

Guide for New, Expecting Moms: How to Talk to Your Doctor About Concerns During Pregnancy

Pregnancy can come with many questions, and no concern is too small when it comes to you and your baby's health. As your body changes and grows, it's important to know how to advocate for yourself and your baby. Here's a quick guide to help you feel more confident speaking with your doctor during pregnancy.

Tips for Talking to Your Doctor

Trust your instincts. If something feels off, even if you're not sure if it's "a big deal," bring it up. No concern is too small.

Be honest and specific. Describe your symptoms clearly. Explain when they started, how often they happen and how they make you feel. Use examples if helpful (e.g., *"It feels like a burning pain when I pee"*).

Take notes. Pregnancy brain is real! Jot down symptoms, questions or changes you notice so you don't forget at your appointment.

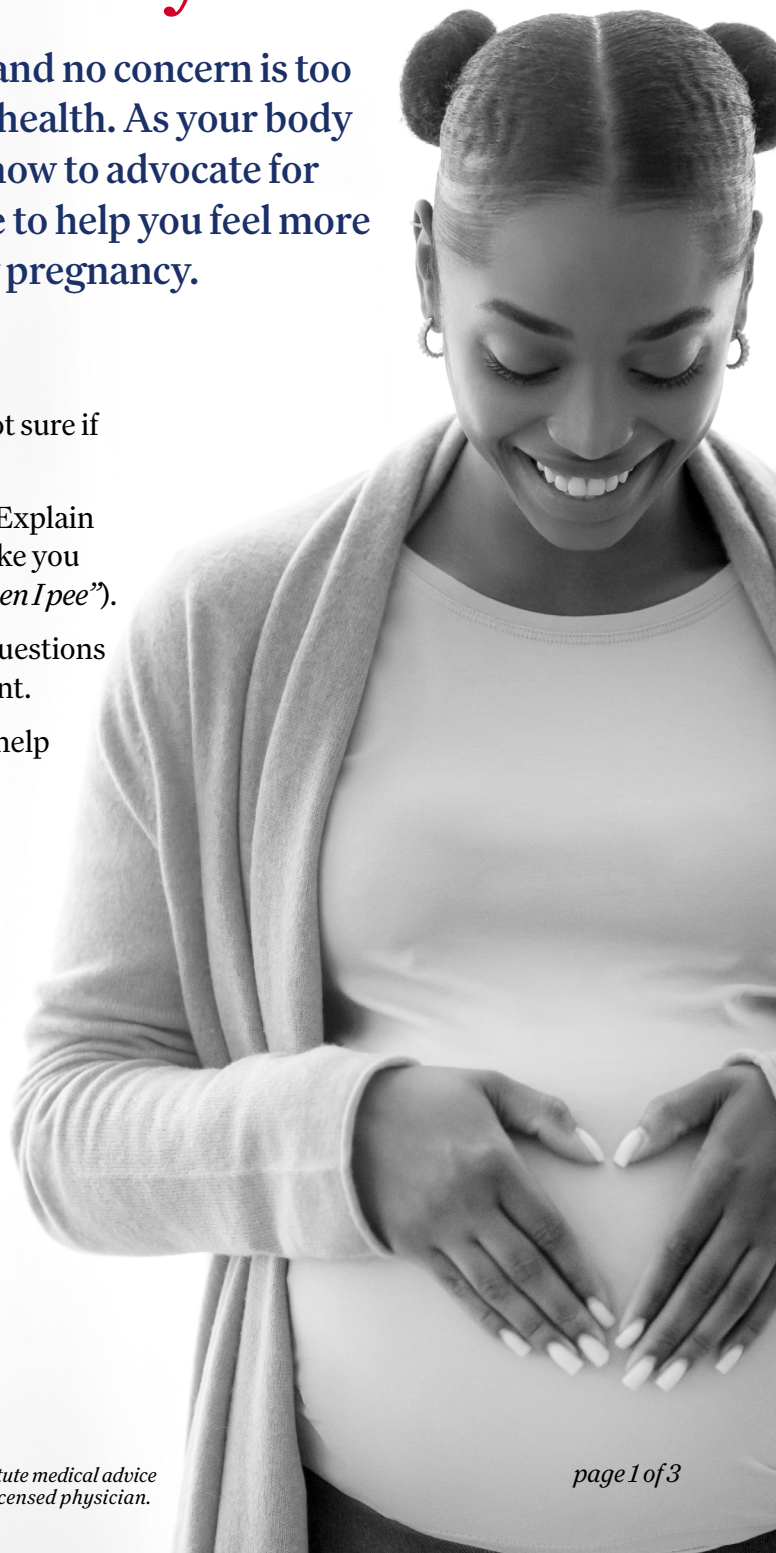
Bring support. Your partner, friend or family member can help take notes, ask questions or just be there for moral support.

