



## Clinical Practice Guidelines for Preconception and Perinatal Care

### Definition

Preconception care (PC) is a critical component of health care for women of reproductive age. The main goal of PC is to provide health promotion, screening, and interventions for women of reproductive age to reduce risk factors that might affect future pregnancies. PC also involves changing the knowledge and attitudes and behaviors related to reproductive health among both men and women.

Early, effective prenatal care can identify mothers at risk of delivering a preterm or growth-retarded infant and provide an array of medical and educational interventions. Early infancy is a critical time for the health of both baby and mother. Continuity of care can help detect problems early and prevent complications.<sup>1</sup>

Studies show a positive relationship between comprehensive prenatal care and a reduction in low birth weight and infant mortality.<sup>2</sup> Women who receive early and regular prenatal care are more likely to have healthier infants.<sup>3</sup>

### Assessment / Education

#### Preconception Care (PC)

Efforts to improve pregnancy outcomes should begin before any pregnancy. Preventive and primary services provided between pregnancies are commonly known as Interconception Care (ICC). PC includes physical assessment, risk screening, vaccinations and counseling. The risk screening should include reproductive awareness, environmental toxins and teratogens, nutrition and folic acid, genetics, substance use including tobacco and alcohol, medical conditions and medications, infectious diseases and vaccinations; and psychosocial concerns such as depression or violence. Specific risk factors for adverse pregnancy outcome include isotretinoin, alcohol misuse, anti-epileptic drugs, diabetes, folic acid deficiency, hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS, hypothyroidism, maternal PKU, rubella seronegativity, obesity, oral anticoagulants, STDs and smoking.

#### Perinatal Care

The following table shows a high level summary of services that should be provided to each member with an uncomplicated pregnancy. During every visit, the health care practitioner should evaluate the woman's blood pressure, weight, urine protein and glucose levels, uterine size for progressive growth and consistency with the estimated date of delivery, and fetal heart rate. After the patient reports quickening (and at each subsequent visit), she should be asked about fetal movement, contractions, leakages of fluid, or vaginal bleeding. Ultrasound before 20 weeks of gestation may be indicated for the purpose of dating if there is a size-date discrepancy or if menstrual dates are uncertain.

<sup>1</sup> Prenatal and Postpartum Care, [The State of Health Care Quality 2005](#), National Committee for Quality Assurance

<sup>2</sup> Safe Motherhood: Promoting Health for Women Before, During, and After Pregnancy 2004, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>3</sup> Guidelines for Perinatal Care, Sixth Edition, copyright © October, 2007 by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

Visit Schedule	History / Physical Exam	Diagnostic Testing / Screening	Education / Counseling
<b>Initial Prenatal Care Visit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete medical, surgical, obstetrical, and gynecological assessment</li> <li>• History including genetic history of parents</li> <li>• Physical exam</li> <li>• Risk assessment</li> <li>• Estimated Date of Delivery calculation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hemoglobin / Hematocrit</li> <li>• U/A, microscopy and infection screening</li> <li>• Blood typing and Rh-D and Antibody screen</li> <li>• Rubella titer</li> <li>• Hepatitis B surface antigen screen</li> <li>• VDRL</li> <li>• Offer counseling and HIV testing</li> <li>• Tb skin test</li> <li>• STD testing</li> <li>• OB Ultrasound</li> <li>• Urine culture</li> <li>• Lead level</li> <li>• Genetic counseling</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• PAP test, (repeat at post-partum visit if abnormality found on initial PAP smear, suggestive of HPV or dysplasia)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall care plan</li> <li>• Expected course of pregnancy</li> <li>• Signs/symptoms that should be reported</li> <li>• Nutrition including individualized vitamin and mineral supplementation as needed</li> <li>• General health</li> <li>• Psychosocial aspects of pregnancy</li> <li>• HIV counseling</li> <li>• Smoking cessation</li> <li>• Avoidance of alcohol and other substance abuse</li> </ul>
<p><b>Subsequent Visits:</b></p> <p><b>0-28 Weeks</b> (visits should occur every 4 weeks)</p> <p><b>29-36 Weeks</b> (visits should occur every 2-3 weeks)</p> <p><b>37+ Weeks</b> (visits should occur weekly)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical assessment including weight and blood pressure, uterine growth, fetal heart rate, fetal movement and presentation (when applicable)</li> <li>• Follow-up risk assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urine protein, glucose</li> <li>• OB Ultrasound at 16 -18 weeks, 32-36 weeks as needed</li> <li>• Karyotype at 8-18 weeks when indicated/elected</li> <li>• Maternal Serum Alpha Fetoprotein at 16-18 weeks</li> <li>• Diabetes screening at 24-28 weeks with GTT as needed</li> <li>• Repeat hemoglobin or hematocrit at 24-28 weeks and again at 32-36 weeks</li> <li>• STD tests</li> <li>• Rh-D and Antibody screen at 24-28 weeks</li> <li>• Rh/G Immune Globulin at 28 weeks (RHOGAM at 28 weeks for non-sensitized Rh negative mothers)</li> <li>• Group B Strep screen at 26-28 weeks</li> <li>• Amniocentesis, when medically indicated</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Cystic fibrosis screen when indicated</li> <li>• Offer counseling and HIV testing at 28 and 32 weeks</li> <li>• Perform second HBsAg test between 28 and 32 weeks of pregnancy for all pregnant members who tested negative at the first visit and are considered high risk for Hepatitis B infection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition including individualized vitamin and mineral supplementation as needed</li> <li>• Desired weight gain</li> <li>• Activity / Exercise</li> <li>• Labor and Delivery process to expect</li> <li>• Signs of labor</li> <li>• Smoking cessation if applicable</li> <li>• Avoidance of alcohol and other substance abuse</li> <li>• Childbirth education classes</li> <li>• Infant feeding</li> <li>• Psychosocial needs</li> <li>• Discussion of VBAC</li> </ul>
<b>Postpartum Visit 4-6 Weeks Following Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interval history</li> <li>• Physical exam including weight, blood pressure, breasts, abdomen and pelvic exams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pap test</li> <li>• Postpartum visit may occur within 21-56 days (4-6 weeks) after delivery</li> <li>• Depression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition including individualized vitamin and mineral supplementation as needed</li> <li>• Breast feeding</li> <li>• Psychosocial needs</li> <li>• Family planning</li> </ul>

