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A WOMAN'S GUIDE TO GOOD HEALTH

A Pregnancy Primer

If problems arise during pregnancy, PinnacleHealth has the resources and expertise required to keep mom and baby safe.

"A pregnant woman can be classified as high-risk due to complications of pregnancy, obstetric history of risk factors [such as a previous preterm delivery or multiple gestation] or medical history such as heart disease or diabetes, which can present a threat to the mother's and baby's outcomes," says Deborah J. Schafer, MSN, RNC, clinical nurse specialist at PinnacleHealth. "Some of the most common problems that occur during pregnancy are preterm labor, preterm premature rupture of membranes [PPROM], vaginal bleeding and preeclampsia."

What to Look For

Preterm Labor—This condition is characterized by cramping, contractions, pelvic pressure, low backache, change in vaginal discharge and a feeling that the baby is pushing down. Preterm labor is diagnosed after an exam of the cervix and uterine monitoring, and it may be treated with fluids, bed rest and medications.

PPROM—This condition can be caused by infection of the placenta or membranes and is characterized by leaking of amniotic fluid. After testing the fluid, treatment is based on several factors, such as cervical status and gestational age.

Vaginal Bleeding—This complication arises due to problems with placental attachment and can occur with or without abdominal pain. Treatment is determined based on the severity of the bleeding and other factors.

Preeclampsia—Symptoms of this condition include high blood pressure after the 20th week of pregnancy and protein in

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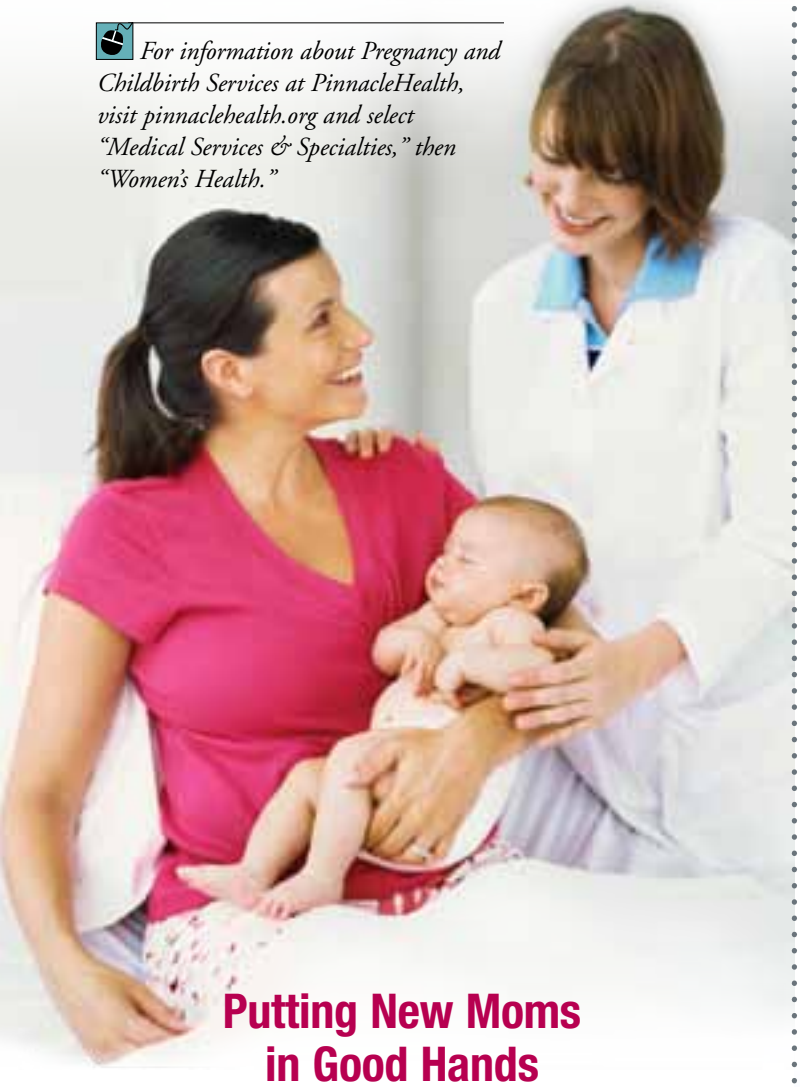
PINNACLEHEALTH Proven.

the urine. Women with this condition often don't feel ill, which makes routine prenatal care essential to detecting preeclampsia. Treatments can include medication and delivery.

