



Your Prenatal Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic

How will the COVID-19 pandemic impact my prenatal care?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our top priority is to keep our patients, staff, and communities safe. To do this, we are limiting in-person contact by reducing in-person visits at your doctor’s office and the hospital and replacing some in-person care with **virtual prenatal care**.

What is virtual prenatal care?

Virtual prenatal care is a safe, convenient way to get your prenatal care from home. Using your phone, computer, or tablet, you can sign into a private telephone call or videoconference with your doctor or midwife to have your prenatal checkup appointments.

Even though many of your appointments will be virtual and will take place on your phone or computer, you will also have in-person appointments with your doctor or midwife when you need them.

Will I still get the same quality of prenatal care?

You will still receive the same high-quality care and all of the prenatal services you normally would, but some services may be grouped together to reduce the number of times you have to come to your doctor’s office. You and your doctor or midwife will review the visit schedule to the right, and make sure that it will work for you and your needs.

USF Health Prenatal Care Visit Schedule

Visits	
New OB Visit	10-14 weeks
Virtual visit	15-19 weeks
In Person Visit	20-22 weeks
Virtual Visit	23-26 weeks
In Person Visit	27-28 weeks
Virtual Visit	29-34 weeks
In Person Visit	35-36 weeks
Virtual Visit	37-38 weeks
In Person Visit	39-40 weeks
In Person Visit	40-41 weeks

Do I need to purchase any equipment for my virtual visits?

You are not required to purchase any equipment to prepare for your virtual visits. However, some patients may choose to purchase devices to monitor their blood pressure and/or check their baby’s heart rate, for their own reassurance. If you choose to monitor these, you can do so before your appointment and share your values with your doctor or midwife at your virtual visit.

Blood Pressure Cuff: a device used to measure blood pressure that consists of an inflatable cuff, a measuring unit, and a mechanism for inflation which may be a manually operated bulb and valve or a pump operated electrically.

Fetal Doppler Monitor: a handheld ultrasound device that helps detect your baby's heart beats.

How can I monitor my baby's movement at home?

We believe it is safe to complete your virtual visits without a fetal Doppler monitor. We would encourage you to monitor your baby's movement by using "kick counts." This means recording the number of times your baby kicks, twists, and turns. You will usually feel your baby move by the 20th week of pregnancy.

How do I measure my baby's movements with "kick counts"?

- 1. Get relaxed and comfortable.** Loosen tight clothing. Lay down on your side or sit with your feet propped up. Minimize distractions like your phone and TV to help you concentrate.
- 2. Note the time you start. Count movements until you reach 10.** Each roll, kick, punch, or twist counts as 1 fetal movement.
- 3. Note the time you finish counting.** It should be less than an hour. If you are not getting 10 movements in an hour, drink a glass of cold juice and start over.
- 4. If you are still not getting 10 movements in the second hour,** call the clinic 813-259-8500 for more guidance

How can I record my weight at home?

Recording your weight during pregnancy can tell your doctor if your baby is getting the nutrition it needs. You will need to measure and record your weight in pounds (lbs) using a bathroom scale.

Before you record your weight, be sure to:

- Use your scale on a solid and flat surface.
- Make sure your scale is zeroed before weighing yourself (the scale should say 0 when there is no weight on it).
- Always remove your shoes before measuring your weight.
- The type of clothing you wear or time of day doesn't matter.

How can I record my blood pressure at home?

We believe it is safe to complete your virtual visits without a blood pressure cuff to monitor your blood pressure, as long as you do not have a history of high blood pressure. However, if you would like to purchase a blood pressure cuff, we have a list of recommended devices.

How To Enter Your Blood Pressure Numbers Into MyChart:

Record these two numbers into MyChart:

1. **Your systolic (SYS) blood pressure** (the top large number on your blood pressure machine). This is your maximum blood pressure when your heart beats.
2. **Your diastolic (DIA) blood pressure** (the lower large number on your blood pressure machine). This is your minimum blood pressure when your heart is relaxed and between beats.

To get an accurate blood pressure measurement, be sure to:

- Read the instructions that come with your blood pressure machine.
- Relax for five minutes before taking your blood pressure
- Sit in a relaxed position (sitting in a chair is best)
- Keep your legs uncrossed
- Remove any thick clothing from your arm
- Rest your arm on a flat surface, keeping it level with your heart

How can I detect my baby's heart beat?

A fetal Doppler monitor is a handheld ultrasound device that helps detect your baby's heart beats. If you would like to purchase a home fetal Doppler monitor, we have a list of recommended devices.

How to Measure Your Fetal Heart Beat:

1. To measure your fetal heart beat, lie down on your back and remove your clothing to expose your stomach. Turn on the device. Then put ultrasound gel on the top of the Doppler wand.
2. Place the probe to the area halfway between your belly button and your pubic bone. (Paper towels might come in handy.) Use firm pressure and move the probe around slowly to find the heart beat. Try changing the angle of the probe.
3. Since your baby will move around and change positions, it may take several minutes to find your baby's heart beat. Most fetal doppler monitors will have a volume setting so you can turn the volume up.

A doppler measures your baby's heart rate in beats per minute. By 16 weeks of gestational age, normal fetal heart beats range from 110 to 180 beats per minute.

We don't expect you to be able to hear a heart beat before your baby is 16 weeks old, so don't be concerned. Feel free to bring your Doppler to your regular in-clinic appointments and ask your provider for help and reassurance on how to use it.

Online Resources

Below are trusted resources that you can access online.

Tour of Labor and Delivery Online

- Tour: <http://www.virtually-anywhere.net/tours/ugh/womens/vtour/index.html>

Online Birthing Classes

- Tampa General: <https://www.tgh.org/event/labor-birth-preparation-e-class>
- Evidence Based Birth: <https://evidencebasedbirth.com/evidence-based-birth-childbirth-class-virtual-experience/>
- One Love: <https://www.onelovedoula.com>
- Lamaze: <https://www.lamaze.org/lamaze-classes-online>

Breastfeeding and Postpartum Questions

- New Mom Health: www.newmomhealth.com
- Lamaze: <https://www.lamaze.org>
- La Leche League: <https://www.llli.org>

Postpartum Depression

- Seventh Mom: <https://www.theseventhmomproject.org>
- SAMSHA HelpLine: 1 (800) 662-HELP
- NIH: <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/publications/perinatal-depression/index.shtml>

Food Banks

- Feeding Tampa Bay: <http://feedingtampabay.org/find-a-pantry/>

If you would like to join an online support group, please fill out the survey here:

[USF Online Support Group Survey](https://tiny.cc/USFsupportgroup) (tiny.cc/USFsupportgroup)

***Thank you for choosing to receive your care at
USF Health and helping us take the best care of our patients during the COVID-
19 pandemic!***

We would like to thank University of Utah, University of Michigan and Mayo Clinic for assistance with these educational materials.