



# THE PRENATAL PERIOD

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Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker

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Additional copies of *The MIHOW Home Visit Guides: The Prenatal Period, The First Year of Life, The Second Year of Life, and The Third Year of Life* are available from the Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker (MIHOW) program at our website, [www.mihow.org](http://www.mihow.org).

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# HANDOUTS AND PAMPHLETS\*



## **Visit 1**

*MIHOW Consent Form (MIHOW)*  
*The Pregnancy Baby Book (March of Dimes)*  
*Folic Acid (March of Dimes)*

## **Visit 2**

*Build Your Own Pyramid*  
*Early Signs and Symptoms of Pregnancy*  
*What to Expect At Your First Prenatal Visit*  
*Healthy Eating During Pregnancy*  
*Exercise During Pregnancy*  
*Watermelon-ade Recipe*  
*WIC – A Brief Overview*

## **Visit 3**

*Fetal Development: The First Trimester*  
*Dealing With Nausea During Pregnancy*  
*Exercise During Pregnancy*  
*Drugs and Pregnancy (March of Dimes)*  
*Smoking and Pregnancy (March of Dimes)*

## **Visit 4**

*Fetal Development: The Second Trimester*  
*Maternal Changes in the Second Trimester*  
*Tips for Smart Shopping*  
*A Healthy Plate*  
*How to Plan Healthy Meals*  
*Making Sex Safer (American College Health Association)*

\*Information on ordering pamphlets is available on page vii.

**Visit 5**

*Tips for Healthy Cooking*  
*Chicken with Squash Recipe*  
*What's Right For Me?*

**Visit 6**

*What Have You Heard About Breastfeeding*  
*What Most Women Want to Know About Breastfeeding*  
*Cultural Beliefs That Might Delay Breastfeeding or Lead to Overfeeding*  
*Busy Moms (Best Start)*  
*Embarrassment (Best Start)*  
*Encouragement (Best Start)*

**Visit 7**

*Fetal Development: The Third Trimester*  
*Maternal Changes in the Third Trimester*  
*Common Discomforts and Home Remedies*  
*What to Expect During Labor and Delivery*  
*Options to Consider for Your Birth*

**Visit 8**

*Deciding About Circumcision*

**Visit 9**

*Your Contraceptive Choices (Planned Parenthood)*

# PAMPHLETS

## SOURCES

TITLE	PUBLISHER AND ADDRESS	PRICE
MIHOW Consent Form	The MIHOW Program Center for Health Services Vanderbilt University, Station 17 Nashville, TN 37232-8180 (615) 343-4513 <a href="http://www.mihow.org">www.mihow.org</a>	Free to make copies until expiration date. Get current forms from website.
Pregnancy Wheel (53-1761-02)	March of Dimes P.O. Box 932852 Atlanta, GA 31193-2852 (800) 367-6630 <a href="http://www.marchofdimes.com/cataloge">www.marchofdimes.com/cataloge</a>	\$5/10
The Pregnancy Baby Book (White: 09-2316-08; Black: 09-2317-08; Hispanic (en español): 09-2318-08)	March of Dimes	\$12/25
Take Folic Acid (Black: 53-1657-02; White: 53-1658-02; Hispanic (en español): 53-1483-00)	March of Dimes	\$7/50
Drugs and Pregnancy (Bilingual: 09-2436-09)	March of Dimes	\$10/25
Smoking and Pregnancy (English: 09-2410-08; Spanish 09-2413-08)	March of Dimes	\$16/50
Making Sex Safer (HS01)	American College Health Association Publications P.O. Box 28937 Baltimore, MD 21240-8937 (410) 859-1500, option 4 <a href="http://www.acha.org">www.acha.org</a>	\$.49 each for 100-500
Your Contraceptive Choices (2012)	Planned Parenthood Federation of America 810 Seventh Ave. New York, NY 10019 (800) 669-0156 <a href="http://www.plannedparenthood.org">www.plannedparenthood.org</a>	\$38/100
Breastfeeding (3 pamphlets): Encouragement, Embarrassment, and Busy Moms	No longer available	Free to make copies

