

I'M PREGNANT

"Useful information about pregnancy and giving birth
for the mother to be and her child"

English/inglese

Gruppo di progetto
Azienda Ospedaliera Universitaria di Ferrara

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Introduction to the purpose of the book

Pregnancy is a very important moment in your life and that of your unborn child. Because of this fact, the World Health Organisation and the Health Ministry, respecting your health and that of your child, gives you the right to be followed from the very beginning by a specialised Medical Centre or by the Maternity Clinic around your area.

In most cases, pregnancy and giving birth happen in a normal way. However, sometimes complications occur putting health at risk. For this reason it is important you have regular check - ups, even if you feel there are no problems.

The purpose of having check ups:

- To examine your health and the development of your unborn child.
- To identify possible complications with any illnesses you and your child have had as soon as possible and receive help.
- To help prepare you for your pregnancy and labour by giving you useful information and advice.

The purpose of this booklet is to help you to take advantage in the best way of the services that the local Azienda Sanitaria (AUSL) and the Hospital (Azienda Ospedaliera Universitaria S. Anna of Ferrara) offers in order to protect your health and that of your child.



I part: I'm pregnant

The first 3 months

A change in the menstrual cycle (for example a missed period) indicates the beginning of pregnancy and a pregnancy test should be taken. To do this you can either visit your doctor who will prescribe a blood or urine test for you in a public or private clinic or you can buy a pregnancy test at the drugstore and do it by yourself at home. If the test is positive (it shows that you are pregnant) contact your doctor or the Advisory centre - Obstetric clinic around your area (direct access). If the test is negative, repeat it after a few days.

Medical card and your doctor

To obtain a medical card and to be given a doctor, you have to go with your documents to the Azienda Sanitaria. Even if you don't have any documents, you have the right to obtain a medical card, known as a STP (temporary foreigner resident). To obtain this card you must go to the above address and choose your doctor who will explain to you what you must do.

The consultant is based in a centre where there are other doctors and other specialists who will be able to assist you through your pregnancy. If you want to, you can take part in pre-natal classes.

Sometimes, becoming a mother is not a happy moment. If you are not sure that you can take care of the baby you are carrying inside you, talk to the doctor or staff of the Advisory centre. You can continue with your pregnancy in any case: Italian law allows you to leave your baby in Hospital, without any legal consequences. You will be assisted and he will be given to a family who can take care of him with love. If you are in difficulty, do not stay alone: contact people who can help you at the Social Services of your Municipality of residence, the Advisory centre, Religious Associations, Women's Associations. You have 10 days of time, after the birth, to decide what to do.

Why it is important for your doctors to know your medical history?

If you suffer from any particular disease, your pregnancy could make it worse. If this is the case, the gynaecologist of the Clinic for the Pregnancies at Risk, will work in conjunction with the obstetrician from the Day Hospital.



Help from other specialists will also be used to help control your health and that of your unborn child throughout your pregnancy.

What should the doctors be told?

- If you have had an infectious illness, in particular hepatitis or paludismo,
- If you are currently using any medicines,
- If you smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs,
- If there is a history of diseases in your family or in that of the father of the unborn child,
- If you have any particular diseases,
- If you have ever had a miscarriage,
- If you do any sport or travel a lot,
- If you suffer from any allergies.

Examples of diseases which can put your pregnancy at risk

- Diabetes
- Eye diseases
- Heart disease
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Some blood coagulation diseases (thrombosis)
- Chronic inflammation diseases
- Psychological diseases
- Thyroids diseases

Ferrara also offers you a *Genetic Consultant* that can help you with any problems or concerns you may have about the pregnancy.



Symptoms to pay attention to:

- Change of your skin colour (turning yellow, or bruises or pale)
- Swelling of different parts of your body (like your throat, legs underarms or groin)
- Headache and blurred vision
- Blood pressure constantly high
- Frequent diarrhoea or vomit continuously
- Always thirsty
- Constant high temperature which is above 37.5
- Vaginal bleeding (blood or yellow liquid)
- Abdominal contractions
- Blood in your urine or faeces
- Itching or burning sensations.

What happens to your body?

During the first three months, you have a bigger appetite and it is normal to crave different foods at different times of the day.

In the morning you may have high salivation, gastric acid, feel nauseous and vomit (this usually lasts for the first three months.).

You may also have a fever. Your breasts become bigger and your nipples begin to hurt. The skin around your nipples and stomach gets darker.

Your uterus (the organ where your unborn baby is growing) becomes bigger even though your stomach doesn't look that big.

You can also feel small contractions on your lower abdomen and some pain in your back.

The appointments

8°-10° week: gynaecologist appointment

12° week: scan

During the appointments, your gynaecologist can prescribe for you some blood tests.



What is a gynaecologist appointment?

It's an appointment where the gynaecologist carries out a painless examination of your intimate parts (genitals). Due to this, if you prefer, when making the appointment you can ask for the doctor to be a woman.

What is a scan?

It is a painless examination without any risk that allows the doctor to control the pregnancy. It is a kind of photograph in black and white of what is happening in your abdomen. It helps to study the form of the unborn child because this is the only way the doctors can see how the organs are developing.

