The Goals of Prenatal Care

Table 1 presents the goals of prenatal care; working to achieve these goals begins with the initial visit. Most women seek prenatal care after the first or second missed menstrual period.

A major goal of prenatal risk assessment is to identify women and fetuses at risk for poor perinatal outcome. Table 2 describes risk assessment during the initial prenatal visit.

Table 1. The Goals of Prenatal Care

1. Establish rapport with the woman.
2. Promote optimal health of the woman and her fetus.
3. Establish an accurate gestational age.
4. Screen and monitor the woman and her fetus for the presence and development of conditions that warrant further evaluation (risk assessment) or referral.
5. Educate the woman (and her partner) about the concerns and issues involved in pregnancy, birth and parenting.
6. Provide psychosocial assessment and referral as needed.
Table 2. The Initial Prenatal Visit: Risk Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Woman’s History</th>
<th>Routine Exams and Laboratory Tests</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General medical history, including psychological history</td>
<td>Comprehensive physical exam including blood pressure, height and weight</td>
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</table>
| Medication use, including prescription, illicit and over-the-counter drugs | Serum testing:  
- Complete blood count  
- ABO and Rh typing, antibody screen  
- Serology  
- Rubella screen  
- Hepatitis screen  
- Hemoglobin electrophoresis  
- HIV |
| Reproductive health history | Pap smear |
| Family medical history with genetic screening, including information about the baby’s father | Urine testing for asymptomatic bacteriuria |
| Social/Lifestyle history | Screening for sexually transmitted infections |
| Nutritional history | Environmental exposures, such as pesticides, cigarette smoke, benzene and lead |
| Current pregnancy history | |