"There is no substitute for good prenatal care, but if a problem arises during pregnancy, expectant mothers should educate themselves about the complications they face and work as a team with their healthcare providers," Deborah says. "If hospitalization is required, women can rest assured that PinnacleHealth will provide the best care possible for them and their babies."

For information about Pregnancy and Childbirth Services at PinnacleHealth, visit pinnaclehealth.org and select "Medical Services & Specialties," then "Women's Health."



Putting New Moms in Good Hands

The Antepartum Unit at PinnacleHealth is an area dedicated to women who must be hospitalized due to pregnancy complications. The unit contains seven private rooms with bedside sleeper chairs available so loved ones can stay overnight. Fetal and maternal surveillance will be provided as ordered by patients' physicians. While staying within the unit, patients have access to a variety of support services, including:

- Arts and crafts
- Counseling
- Education
- Laptop computers
- Neonatal intensive care consults and tours
- Pet therapy
- Pregnancy journals
- Social activities with other patients

Recognizing Important Health Clues

Because women deal with a variety of gynecologic symptoms on a monthly basis, they may overlook subtle warning signs of cancer.

Gynecologic cancers—including cervical, endometrial, uterine and ovarian cancers—are often referred to as "silent killers." This is because these types of cancer generally do not give clear signs of their development. However, taking charge of your health by undergoing annual Pap tests and other routine screenings can help detect abnormalities in your health.

"Early detection is key for helping prevent the spread of cancer," says Kenneth Oken, MD, OB/GYN and chair of the OB/GYN Department at PinnacleHealth. "While screenings are essential, it's important for women to know their bodies and alert their physicians if they notice any changes or experience anything that doesn't seem normal to them."

Don't Ignore the Signs

Cancer symptoms that women tend to overlook include:

- Abnormal bleeding
- Change in appetite
- Change in bowel movements
- Frequent bloating
- Ongoing abdominal discomfort
- Sudden weight loss or weight gain

"Abnormal bleeding is a key symptom, especially if you're postmenopausal," says Dr. Oken. "All patients who are postmenopausal and experience bleeding—even if it's just spotting—need to be evaluated by a healthcare provider. This is not normal and may be a sign of a health concern."

To find a physician near you, visit pinnaclehealth.org and click on "Find a Doctor."

HEALING Little Hearts

Because the ways children express and deal with grief often vary greatly from adults going through the same situations, it's easy to overlook the importance of helping children through the mourning process. At PinnacleHealth, we offer a variety of programs that address children's unique needs and help them find peace after a significant loss.

"As adults, we tend to show or feel our pain all the time," says Cathie Davidavage, LSW, hospice bereavement counselor for PinnacleHealth. "Children, on the other hand, can only handle so much at one time—their emotions seem to turn on and turn off, frequently at times when we least expect them to do so."

How a child grieves depends on a number of factors, including his or her age, gender, personality and stage of development. However, some common signs that a child is grieving include:

- Anxiety about others' safety and/or his or her own safety
- Asking questions about death
- Bedwetting
- Being easily distracted
- Dreaming about the deceased person
- Feeling physically ill or achy
- Forgetfulness
- Having difficulties in school
- Irritability, defiance or aggressiveness
- Trying to find the deceased person (in very young children)
- Wanting to be with family and friends more often
- Withdrawing

"I encourage parents to have an open-door policy and let their child know it's okay to laugh, cry, talk and even not talk," Cathie says. "If parents take that first step to let their child know that what they're going through is expected and that they'll be there when the child needs them, it will certainly encourage healing."

How We Can Help

PinnacleHealth offers one-on-one counseling, literature for parents and a program through area schools called Together Laughing and Crying (TLC). TLC is available by request to schools in which several children have gone through a significant loss and typically lasts four to six weeks.

In addition, children may participate in Camp Dragonfly, a free weekend camp for children ages six through 15 who have suffered a loss. Each child who attends the camp is matched with a "big buddy" based on personalities and the losses each has experienced.