It can also ensure that the heart beat is normal and if there is the possibility of expecting twins. The results from the scan can be given immediately.

What is a BLOOD TEST?

It is a test where blood is taken and helps to control your health situation.

The consultants (obstetrics and gynaecologists) in the Ferrarian area

Ferrara	via Boschetto, 29	0532/235515
Argenta	via Roma, 6/a	0532/317924
Bondeno	via Dazio, 113	0532/884283-11
Cento	via Cremonino, 10	051/6838431-0
Codigoro	via Cavallotti, 347	0533/729622- 629-730-608
Comacchio	via Felletti, 2	0533/310612
Copparo	via Roma, 18	0532/879957
Mesola	via Pomposa, 26	0533/993468
Migliarino	via Fiorella, 8	0533/649717
Portomaggiore	via De Amicis, 22	0532/817415



II part: My baby grows From 4° -6° months

In the 4° month you can feel with your hand that the uterus is getting bigger, from the 5° month the growth of your abdominal becomes visible.

In this phase you can start to feel the movements of your child.

In time, these movements will become more frequent until the time comes when you can tell when the baby is sleeping and when it is awake.

You will go to the toilet more frequently but you won't feel any burning or pain.

You may suffer from constipation.

You gain weight for many reasons: the baby itself, the placenta (the bag that contains the baby), the amniotic liquid (that protects the baby), the swelling of the uterus and because of the change of hormones.

It's very important that you don't gain more than 12kg, throughout the pregnancy, because an excessive gain of weight can cause complications.

That's why, especially in this phase of your life, you should follow a healthy diet.

Your doctor will advise what you should eat, respecting your culture and traditions.

The appointments

17°-18° week: gynaecologist appointment

21° week: gynaecologist and scan appointment (to see all the parts of the baby).

The Gestosi

These are illnesses which are connected to the pregnancy and usually disappear shortly after giving birth. The symptoms are: swelling of the legs and of the face, proteins in the urine, high blood pressure.

If you have any complications during your pregnancy your doctor or the Advisory Centre will send you to the Patologia della Gravidanza (pregnancy) in the Obstetric Clinic at the S. Anna Hospital of Ferrara. There they will take care of you until the end of the pregnancy.



What is the pre-natal diagnosis?

There are different clinical tests that will allow you to know the development of your unborn baby. They tell you if the baby is healthy or if it has any genetic diseases. Usually these tests are prescribed by the doctor or gynaecologists if they notice any problems.

Examples of prenatal diagnosis tests:

Combined tests

They consist of a blood test that shows the presence of 3 substances produced by you and your baby. These values should be an equal balance. Through this test it is possible to know if your baby has abnormal chromosomes.

Villocentesi

Consists of taking a sample of villicoriali, which is part of the placenta. The doctor, with a needle, enters the abdominals and then the uterus, controlling his movements with a scan. This test can be painful. Remember that if you are 35 or over this test is free.

Amnio test

The doctor takes a sample of the amniotic liquid which is inside your placenta. In this liquid you can find some cells of your unborn child. Chromosomes can be analysed from this. This test is also free if you are 35 or over.

III part: Giving birth is closer From 7°-9° month

Your baby senses sounds and sensations: The baby answers you with movements if he is satisfied or unsatisfied with the external stimulations that he feels and the emotions from the mother. It is possible that a white liquid begins to leak from your nipples. You may feel that the baby is pushing your internal organs (diaphragm, kidney, stomach, intestines). When you walk or go upstairs you may become out of breath.

The baby moves lower down in preparation to come out.



Appointments

32° week: gynaecologist appointment with scan

36° week: appointment with the Obstetric Day Hospital at the S Anna Hospital in Ferrara to have a blood test for the giving birth

38° week: appointment for a scan.

DONATION OF CORD BLOOD

On the 36° week, in line with your values and traditions, you can decide if, when you give birth, you want to donate the blood of the umbilical chord in which there are a lot of steminal cells.

This can help other children that suffer from blood or genetic illnesses. Ask your doctor.

In the 39° week, very close to giving birth, your doctor will send you to the birthing clinic you have chosen to give birth in (for example the Clinica Ostetrico-ginecologica dell'Ospedale S. Anna) where the doctors and staff will monitor you until the moment of labour doing scans and heart scans.

What is a Heart scan (ECG)?

It's the registration on paper of the heart activity of your baby and of the contractions of the uterus. It is painless.

Birth clinics in the Ferrian area

FERRARA Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria S. Anna
Corso Giovecca, 203 0532/236553

CENTO SS.ma Annunziata
via Vicini, 2 051/6838258

LAGOSANTO Del Delta
via Valle Oppio, 2 0533/723377



At this point, you and the staff of the Birth Point will decide together the most suitable way of giving birth, depending on your health. Each Birth Point is organised differently: decide directly with the professionals who work there.

Ways of giving birth

- Natural birth:** the contractions of the uterus push the baby out of the abdominal.
- Induced birth:** it's like the natural birth but the contractions are helped using medicine given to you by the medical staff.
- Caesarean birth:** the doctor using anaesthetic cuts your abdomen and takes out the baby, this is done when there are problems to reduce the health risks for you and your baby.
- Painless birth:** this can happen with the help of medicine that doesn't allow you to feel any pain. You can decide with the staff of the Birth Point.

