

SIGNS OF PREGNANCY

A missed menstrual period is the most common first sign of pregnancy. If a woman has had unprotected intercourse, and if she has missed her period by more than 14 days she is most likely pregnant. However, before a period is missed, the baby is the size of a thumbnail and has a beating heart. It is too late to prepare for pregnancy.

NOTE: Because stress can cause a person to miss a period, do not assume you are pregnant if you miss a period. The sure way to find out is to take a pregnancy test at home or at your physician's office.

Some changes in the mother's body include fuller and more tender breasts, nausea or morning sickness, fatigue, and sensitivity to particular foods or odors.

Since the physical signs of pregnancy may not be accurate, a pregnancy test is used to verify the pregnancy. This test can be done at the doctor's office, or a pregnancy test can be purchased at the pharmacy and done by the woman herself. The test is done using a urine sample and is considered to be extremely accurate.

Staying in good health is the most important responsibility of a pregnant woman. The way that she takes care of herself during this time will have a great effect on her child's life and health as well as her own. As soon as she knows or suspects that she is pregnant, she should visit a physician and begin receiving care. Getting plenty of rest, eating nutritious foods, and avoiding drugs, alcohol, and tobacco will aid the baby in developing normally and being born healthy. The health of the mother 2-3 years prior to the pregnancy will greatly affect the health of the baby.