"Many of the kids who come to camp are the only children in their classes or groups of friends who have lost someone, and they feel like no one understands," says Stephanie Schaefer, coordinator of volunteers for PinnacleHealth Hospice and the Camp Dragonfly Hebron site. "When they come to camp, however, they realize they're not alone. It gives them healthy outlets to deal with frustration, anger and sadness."

For more information about Camp Dragonfly, visit pinnaclehealth.org and type "dragonfly" in the search box.

To learn more about Camp Dragonfly or to become a "big buddy," call or e-mail Stephanie Schaefer at 1-800-889-1098 or sschaefer@pinnaclehealth.org.

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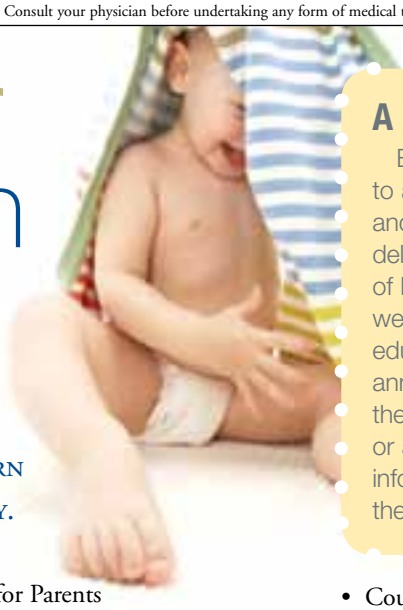
Preparing for Your New Addition



THE BIRTH OF A CHILD IS A JOYFUL EVENT FOR ANY FAMILY. HOWEVER, CHILDBIRTH CAN ALSO BE STRESSFUL, PARTICULARLY FOR MOTHERS. TO ENSURE THE DELIVERY OF YOUR BABY GOES AS SMOOTHLY AS POSSIBLE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO TURN TO A FACILITY THAT MAKES COMFORT A PRIORITY.

A Useful Resource

Expectant parents have access to a helpful guide that offers tips and advice about pregnancy, labor, delivery and the baby's first year of life. *The Parent Review* is a weekly e-mail that contains news, educational information and hospital announcements customized to the mother's week of pregnancy or age of the newborn. For more information or to register, visit theparentreview.com/pinnacle.

Adequate planning and preparation prior to delivery are vital to keeping stress manageable, and PinnacleHealth has a number of resources to help parents prepare for the big day.

"Pregnancy can be extremely overwhelming for new parents," says Bonnie Timko, marketing specialist for Women's and Children's Services at PinnacleHealth. "In the face of tremendous stress, however, we help expectant parents prepare themselves for the special day through education and proper planning."

Childbirth 101

PinnacleHealth's Childbirth and Parenting Education classes help new parents know what to expect during pregnancy and the delivery process. Some of these classes include:

- Baby Care Basics
- Breastfeeding Basics
- First Aid for Parents
- Infant/Child CPR
- Lamaze® Childbirth
- Online Childbirth Classes (New!)
- Prepared Childbirth
- Tiny Touch/Infant Massage

Tours of the Birth Center also are available for new parents to visit and ask questions about their upcoming delivery, and virtual tours are available for parents who are unable to visit the hospital in person.

A Center of Excellence

Birthing options and services focus on making childbirth as easy for mothers as possible. Through a variety of amenities and services, physicians and staff give new mothers the resources they need to feel comfortable, including:

- Behavioral health services
- Board-certified specialists
- Counseling and educational services
- Personal nursing attention
- Private rooms, complete with showers
- Sleeper chairs for visitors

Additionally, PinnacleHealth offers a 32-bed Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit that specializes in at-risk births. Caring for nearly 500 babies each year, this department has the experience required to prepare babies for a healthy beginning.

"Turning to an experienced facility for the birth of a child is one of the most vital steps parents can take," Bonnie says. "At PinnacleHealth, everything we do serves the greater purpose of making childbirth memorable and comfortable for parents."

To learn more about childbirth and parenting education classes at PinnacleHealth, visit pinnaclehealth.org and click on "Classes & Events."