Ask follow-up questions.

If you don't understand something, ask:

- *"Can you explain what that means?"*
- *"Is this normal for pregnancy?"*
- *"Should I be worried?"*
- *"What are the next steps?"*

Speak up if you feel dismissed. You deserve to be heard. If you feel like your concerns aren't being taken seriously, it's okay to ask again, or even seek a second opinion.



Common Pregnancy Concerns to Bring Up

Here are some common, but important conditions and symptoms that you should never hesitate to mention:

Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)

WHAT IT IS: Infection in the urinary tract, common in pregnancy.

SYMPTOMS: Burning during urination, frequent urges to pee, cloudy or foul-smelling urine, lower abdominal pain.

WHY IT MATTERS: If left untreated, a UTI can spread to your kidneys and cause serious complications. It can also increase the risk of preterm labor and low birth weight.

TIP: Even if it doesn't hurt much, bring up any change in how you feel when you pee. You can also request a urine test just to be sure. UTIs are common in pregnancy and easy to treat when caught early.

HOW TO BRING IT UP: *"I've been feeling some burning when I pee. Could this be a UTI?"*

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV)

WHAT IT IS: Imbalance in vaginal bacteria.

SYMPTOMS: Thin grayish discharge, strong fishy odor, itching or irritation.

WHY IT MATTERS: BV can lead to infections in the uterus or amniotic fluid and is linked to premature birth and low birth weight — so catching and treating it early matters.

TIP: Don't feel embarrassed. Vaginal health is a normal and important topic. Speaking up helps protect your health and your baby's, and your provider will be glad you did.

HOW TO BRING IT UP: *"I've noticed a strong odor and different discharge lately. Should I be tested for BV?"*

Yeast Infections

WHAT IT IS: Overgrowth of yeast due to hormonal changes.

SYMPTOMS: Thick white discharge, intense itching, irritation or burning

WHY IT MATTERS: While not uncommon during pregnancy and usually not dangerous, untreated yeast infections can cause significant discomfort and may lead to further irritation or secondary infections if not addressed. It's often easy to treat but diagnosis is key.

TIP: Keep the area dry and avoid using scented soaps, bubble baths or douches, which can throw off your balance even more. Wear breathable cotton underwear and mention even mild irritation — especially if it doesn't go away.

HOW TO BRING IT UP: *"I'm feeling a lot of irritation and thick discharge. Could it be a yeast infection?"*

Spotting or Bleeding

WHAT IT IS: Light bleeding can happen, but it always deserves attention.

SYMPTOMS: Any amount of blood, even light pink or brown spotting.

WHY IT MATTERS: While it could be completely harmless, bleeding can also be a sign of something more serious — like miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or placental problems later on. In some cases, it could mean your baby's health is at risk, or even be life-threatening to you or your baby. Always report it as soon as you can.

TIP: Stay calm and take note of when the spotting started, how much you're seeing and if it's paired with cramping or back pain. Even if it stops quickly, it's always worth checking out.

HOW TO BRING IT UP: *"I noticed some spotting. Can we check on it just to be safe?"*

Cramping or Pelvic Pain

WHAT IT IS: Could be round ligament pain, Braxton Hicks or a sign of something more.

SYMPTOMS: Dull or sharp pains, pressure or tightness.

WHY IT MATTERS: It can be normal (especially early on), but it can also signal something more serious like an infection, dehydration or preterm labor.

TIP: Gentle stretching, changing positions or drinking water can ease normal cramping. But if it continues or gets more intense, write down when it happens and how it feels. Trust your body and don't wait to bring it up.

