

Welcome to the third trimester! You are now in the final stretch of pregnancy and, depending on how things are going these last few weeks, might be quickest or the slowest of your life. Here are some tips for the last bit...

If you haven't done so, register at the hospital. This way you are not fishing out cards and filling out forms when you are in labor. It also means you can get your epidural faster if this is your plan because they will not have to put you in the system.

If you want to take prenatal classes and haven't signed up, do so now. Some classes fill up quickly.

**Body aches:** are very common toward the end. These can make it difficult to get comfortable or sleep. Warm showers and baths are OK and can help. Prenatal massage helps too. It's not too late to start prenatal yoga—Gaiam makes a good tape for beginners and it's available at Target or Whole Foods.

**Sleep disturbance:** also very common—its nature's way of preparing you for life after delivery. Still, a good night's sleep goes a long way. Try to have a snack with protein and fiber at bedtime. Keep the room cool. Get a good egg crate for your bed. If things are really bad, discuss this with Dr. Williams.

**Bladder issues:** especially with second, third, etc. pregnancies. Leaks happen—Kegels help. It's a good idea to start now—you will probably need them after delivery.

**Heartburn:** avoid even decaffeinated teas, coffee, and soda along with chocolate, mint flavored stuff, tomato sauces, and spicy food. If this is what you live on, Tums or over the counter Pepcid can help. Try not to lay down for 1-2 hours after you eat (not always possible). If things are severe, please let us know—sometimes severe symptoms are not actually heart burn.

**Crankiness:** you will not be pregnant forever.

Things can occasionally go wrong in pregnancy—here are some things to look out for... Please call the office during the day or the service if it is after

hours so that the doctor knows you are coming in and can alert labor and delivery so a bed is waiting for you.

**Preterm labor:** it is common to start contracting in the third trimester, but we worry about too much contracting. If you are having more than 4-5 contractions an hour, please rest and drink a ton of fluids. If they are not getting better, please call (even at night and weekends). Other signs of preterm labor include leaking fluid or vaginal bleeding, low dull backache, “menstrual” cramps, and pelvic pressure not getting better.

**Preeclampsia:** otherwise known as toxemia, is a blood pressure disorder of pregnancy. If you are experiencing any of the following please call as soon as possible:

- Headache not resolving with Tylenol
- Visual changes (spots in your vision, blurry vision, loss of vision) lasting more than a couple of minutes
- Right upper stomach/right shoulder pain not going away
- Nausea and vomiting that’s not going away

**Decreased fetal movement:** when babies move well, we know they are doing OK. During this time your baby will develop sleep cycles. You will know what is normal for your baby. Babies do not move constantly at this point, but they should not stop moving for several hours. If you have not felt your baby move for a while, eat something or drink something sweet. Rest on your side in a quiet place and concentrate on feeling the baby move (i.e. no TV, no laptop, etc). Count for a half hour. If your baby does not move at least 3 times in 30 minutes, flip to the other side and keep on counting for another 30 minutes. If within that hour the baby moves 6 times or less please call—even if it is a night or on a weekend. We will bring you into the office or send you to labor and delivery for monitoring to make sure the baby is doing OK.

**Other things to call for:** bleeding, leaking fluid, severe pain

**Labor:** if you are after 36 weeks we will not try to stop your labor unless you have been told otherwise. The main sign of labor is contractions. These might come and go before you truly go into labor. If your contractions are coming every 5 minutes or less for 2 hours and are making you cranky, you most likely are in labor. If you are not there yet, feel free to eat, drink, walk around, and get in the shower, etc. to help you feel better. Please do,

because it might be a long day (and night). Do keep in mind that what goes down might come up. Other signs of labor include diarrhea, breaking your water, and vaginal bleeding. Please call the service if it is after hours so that the doctor on call knows you are coming in and can alert labor and delivery so a bed is waiting for you.

**Other tips:**

It's a good idea to bring very little jewelry to the hospital. First of all, necklaces and large earrings can get in the way. Secondly, things have a way of getting lost and we would hate for you to lose an expensive or well-loved piece of jewelry.

While we are on the subject, please remove piercings before coming in. Metal objects can be a safety hazard if you should need surgery. There often is not time to remove these before an emergency c-section, especially tongue and belly-button rings. Trying to remove these quickly can lead to pain and injury. Piercings in other areas might also be in the way. Please leave these at home.

If it is after 8 pm please enter St. Lukes through the emergency room—they will bring you upstairs.

Make sure all batteries are charged.

Get a pediatrician and car seat now—you will need them before you leave the hospital with the baby.

Thanks!  
Summit Women's Care