

A Pregnancy Primer for Preppers

An SHTF scenario may not be the best time to bring a new baby into the world. But it's going to happen. Without consistent access to contraception, pregnancy rates will likely increase. Someone you know will get pregnant when the SHTF, especially if it's a long-lasting event.

While the idea of helping someone through pregnancy and childbirth may be frightening, remember this:

Pregnancy is a natural process. Women have been birthing babies since the beginning of time. A woman's body is truly remarkable in its ability to grow another human.

Much common-sense wisdom about pregnancy and childbirth has been lost in today's ultra-medical culture. Community midwives have been replaced with high-tech hospitals. Basic knowledge about the ins and outs of pregnancy has been turned over to medical professionals.

Somewhere along the way, pregnancy has become a medical emergency. And with a sky-rocketing cesarean rate, it's no wonder people are terrified of being pregnant in an SHTF scenario.

If no doctors are available, it's essential to be prepared. Your knowledge could make a world of difference.

Quick Pregnancy Overview

There's no need for birds and the bees lesson here. I'm operating under the assumption that everyone reading this post knows where babies come from. But, it's crucial to have a basic understanding of what comes next.

Traditionally, due dates are calculated based on the last menstrual cycle. Take this date and subtract three months. Then add seven days. This projects a due date that is 40 weeks away.

However, typical pregnancies last from 38-42 weeks. Very few babies come precisely when they're "due."

Pregnancy is broken into three trimesters. Miscarriage is most likely during the first trimester. About ten percent of all pregnancies end in a miscarriage, so this may be something you experience as well.

A woman's uterus grows with the baby. By the time she is twenty weeks pregnant, the top of the uterus is typically even with the belly button. After that, it grows about an inch each week. You can use this measurement to get a rough due date if you are unsure of her last menstrual cycle.

Labor begins when it's time for the baby to enter the world. Childbirth has three distinct stages: labor, pushing/delivery, and the delivery of the placenta. The labor stage breaks down into early, active, and transition. This corresponds with dilation.

The cervix thins and dilates, preparing for birth. When it's dilated to 10 centimeters, it's time for the pushing phase to begin.

Shortly after the birth of the baby, the placenta gets pushed out. It's important to check this over and ensure there aren't any pieces remaining inside.

Labor is complete after this stage. Then you can all switch gears and focus on recovery.

Prepping with Pregnancy in Mind

Now that you've had a quick overview, it's time to dive into some practical basics. What can you do to be prepared for a pregnancy in a crisis?

As you're building your prepping stockpile, consider adding supplies for pregnancy and labor to it.

Growing a baby requires nutrients. The baby will take nutrients from the mother's body, so pregnant moms must eat properly. Stockpile plenty of nutritious foods to support both mother and baby.

Prenatal vitamins help ensure nutritional requirements are met. You can stockpile these. Folic acid is an essential vitamin for expecting moms. It helps prevent many congenital disabilities.

If supplements aren't available, here are five types of food with folic acid:

- Green leafy vegetables
- Citrus fruits
- Legumes
- Eggs
- Beef liver

Work legumes and green leafy vegetables into your [survival garden](#) plans for long-term planning. Add citrus if your climate supports it.

Stockpiling for Pregnancy

Nutrition isn't the only area to prepare for. Here are other items to add to your stockpile:

- Pregnancy tests
- Anti-nausea medication
- A belly-band
- Clothes with loose waistbands to accommodate a growing belly
- Red raspberry tea
- An emergency birth kit
- Cloth diapers, pins, covers, and wipes
- Large feminine pads or adult diapers for after delivery
- Bulb syringe for the baby after delivery
- Squirt style bottle for cleaning the mom after delivery
- Pain medication
- Antibiotics in case of an infection
- Hand sanitizer
- [Basic medical supplies](#)
- Doppler monitor for checking for a heartbeat
- Pregnancy books so you know what to expect
- *Emergency Childbirth* by Dr. Gregory
- Plenty of towels
- A blanket for the newborn
- Clothes for baby

Learn

Take time now to read books about pregnancy and delivery. Watch some basic videos about childbirth. Talk to women who have delivered outside of a hospital setting.

Find out more about red flags during pregnancy. While occasional spotting is normal, lots of blood is not.

If you discover you're interested in this topic, consider becoming a doula or midwife. Take courses now, so you can barter your services to the pregnant women around you when the time comes.

Back in the day, older women who had some experience with

birth helped expectant women. They assisted during delivery and often stayed in the home for a couple of weeks until the new mama was back on her feet.

This community approach may make a comeback in a long-term survival situation.

Limitations During Pregnancy

When life as you know it changes, you'll want all hands on deck. Everyone will have to pitch in for survival. If there's a pregnant woman in your group, she may face some limitations.

During a typical pregnancy, a woman can continue with the same day-to-day tasks that she did before pregnancy. Most women can continue working until delivery.

However, pregnancy is not a good time to start doing new strenuous things. She shouldn't start now if the woman hasn't been lifting heavy objects.

Exhaustion is common in pregnancy, especially in the first and third trimesters. Ensure the mom to have the opportunity to rest. Keep her well hydrated and take breaks as needed if you're bugging out.

Morning sickness often attracts certain smells and makes it challenging to complete tasks. It's important to note that morning sickness isn't limited to the mornings. Many women deal with nausea all day long.

Nibbling crackers can help. So can increasing protein consumption. [Ginger](#) works for many women.

Be patient and compassionate. The woman isn't puking on purpose. If she could wave a magic wand and automatically stop feeling sick, she would.

If bleeding develops, bed rest may be necessary. This can help

prevent premature birth.

While the mom is stuck in bed, think of ways to continue contributing to the group. Can she take up knitting or another helpful hobby? Could she entertain the children by reading them stories or playing quiet games? Brainstorm some low-key ways she can continue feeling like part of the team.

Emotional Support

Hormones run wild during pregnancy. A pregnant woman can appear fine one moment and be sobbing the next.

When you combine these hormonal changes with the added stress of life being so different, emotional needs will increase. Make sure someone checks in regularly with the woman and allows her to share her feelings and struggles.

She may feel sad that she cannot be a bigger help to the team right now. She may feel guilty about being pregnant. And she's probably worried about bringing the baby into this crazy life everyone is dealing with.

Emotional struggles won't go away after delivery. Postpartum depression and anxiety are real possibilities. Having support with the new baby, prioritizing rest, and eating a healthy diet can all help minimize the risk.

Avoid Infections

Infections can be deadly for a pregnant woman. Many deaths before modern medical care were associated with infections.

Always wash your hands before measuring her uterus, checking for dilation, or doing any other care. When it's time for delivery, use boiling water to sanitize towels and everything else.

Keep things clean.

Be Prepared for a Less than Ideal Outcome

Modern medical science has learned how to keep many premature babies alive. And it's played an important role in reducing maternal deaths related to childbirth.

When modern medical science isn't available, deaths will likely increase. Without an incubator and specialized medical equipment, a baby born very premature probably won't survive.

It's sad, but it's a fact. And one you should be prepared for.

Think About Life with a Newborn

Pregnancy doesn't last forever. Once labor is over, you'll have a newborn to care for.

Babies can change the way you live. Packing up and bugging out won't be as easy. The baby may cry at an inopportune time while you're trying to avoid being heard.

Think through your longer-term survival plans. How will a newborn fit into this picture?

It's important to talk about this well before the newborn arrives. Eventually, you will fall into a new routine, but the first few weeks can be a difficult adjustment.

How are you preparing for the possibility of pregnancy when the SHTF? Please share your thoughts in the comment section below.