

# Essential guide: what to expect during each trimester of your pregnancy

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So, you've just found out that you're pregnant. Congratulations! Discovering you are pregnant and there is a new life forming within you brings with it a flood of emotions from excitement, nervousness, curiosity, and beyond. As the weeks progress many mothers-to-be begin to get curious about the changes within their body and the development of their baby. So, below we've put together a little guide on what to expect during each trimester of your pregnancy to feed your curiosity.

Remember, every woman's body is different, and every pregnancy is different, therefore if you do not experience some of the symptoms, as another woman, don't be alarmed.

## First trimester (week 1-12)

The beginning of your pregnancy is counted from the first day of your last menstrual cycle. During this first trimester, although you will not look pregnant, your body will go through many changes. In the first few weeks of conception, your hormone levels change affecting almost every organ in your body. You'll start to experience symptoms such as the following:

- Fatigue
- Morning sickness
- Headaches
- Constipation
- Cravings or food aversions
- Tender breasts

However, the above are not sure signs as they can also be experienced when one is expecting their period. The first definitive sign of pregnancy, as you may be aware, is a missed period and an at-home pregnancy test. This is then confirmed at a doctor appointment by taking another urine test or a blood test.

This is a critical time so you will need to listen to your body and make necessary lifestyle changes. It is strongly advised that you take prenatal vitamins and avoid harmful substances to minimise the risk of a miscarriage.

## Second trimester (week 13-28)

During the second trimester, most of the early pregnancy symptoms disappear. However, you will begin to experience more noticeable changes to your body. As your baby begins to grow, you will notice your abdomen expand and by the end of the trimester, you will feel your baby move. Now will be a good time to invest in some maternity wear!

While a lot of the early pregnancy symptoms disappear, you can expect to experience the following:

- Body aches such as back pain.
- Darkening of the areola (skin around the nipples).
- Leg cramps.
- Swelling of ankles/fingers and the face.
- Stretch marks on your abdomen, breasts, and thighs.

## Third trimester (week 29 – 40)

As you continue to experience some of the symptoms from the second trimester, you will begin to experience new discomforts as the baby is getting bigger. For instance, you will notice that you have to go to the bathroom more often, this is due to the baby putting pressure on the cervix. Along with this, you may begin to experience the following:

- Shortness of breath.
- Heartburn.
- Haemorrhoids.
- Your belly button may pop out.
- Braxton Hicks contractions can be signs of early or false labour.
- Your breasts may begin to leak a watery pre-milk called colostrum.

As the final countdown begins and you fast approach your due date, your cervix becomes thinner and softer to help the birth canal open during the birthing. A vaginal exam by your doctor is carried out to check on your progress as you prepare for the birth of your baby.

## Prenatal care and regular check-ups.

Having proper prenatal care and knowledge during your pregnancy is essential which is why here at **Wollongong Obstetrics and Gynaecology**, we recommend regular visits with **Dr Kothari**. This will allow for professional monitoring of your and your baby's health. During these visits, Dr Kothari will check your baby's heart rate and perform an ultrasound to examine the baby's development. He will also check your blood pressure, urine, and weight gain to help keep your health on track.

Dr Kothari and his team also provide care for high-risk pregnancies including for women with pre-existing medical conditions, multiple births and abnormal pregnancies that may carry an increased risk of complications.

## Book your appointment.

If you have just found out that you are embarking on the journey of motherhood, give our team a call on **02 4225 1999** to book an appointment with Dr Kothari.

Dr Kothari is dedicated to developing a trusting and supportive relationship with all his patients to ensure a safe and successful pregnancy and delivery. Our experienced team is here to support and help you every step of the way on this incredible journey.

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