# **Introduction    How to Use the Prenatal Home Visit Guides**



## **MIHOW Philosophy**

*All children deserve a fair start in life in order to reach their full potential. This journey begins prenatally with a mother who is well nourished and well cared for, and continues after delivery with a healthy, warm, and stimulating environment for the child and the entire family.*

In addition to promoting healthy babies and families, the MIHOW program is committed to helping the individual home visitor and the community become more self-sufficient. During your training as a MIHOW home visitor, you were given guidelines and responsibility for finding the necessary information about services and resources available in your community. This process allowed you to not only educate yourself, but also learn how to network and be assertive, and at the same time, have more influence in your community. This is a great and inspirational accomplishment that you can now share with your MIHOW mothers and their families.

## **About the Home Visit Guides**

The MIHOW curriculum consists of four Home Visit Guides covering the prenatal period and continuing through the child's third year of life. Each "chapter" of the Home Visit Guide represents a monthly home visit and is divided into seven sections:

Objectives

Pre-visit Tasks

Background Information

Making the Home Visit

Building Mother's Self-Esteem  
Reflections  
Notes

The first two visits during pregnancy are designed to be completed within one month. The visits thereafter are usually made once per month.

The following points should be considered in using the guides.

- ***Objectives – The objectives are recommended topics to address at each stage of pregnancy.***
  - Remember that each MIHOW mother is different and will have different needs and concerns. Therefore, all objectives and activities listed in the guide do not need to be covered at each visit. Pick and choose the ones that best suit the mother's needs.
  - You will meet each mother at a different stage of her pregnancy. The objectives of the first visit are the ones you will want to complete with each pregnant mother, regardless of when she enters the program.
  - Beyond the first prenatal visit, you will need to decide what will be most helpful for each individual mother. For example, if you are working with a mother who is entering the MIHOW program during her second trimester of pregnancy, you can skip the information on early signs of pregnancy. You still want to cover pregnancy warning signs, nutrition, and exploring her feelings about the pregnancy.
  
- ***Pre-Visit Tasks – This section outlines the minimal things you need to do to prepare for each visit.***
  - You may need to do more or less, depending on the needs of the individual mother.
  - All MIHOW handouts and pamphlets are in protective sleeves at the end of each visit section.

- The primary resource listed for background reading is Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn: The Complete Guide. This text is available at your MIHOW site.
  - The second book listed, The Complete Book of Pregnancy and Childbirth, is strongly recommended, but may or not be available at your MIHOW site. If not, it is available through your public library.
  - Additional reading materials listed, such as back issues of *The MIHOW Networker*, also are in a sleeve at the end of each visit.
- ***Background Information – This section highlights important points to consider in your preparation for the visit.*** Use this information with the objectives and pre-visit tasks as a tool to prepare for and focus on the issues that pertain to that particular stage of pregnancy
  - ***Making the Home Visit – This section guides you through each step of making the home visit.***
    - These guides are not set in stone. Think of them as a menu from which to pick the issues that best address the woman’s most pressing needs.
    - A little preparation goes a long way toward helping you choose which parts of the guide are most appropriate for each woman. Review the notes from the previous visit to help you make the best choices.
    - These guides do not provide all the information needed to complete each visit. They are intended to be a reminder of topics that are important to cover throughout the pregnancy.
    - You may find that if you are a new outreach worker, you will follow the guide objective by objective and visit by visit. Over time, as you become more comfortable with the information, the guide will serve more as a reference, a place to look for quick reminders, or a resource to be used as a teaching tool.

- ***Building Mother’s Self-Esteem – This section provides suggestions that will help you gently assist the woman over time to view herself more positively and realistically.*** A woman who has low self-esteem is less likely to find ways to meet her own or her baby’s physical, emotional, and social needs adequately. It also diminishes her ability to help take care of the rest of her family, return to school, find a job, and be an active, contributing member of her community.