## Patient Education

### Vaccinations:

- All women at risk for or susceptible to rubella, varicella, and hepatitis B should be offered vaccination.
- All women who will be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during the influenza season should be offered vaccination. Women with medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza complications should be offered vaccination regardless of the stage of their pregnancy.

## Specialized Assessment

### Issues to Discuss Before Delivery

Anticipating Labor (i.e. what to do in the event of regular contractions, membrane rupture, or vaginal bleeding)

Working / Occupation  
Non-routine Travel  
Breech presentation  
Umbilical Cord Blood Banking

Circumcision  
Postpartum Tubal Ligation  
Discharge planning  
Perinatal psychosocial issues

### Depression

Utilize the Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ2) Depression Screening questions regarding the frequency of depression or anhedonia over the past two weeks:

- “Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by little interest or pleasure in doing things?”
- “Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been feeling down, depressed or hopeless?”

### Domestic Violence

Research indicates that the majority of abused women continue to be victimized during pregnancy and this may affect both maternal and fetal well-being. Some of the obstetrical presentations of abused women include:

- Unwanted pregnancy
- Late entry into prenatal care, missed appointments
- Substance abuse or use
- Poor weight gain and nutrition
- Multiple, repeated somatic complaints

If a patient confides that she is being abused, the physician should record verbatim accounts in the medical record, inquire about her immediate safety and the safety of her children, and refer to appropriate local resources for counseling, legal, and social services.

## Specialized Counseling

Moderate exercise 30 minutes or more per day on most if not all days of the week within limitations and with physician guidance (avoid supine positions, potential abdominal trauma, new strenuous sports taken up during pregnancy, etc.) Tobacco, alcohol, and substance abuse use should be strongly discouraged. Assessment of and counseling on the perinatal implications of substance abuse during pregnancy, referral to appropriate drug treatment programs if needed. Appropriate weight gain during pregnancy (25-35 lbs for average weight women, 15-25 lbs for significantly overweight women, 28-40 lbs for underweight women). Patients economically unable to meet nutritional needs should be referred to federal food and nutrition programs such as the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

## Genetic Risk Assessment / Counseling

Teratogens counseling and serum screening  
Trisomy 21 screening  
Neural Tube Defects screening

## Documentation Standards

WellCare recommends the use of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) format for documenting patients' pregnancies. The format is available as Appendix A, "ACOG Antepartum Record and Discharge/Postpartum Form", in Guidelines for Perinatal Care, Sixth Edition, which can be purchased online at [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org).

## Physician Measurement and Assessment of Compliance with Guidelines

- Adequate documentation of physical examination at each obstetric visit
- Documentation of prenatal and postpartum depression screening utilizing the Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ2) Depression Screening tool described above or the Edinburgh Depression Scale tool.<sup>4</sup>
- Documentation of family planning counseling and services for all pregnant women and mothers.
- *Postpartum Care*. The percentage of deliveries in the denominator\* that had a postpartum visit on or between 21 and 56 days after delivery.<sup>5</sup> [*"Denominator" of live births as defined by HEDIS*]

## References

Educational materials available from ACOG ([www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org)), the US Public Health Service ([www.os.dhhs.gov/phs](http://www.os.dhhs.gov/phs)), and the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation ([www.modimes.org](http://www.modimes.org)).

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Recommendations to Improve Preconception Health and Health Care—United States, MMWR, April 21, 2006/55(RR06); 1-23.

<sup>4</sup> L. Murray and J. L. Cox 1990, a.k.a. The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), J L Cox, J M. Holden, R Sagovsky – 1987

<sup>5</sup> Health Plan Employer Data Information Set (® HEDIS) 2007, Volume 2: Technical Specifications, © 2006 by the National Committee for Quality Assurance

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