



Advice from Dr. Weiss

Q My friend just found out she's pregnant. She's 18 and has a very small frame. Nothing unhealthy for her age, but could her size cause any harm to her or the baby?

A As long as she eats right and gains a normal amount of weight during her pregnancy, the risks of your friend's pregnancy shouldn't be higher than for a taller or stouter person.

Stephen H. Weiss, M.D., is an assistant professor in the department of gynecology and obstetrics at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta.



Doula Jill says

Q My childbirth educator suggested I plan an "early labor project." What does she mean and what can I do?

A Early labor lasts a long time—and it's supposed to last a long time, so you need to relax and just let it happen. A "project" can help you look inward, connect with your creativity, and focus your mind, all of which ground you before the real work of birthing begins.

I recommend cooking or baking to my clients, and I did this myself when I was pregnant. In fact, my husband says that the bread I made in early labor with my son Sebastian was the best I've ever baked! Why bread? It takes touch and time. Your hands determine if you need more flour, more water, more kneading. You have to work through the fatigue

of your fingers and arms as you knead. You have to stretch and push the dough, even when you want to quit. And this is exactly the kind of intention that will support you in labor.

Jill Wodnick, M.A., (jillwodnick.com) is a certified doula, prenatal instructor, and owner of Montclair Maternity, a New Jersey childbirth education center.



Ask Dr. Dana

Q My ob/gyn just advised me to pick a pediatrician for my soon-to-be new baby. I know that many suggest a prenatal interview, but I'm not even sure which questions to ask. Can you help?

A You're not alone! During the prenatal conversation, most new moms honestly say to me, "What else should I be asking you?" My top five:

- How long have you been practicing?
- What's your after-hours support? Do you have an after-hours advice nurse or doctor?
- What if I have questions during the day? Do you have a nurse who can answer them?
- Will I be able to schedule a same-day appointment for my baby if she is sick?
- Will I see you for both well and sick visits?

Of course, besides just asking questions, it's important to get a feel for how you communicate with each other. Make sure you're a good fit.

Lisa Dana, M.D., is a pediatrician at Golden Gate Pediatrics in San Francisco and a clinical faculty member at University of California, San Francisco.



A word with Dr. Wendy

Q I'm scared to leave our newborn because I'm afraid my husband won't take care of the baby so well. He thinks I'm being a control freak. What should I do?

A I hear this from new mothers all the time, and I've experienced the feeling, too. But if you don't allow that man some time alone to get in a groove with his own child, the bond between them can never be built, and you might lose his help altogether. If he's willing to parent and has no drug, alcohol, or other daredevil behaviors that could put the baby in real danger, you need to take a deep breath and walk out the door. Start with short excursions and then stretch the time out.

When you come back, even if that baby has a diaper on her head, just smile and thank him. They'll find their way together, but not if you're criticizing him every step of the way. 🍌

Wendy Lee Walsh, Ph.D., appears regularly on TV as a psychological expert. She wrote *The Boyfriend Test* and blogs about relationships at drwendywalsh.com.

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