specimen was taken, test completed, physical examination and name and address of laboratory making the test.
17. For minors (males under 21, females under 18) consent of both parents or guardians is required, either in person or notarized statement. All under 21 must present proof of age. License issued in New York State may be used anywhere in the state.
18. The fee for the marriage license is \$3.00. This license is valid for 60 days from the date of issuance.
19. Marriage may take place 24 hours after the issuance of license, providing that 3 days have elapsed between date on which the blood specimen was taken and the date of the license.
20. License must be filled out by the officiating priest and signed by the two witnesses. The license is then forwarded by the priest to the issuing office. A copy will be sent to you. A Marriage Certificate may be obtained from the Church at which you are married.

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