

Glossary

birth control—Also called contraception or family planning. Things you can do to keep from getting pregnant. Using a condom and taking a birth control pill are examples of birth control.

birth defect—A problem with a baby’s body that is present at birth.

chronic health condition—A health condition that lasts for a long time or that happens again and again over a long period of time. Examples are diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity and depression. Chronic health conditions need treatment from a health care provider.

contraction—When the muscles of a woman’s uterus get tight and then relax. Contractions help push the baby out of the uterus.

depression—A medical condition where strong feelings of sadness last for long periods of time and prevent a person from leading a normal life.

diabetes—Having too much sugar in your blood. Too much sugar in your blood can damage organs in your body, including blood vessels, nerves, eyes and kidneys.

family history—A list of questions a health care provider asks to find out about disease and other health problems in your family.

fertility—If you’re a woman, fertility is being able to get pregnant. If you’re a man, fertility is being able to get a woman pregnant.

fertility treatment—Special medical treatment to help a couple get pregnant.

folic acid—A vitamin that can help protect a baby from some birth defects. A woman should take a multi-vitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid each day before pregnancy and during early pregnancy.

genetic—Having to do with things that run in families, like eye or hair color or certain diseases.

health care provider—Also called provider. The person who gives you medical care. Your provider could be a doctor, a nurse, a nurse practitioner, or another trained medical professional.

high blood pressure—Also called hypertension. When the force of blood against the walls of the blood vessels is too high.

hormone—A chemical made by the body.



mood swings—Quick changes in feelings. Many pregnant women have mood swings. They most likely are caused by changing hormones in the pregnant woman's body.

multivitamin—A pill that contains many vitamins (like vitamins B and C) and minerals (like iron and calcium) that help the body work and stay healthy.

over-the-counter medicine—Medicine, like aspirin or cough syrup, you can buy without a prescription.

pelvic pressure—The feeling a pregnant woman gets that the baby is pushing down inside her. Pelvic pressure is a sign of preterm labor.

Period—The bleeding a woman has at the end of her menstrual cycle. If she gets her period each month, she's not pregnant.

preconception—Before pregnancy.

prenatal care—Medical care a woman gets during pregnancy.

prenatal vitamin—A vitamin made for pregnant women.

preterm labor—Labor that happens too early, before 37 completed weeks of pregnancy.

reproductive history—A list of questions a health care provider asks to find out about any pregnancies you have had and any problems with those pregnancies.

reproductive life plan—Thinking about if you want to have children, when you want to have children and what you can do to help prevent you from having children.

sexually transmitted infection—Also called an STI. An infection you can get from having sex with someone who has the infections. Examples of STIs are HIV and herpes.

supplement—Something you take in addition to what you eat that helps your body work and stay healthy. Examples are vitamins and minerals.

toxoplasmosis—An infection you can get from eating undercooked meat or touching cat feces.

umbilical cord—The cord that connects the baby to the placenta. It carries food and oxygen from the placenta to the baby.

vaccination—A shot that contains medicine (a vaccine) that helps protect against certain diseases.

vagina—Also called the birth canal. The baby comes out of a woman's vagina during a vaginal birth.