HOW TO BRING IT UP: *"I've been feeling some cramping that doesn't go away. Should we monitor it?"*

Decreased Fetal Movement (After 28 Weeks)

WHAT IT IS: A drop in how often or how strongly the baby moves.

SYMPTOMS: Baby's kicks or rolls seem less frequent or less strong.

WHY IT MATTERS: Fetal movement is a key sign of well-being. Don't wait — call your provider right away.

TIP: Start tracking your baby's movements around the same time each day when they're usually active (often after meals or at night). You can use apps like Pregnancy+ or simply count how long it takes to feel 10 movements — most babies move 10 times in 2 hours or less. Every baby has their own pattern, so learn what's normal for yours. If movements feel weaker or less frequent than usual, don't wait — trust your gut and call your provider right away.

HOW TO BRING IT UP: *"I haven't felt the baby move as much. Can we check to make sure everything's okay?"*

Unusual Swelling

WHAT IT IS: Normal swelling is common, but sudden or severe swelling can be dangerous.

SYMPTOMS: Sudden or severe swelling in the hands, face or legs.

WHY IT MATTERS: Another potential sign of preeclampsia, especially when paired with high blood pressure.

TIP: Swelling in your feet or ankles can be normal — but keep an eye out for puffiness in your hands or face that comes on fast. Take a quick photo for reference, and check in with your doctor, especially if paired with headaches or changes in vision.

HOW TO BRING IT UP: *“I’ve had some swelling in my hands and face lately. Can we check my blood pressure?”*

Mental Health Concerns

WHAT IT IS: Anxiety, depression or feeling overwhelmed is common—and treatable.

SYMPTOMS: Feeling persistently sad, anxious, overwhelmed or detached.

WHY IT MATTERS: Mental health is just as important as physical health. Prenatal anxiety or depression is nothing to be ashamed of and important to address. You deserve support — and there are safe, effective options to help you feel better.

TIP: Pregnancy can bring big emotions — and not all of them feel joyful. If you’re feeling persistently anxious, down, overwhelmed or disconnected, you are not alone and it is not your fault. Try writing down how you feel each day, keeping notes on your phone to track changes in your mood, sleep or appetite. If those feelings last more than two weeks or interfere with your daily life, talk to your provider. There are safe, effective treatments available — from therapy to medication — and getting help now can make a big difference for both you and your baby.

HOW TO BRING IT UP: *“Lately I’ve been feeling really anxious/sad. Is there someone I can talk to?”*

Headaches or Vision Changes

WHAT IT IS: Could be normal or a sign of high blood pressure/preeclampsia.

SYMPTOMS: Persistent headaches, blurred vision, seeing spots.

WHY IT MATTERS: This could signal preeclampsia, a dangerous condition involving high blood pressure.

TIP: Jot down how long your headaches last, where the pain is and whether you’ve noticed flashing lights, floaters or blurry vision. If they’re paired with swelling or nausea, call your provider as soon as possible.

HOW TO BRING IT UP: *“I’ve had a few headaches with some blurry vision. Could it be a blood pressure issue?”*

Severe Nausea or Vomiting

WHAT IT IS: Often referred to as “morning sickness” but can occur any time of day. It is most common in the first trimester, but extreme cases may be hyperemesis gravidarum.

SYMPTOMS: Can’t keep food or fluids down, rapid weight loss.

WHY IT MATTERS: If you can’t keep food or fluids down, you could become dehydrated or malnourished — which can affect your baby’s growth and your overall health. In severe cases, you could be experiencing hyperemesis gravidarum, which requires medical care.

TIP: Keep track of what you’ve had to eat and drink and how long it stays down. Even if you’re managing to eat a little, if nausea is interfering with your daily life or causing weight loss, ask your provider for help — there are safe options that can ease the symptoms.

HOW TO BRING IT UP: *“I can’t seem to keep anything down. What can we do to help manage this? When should I be concerned?”*

Remember: You are Not a Burden.

You’re not overreacting. You’re not being dramatic. You are growing a human being, and your health and voice matter. Whether it’s a routine question or something that’s been nagging you, your care team is there to support you. The best prenatal care happens when you feel heard, safe and supported.