  - Try to weave the self-esteem exercise into the visit without presenting it as a separate activity, when possible. Referring to the activity as a self-esteem exercise will be less effective and could make the mother feel uncomfortable.
  - Be careful – remember that you are her friend and helper, not a professional counselor. If necessary, refer her to an affordable mental health provider or agency in the community, or encourage her to discuss her emotional concerns with her primary health care provider.
  
- ***Reflections – This section helps you reflect on your visit and determine whether you and the MIHOW mother made progress during your visit.*** It is not intended to evaluate actual change in the woman’s health or behavior.

  - Review the questions that are appropriate to you, the mother, and the information or activities covered in the visit.
  - Consider the parts of the visit that went really well and things that could be done differently to produce a better outcome.
  - Pat yourself on the back for all that you and the MIHOW mother have learned and accomplished and for the relationship you are building!
  
- ***Notes – This box allows space to record any changes, additions, resources, or any other information you want to keep in mind for this particular visit with other women.*** In the “Notes” box, record your

thoughts and ideas that apply to all mothers. Note information specific to the mother in her record.

- ***Building Mother's Self-Esteem – This section provides suggestions that will help you gently assist the woman over time to view herself more positively and realistically.*** A woman who has low self-esteem is less likely to find ways to meet her physical, emotional, and social needs adequately. It also diminishes her ability to take care of her family, return to school, find a job, and be an active, contributing member of her community.
  - This section appears in Visits 3 – 8 only.
  - Try to weave the self-esteem exercise into the visit without presenting it as a separate activity. Referring to the activity as a self-esteem exercise will be less effective and could make the mother feel uncomfortable.
  - Be careful – remember that you are her friend and helper, not a professional counselor. If necessary, refer her to an affordable mental health provider or agency in the community, or encourage her to discuss her emotional concerns with her health care provider at her next prenatal visit.
  
- ***Handouts and pamphlets – All the handouts and pamphlets referred to in the Guides are included in the back of each section for that guide.***
  - The MIHOW handouts have been placed in a sleeve for easy copying (you do not have to remove them from the sleeve).
  - The pamphlets are published by a variety of agencies and should not be copied unless permission to do so is clearly stated. Information for ordering the pamphlets is on page vii.

## Visit 1

# Getting to Know The Mother



## I. Objectives

1. Acquaint her with the MIHOW Program and you.
2. Explore her feelings and concerns about the pregnancy.
3. Identify sources of social support.

## II. Pre-visit Tasks

1. Determine gestational age and due date with pregnancy wheel, if possible (pregnancy wheel in pocket at end of manual).
2. Review *MIHOW Consent Form*.
3. Read Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn: The Complete Guide\*, Simpkin, P., Walley, J. and Keppler, A. (1991) pp. 26-29: *First Trimester Changes for Mother and Baby*, pp. 34-40: *Special Considerations in Pregnancy*, and p. 41: *Calendar of Pregnancy: First Trimester*, Meadowbrook Press, New York.
4. Read The Complete Book of Pregnancy and Childbirth\*\*, Kitzinger, S. (1997) pp. 24-30: *Emotional Reactions to Pregnancy*, pp. 149-157: *Emotional Challenges in Pregnancy*, and, as appropriate, pp. 159-173: *Becoming a Father, Your Changing Relationship*, and *Pregnant Again*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

\* This book is available at your MIHOW site.

\*\*This book is available through your local public library.



5. Collect: *The Pregnancy Baby Book – Month to Month Folic Acid* (insert into front of *The Pregnancy Baby Book*)  
calling card and/or MIHOW brochure with your name and number

### III. Background Information

Pregnancy is a time of dramatic physical and emotional changes for women. Some feelings women experience in response to pregnancy are:

- *Joy* about her new life as a mother.
- *Curiosity* and/or *fear* of the *unknown* and changes taking place.
- *Sadness* that she is pregnant, even when a pregnancy is planned.
- *Anger* if the pregnancy is unplanned and unwanted.
- *Reluctance* to assume the "role" of pregnant woman or mother.
- *Hope* that she will raise a child who will have more advantages than she has had.
- *Fear* of failure as a mother.
- *Anxiety* about health problems, existing or potential, in mother and child.
- *Guilt* for having what may seem to be inappropriate feelings.
- *Confusion* about what she should feel and do.
- *Worry* about the labor and delivery process: *pain, discomfort, and loss of control.*
- *Excitement* that she will have someone to love and care for and to love her.
- *Overwhelmed* with advice from others.



