

Total Women's Health of Baltimore

Important Information About Your Pregnancy



Important Information About the Third Trimester

Congratulations! You have approached the final stages of pregnancy! Dr. Oliver will need to monitor your blood pressure and weight more often. It will also remain very important to monitor the baby's heartbeat and movements. From 28 until 36 weeks, you have biweekly appointments. You will have weekly check-ups during the last month of your pregnancy.

Being tested for group B strep

One of the things you will be tested for in the third trimester is a bacterium called group B streptococcus, or GBS. About 1 in 4 women have GBS in the vagina and/or rectum. It is harmless in adults but can cause infection in the infant as the infant enters the birth canal. If GBS shows up on the swab (done between 35 and 37 weeks) from your vagina and rectum or is in your urine at any time during the pregnancy, you will be administered an intravenous antibiotic during your labor to help protect the baby. A woman with GBS who is not treated in labor has a 1 in 200 chance of transmitting it to her baby as opposed to a 1 in 4,000 chance of transmission if treated in labor with antibiotics.

Resumption of vaginal exams

During the pelvic exams In your third trimester, Dr. Oliver will check to see if your baby is positioned head first or butt first, also known as breech. Dr. Oliver may want to try to apply pressure to your abdomen to turn the baby. If the baby will not turn to the head-first position, you may need to have a cesarean delivery (C-section).

As you come closer to delivery your cervix will begin to soften and dilate.

Physical changes to your body in the third trimester

- Backaches and sore hips are common as your baby gains weight. Try sitting on chairs with a good back support, using a heating pad, or get Amanda, the massage therapist at Dr. Oliver's office to give you a massage. A maternity belt may also be helpful by taking pressure away from the back and pelvic areas. Ask Dr. Oliver about which maternity belt she recommends.
- Swelling of the feet and ankles are normal. You are retaining fluid as your blood vessels become dilated. This will leave your face and eyes puffy in the morning.
- Heartburn may occur
- Spider veins, varicose veins and hemorrhoids may occur. Try elevating your legs and drinking lots of water
- You may notice more stretch marks that become itchy

- Your breasts are still growing
- You may feel an increased pressure on your bladder
- A continuation of the Braxton Hicks contractions
- A total weight gain of 25-35 pounds if you are normal weight, 35 to 45 pounds if you are underweight and less than 20 pounds if you are overweight

During your last trimester, as your baby grows, so will your level of discomfort. The best thing to do is to keep in mind that you are almost there. Try doing positive things that will help you pass the time. Pamper yourself as much as possible.