The giving birth and the following days

The pregnancy is at the end and you and your baby are getting close to the giving birth.

Loss of the mucus plug which closes the neck of the uterus, the passage through which your child will make his/her entrance into the world, indicates you are close to giving birth. In natural conditions, it starts with an ill feeling, slight pains and small contractions, distanced apart, which slowly cause the uterus to open. The pain and the contractions increase in intensity and frequency and the neck of the uterus dilates increasingly, to reach 10 centimetres, the measurement of the head of your child. All this helps to encourage the birth.

The sac of fluid in which the baby develops breaks before labour (in this case you have to go to hospital immediately) during or at the end of the dilation: it is important that the liquid is clear.

At the moment of labour in any case you will be recovered in the labour room



and assisted by specialised staff. If you wish, one family member, or your partner, can stay with you at all times.

The feelings connected to the giving birth differ from woman to woman. A common experience however, after lots of effort, is the joy of seeing your child, at last.

After the birth, the placenta is delivered: if you wish the medical staff will show it to you. After you give birth, your baby will receive all the necessary care given by the nurses (some hospitals like S. Anna have a new born baby service) in the meantime you will be shown how to take care of your baby and how to breastfeed him. You and your child will remain in Hospital for the time required: generally, after a spontaneous birth without complications, the recovery time is 2 days. In case of necessity, the hospital specialists are available 24 hours a day for you and your baby. When you and your child are home, you will continue to receive guidance for breastfeeding and for any difficulty in looking after your child, especially if you feel a strong sense of sadness and stress in tackling the new problems.

Remember that, if you can't take care of your baby you can entrust the baby to the hospital that will find a family for them without any legal consequences for you and respecting your privacy.

BREASTFEEDING

Breast milk contains all the necessary elements to nourish your child and prevent infections that can strike him/her. The first few times, it can seem difficult for both you and the child; the breast may be sore and your child may find it difficult to latch on, also because the milk does not flow easily at first. With experience and the help of professional staff, the situation will be resolved and breastfeeding can become a pleasurable moment for both you and your child: it is not only a moment of physical nourishment but also an exchange of love, essential for the emotional development of your child.

If you have a lot of milk you can donate it to other mothers who do not produce as much.

Ask the staff for information.



After the birth, your baby must be registered at the Register Office: the Birth Point will tell you what to do and where to go.

If, at the moment of being discharged, you or your baby require further check-ups or therapies, you will be given all the information you need to correctly complete the treatments required, even specialist ones.

What is the post-delivery check up?

It is a gynaecological check-up 40 days after the birth. As soon as you arrive home, remember to make an appointment with your gynaecologist or advisory centre.

THE PEDIATRICIAN AND VACCINATIONS

Remember that, even if you are not legally resident in Italy, in the same way in which you choose your family doctor you can choose the pediatrician to care for your child. The pediatrician will inform you, where and when you can have the vaccinations done against some illnesses that may strike your child. Your child has the right to be vaccinated against some serious infective illnesses, starting from 2 months of age. For information and pediatric visits phone the Community Pediatric Service (Ferrara: 0532/235505; Copparo: 0532/879832; Cento: 051/6838435; Codigoro: 0533/729673; Portomaggiore: 0532/817485). You can also choose the pediatrician at any Usl office.



POINTS OF REFERENCE WITHIN THE AREA:

These are buildings with professional staff that can help you in case of need about breastfeeding, caring for the baby, prevent future pregnancies (if undesired), help if you feel lonely or depressed.

If you need telephone assistance for breastfeeding contact the following numbers:

FERRARA free phone 800 551333

(Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays from 9 a.m. to 12.30)

COPPARO 0532/879957

(from Monday to Friday from 12 to 1 p.m.) 0532/879832

CENTO phone 800 076640

(Tuesdays from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30)

PORTOMAGGIORE 0532/817421

(Tuesdays from 12.30 to 2.30 p.m.)

ARGENTA 0532/317924

(Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 12)

CODIGORO-COMACCHIO 0533/729730

(Wednesdays from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30)

If you feel lonely and in difficulty during or after your pregnancy contact:

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICE IN THE AREA

0532/235429

0532/235428

The service will make specialists available who can help and support you at this psychologically difficult time.

WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICE (Advisory centres)

For obstetric check-ups, scans, exams, preparation for the birth, employment protection, assistance at birth, breastfeeding guidance, initial care for the baby, post-delivery check-up. The telephone numbers are listed in the previous pages.

FAMILY CENTRE 0532/242179

Provides updated information on services, activities, projects for children from 0 to 14 years of age, mothers and fathers and makes operators available for advice to families with children.



Numeri Utili

- Numero Verde Regionale
Filo diretto con la sanità 800 033 033
- URP Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria di Ferrara
Ufficio Relazioni con il Pubblico 0532 236425
- URP Azienda USL di Ferrara
Ufficio Relazioni con il Pubblico 0532 235605
- Su internet
www.ospfe.it
www.ausl.fe.it