In addition to the pregnancy, if the woman or her family is experiencing a stressful situation such as losing a job, recently moving to a new town, or the loss of a family member, she may be reluctant to start a new friendship. On the other hand, she may reach out for support during difficult times.

For teens, it is especially important to get a clear sense of her feelings about finishing school and how pregnancy will interfere with graduating. You may want to connect with the counselor or supportive teachers at school.

## IV. Making the Home Visit

### **Objective 1: Acquaint Her with the MIHOW Program and You**

- ***Explain the MIHOW program and encourage her participation.***

Make sure she understands:

  - how you were put in touch with her (church group, prenatal clinic, relative, friend, neighbor).
  - the goal is to assist her to have the healthiest pregnancy possible, the healthiest baby possible, and to become the best parent possible.
  - the services are personalized to meet each woman's needs.
  - your part in detail, including a description of a typical visit, the visit schedule, and examples of activities.
  - you will help her find services available to her in the community.
  - she will meet other women like herself to share experiences and ideas.
- ***Ask if she has any questions or concerns about the program or the pregnancy.***



- **Have her sign the agreement form.** Explain that the program is voluntary and that she decides how long you continue to visit.
- **Give her a card and/or brochure with your name and number.**

## **Objective 2: Explore Her Feelings and Concerns About the Pregnancy**

- **Ask how she feels about the pregnancy.** Some women may have no one else to talk to about their fears and desires with the pregnancy.
  - If this is an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, she may feel this is her first chance to explore her feelings.
  - If this is a wanted pregnancy, it gives the woman a chance to share her excitement, joy and mixed emotions with you.
- **Ask how her family and community feel about her pregnancy.**  
Different cultures and communities feel differently about pregnancy and may treat pregnant women in different ways.
- **Ask what short- and long-term plans she had for herself before she found out she was pregnant. How has this pregnancy changed those plans?** This gives you a chance to know the mother as well as address any sources of anxiety or happiness that this might bring up. Explore how this may change her plans for education, career, family, etc.
- **Ask what changes she has noticed since becoming pregnant.** Talk about some of the normal physical and emotional changes of pregnancy and ask her about her experiences. Let her ask questions and talk about issues that are bothering her.
- **Ask what has changed about her life since she found out about the pregnancy.** Sometimes, people may not be able to identify that they are



worried or concerned, but are able to notice that their lives are different. This question may provide direction for your conversation and allow the woman to talk about what has changed in her life as a result of the pregnancy.

- ***Ask if anyone has identified any problems with her pregnancy.***

Women with high-risk pregnancies will have the added fears of abnormal babies, or harm and pain to themselves. They may also feel very guilty if the pregnancy is not normal, even if they have no control over the problem.

- ***Give her the booklet, The Pregnancy Baby Book - Month by Month, A Diary of Your Pregnancy and handout Folic Acid.*** Let her know you will be there throughout her pregnancy to help her find answers to all her questions.

### **Objective 3: Identify Sources of Social Support**

- ***Ask who is around to help her now and after the baby comes.***
  - Does she have a husband or partner at home? Is he or she supportive emotionally? Is he or she supportive financially?
  - Will the father of the baby continue to be involved with the pregnancy and parenting?
  - Does she have her mother, mother-in-law, sisters or close friends nearby?
- ***Ask if she has other small children at home that will need care.***
- ***Assure her that you will help her identify and find the help she needs.***



## V. Reflections

- ✓ Did you establish good rapport with the pregnant woman? Did she ask questions? Do you think she felt comfortable? Did you both laugh?
- ✓ Do you feel that you explained the MIHOW program and your role in it to the woman's satisfaction? Does she have a good picture of what will happen when you walk through the door for future visits?
- ✓ Do you have a clear understanding of the woman's feelings about her pregnancy?
- ✓ Did you help her identify the sources of support available to her?
- ✓ Do you feel that you are a good match for this MIHOW mother?



**Notes**



# Visit 2 Getting Connected



## I. Objectives

1. Determine if she is receiving adequate prenatal care.
2. Help her identify social service needs and enroll in the WIC program.
3. Help her identify nutritional needs.
4. Discuss exercise during pregnancy.

## II. Pre-visit Tasks

1. Review notes from last visit.
2. Review Handouts:
  - Build Your Own Pyramid*
  - MIHOW Prenatal Data Entry Form*
  - Early Signs and Symptoms of Pregnancy*
  - What to Expect At Your First Prenatal Visit*
  - Healthy Eating During Pregnancy*
  - Exercises During Pregnancy*
  - Watermelon-ade Recipe*
3. Read Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn: The Complete Guide, pp.67-80: *Nutrition in Pregnancy*
4. Review *How WIC Helps?* (for home visitor only) and collect WIC brochure for mother from local WIC agency.

## III. Background Information

Now that you have had a chance to start building trust, you can more easily evaluate her medical, emotional, and informational needs. This is a good



opportunity to begin to share information that can help her be the healthiest mother she can be and to have the healthiest pregnancy possible. You may want to come prepared with a list of the prenatal care options, phone numbers, and addresses available in her area.

## IV. Making the Home Visit

### **Objective 1: Determine If She is Receiving Adequate Prenatal Care**

- **Ask if she has any questions or concerns since your last visit.**
- **Ask if she has noticed any physical changes since your last visit.**
  - Review and give her the handout, *Early Signs and Symptoms of Pregnancy*.
  - Review *Warning Signs in Early Pregnancy* (on *Early Signs and Symptoms of Pregnancy* handout)
  - Ask if she has experienced any of the warning signs. If so, has she told her healthcare provider?
- **Ask where she is receiving prenatal care.**
  - If she has not made arrangements for health care, find out why.
  - Explain her options: health department, clinics, private doctors and midwives.
  - Help her find the phone number and encourage her to make the appointment while you are there.
  - Ask if she has transportation to the appointment. Help her explore her transportation options.
  - If she has other children, explore her needs and options for child care.



- **Discuss the importance of prenatal care.** Prenatal care can help prevent small problems from becoming life-threatening. For example, high blood pressure and diabetes can be identified and managed relatively easily, but without care, they can lead to serious complications and/or death.
- **Ask if she has ever had a gynecologic exam ("female exam") or Pap smear.**
  - Review and give handout, *What to Expect at Your First Prenatal Visit*.
  - Explain importance of exam, Pap smear and infection check, breast exam, blood work, and urinalysis.
- **Encourage her to practice safer sex.**
  - If woman is sexually active and not in a mutually monogamous relationship, she is at risk for contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.
  - STIs can put both mother and baby at risk.
  - Condoms used for vaginal, anal, and oral sex can reduce the risk of transmission of many STIs.

## **Objective 2: Help Her Identify Social Service Needs and enroll in the WIC Program**

- **Complete the Prenatal Data Entry Form online.** Completing these forms will provide a lot of information about the woman and her household. It may tip you off to any concerns or problems she may have. The questions also provide information about sources of support she already has in place.
- **Ask if she is enrolled in the WIC program.** If not, explain that the program provides:



- free nutritional foods, which are essential for healthy fetal/child development. Some of these foods are eggs, peanut butter, cheese, dried beans, milk, and juice.
- free health screenings, including blood iron level and weight.
- free nutrition education.
- support for breastfeeding.
- benefits until child is 5 years old.
- ***Give her the local WIC program phone number and brochure (if available).***
- ***Encourage her to call the WIC program to make an appointment while you are there.***
- ***Explore her transportation options with her.***
- ***Help her understand the importance of keeping WIC appointments.***

### **Objective 3: Help Her Identify Nutritional Needs**

- ***Help her complete the handout, Build Your Own Pyramid.*** Ask if she can remember everything she ate yesterday since waking up in the morning.
  - Explain that this information will give her tips about how to improve her eating habits so her baby will grow and develop to his/her fullest potential. Also, increased quality calories fuel the mother's body.
  - Point out good nutritional choices she is making. Encourage her to continue. Discuss fruit and vegetables important for weight loss. Give extensive lists of examples.
  - Discuss right amount for mom and baby (portion size).



- **Ask if she is taking a prenatal vitamin and mineral supplement.**  
Discuss the importance of taking them regularly. Emphasize the importance of folic acid.
- **Point out the nutritional practices that she should follow to have a healthy pregnancy.**
- Identify what she is currently eating and then provide suggestions and alternatives, as needed.
- **Discuss which drinks are healthy and which to avoid.**
  - Discuss the importance of avoiding beverages high in caffeine & sugar (sodas, sports drinks, coffee, tea) as they can be dehydrating. Caffeine crosses the placenta. Sugar drinks are unnecessary calories.
  - Avoid all alcoholic beverages.
  - Review handout, *Watermelon-ade Recipe*.
- **Review and give her the handout, *Healthy Eating During Pregnancy*.**
- **Set nutrition goals for the month. Have her post the calendar on her refrigerator.**

#### **Objective 4: Discuss Exercise During Pregnancy**

- **Ask what kind and how much exercise she gets.**
- **Give and review handout, *Exercise During Pregnancy*.**
- **Make an exercise plan with her and set goals for the next month.**
  - Ask what her favorite activities are.
  - Can she build physical activity into her daily life? Examples: Walk up stairs instead of taking the elevator; do stretches during TV commercials.



- Make her aware of other ways she is already physically active.  
Examples: Cleaning the house, carrying groceries, carrying other children. She should give herself credit for this activity!
- Ask what her physical abilities and restrictions are. How much exercise does she normally get? How are her joints feeling? How is her back feeling? Pregnancy is **not** the time to start a rigorous exercise program.
- Ask what her resources are. Does she have a friend to walk with? Is there a lake, pond, or pool nearby? Is it safe to ride a bike in her community? Does she need childcare while she exercises, or are there activities she can do with her children? Is she familiar with the closest community center?
- Go for a walk with the mother if she enjoys walking or would like to start. During the walk, share tips on walking safely and key points on nutrition and physical activity.
- Introduce the mother to her community center.
- **Review warning signs for too much exercise during pregnancy.**
  - *Dizziness or feeling faint.* (Unless it happens only when getting up too quickly from floor or sitting.)
  - *Pain.*
  - *Vaginal bleeding.*
  - *Irregular or rapid heart beat.*
  - *Difficulty walking.*
  - *Pain in back or pubic area.*

**If she has any of these symptoms, she should contact her healthcare provider immediately.**



## V. Reflections

- ✓ Do you think that the mother felt comfortable with your visit today? Did she ask questions? Did she share stories with you?
- ✓ Did she share with you the symptoms of pregnancy she is feeling?
- ✓ Did you help her understand which symptoms are not normal and when she should contact a healthcare provider about them?
- ✓ Did you engage her in a discussion about prenatal care? Do you feel that she will seek or continue to seek prenatal care?
- ✓ Did you help the mother complete the handout *Build Your Own Pyramid*? Did you help her identify at least one way to improve her diet?
- ✓ Were you able to spark her interest in the WIC program? If she is not already on WIC, did the mother call WIC during your visit?
- ✓ What do you think you did especially well during this visit? For example, put her at ease, explain things well, and influence her to choose her food more wisely.
- ✓ What would you do differently at the next visit?



**Notes**