



Pregnancy Terminology

Here is a little worksheet to help you understand some pregnancy terms we use in Ultrasound.

Go ahead and get started.

A

Amniotic fluid: or waters are what the baby floats around in the uterus

ARM: Artificial Rupture of the Membranes – technically this is really an amniotomy, however, most doctors and midwives will use the term ARM

Anaemia: A deficiency in the number or quality of red blood cells. A lack of iron is common in those suffering from anaemia

Antenatal: The period of pregnancy until labour and birth

Areola: The circular pigmented area around the nipple

Apnoea: The baby stops breathing and needs medical help to start again

Augmentation: When labour slows sometimes the doctor may recommend an augmentation where the labour is helped to progress, usually by using a drug called Syntocinon, given via an intravenous drip.

B

Birth Canal: The vagina

Braxton Hicks contractions: Usually painless tightening that occurs late in the pregnancy – not a sign of labour

BLA – Baby Led Attachment: A more natural way of latching the baby onto the breast

BSL- Blood Sugar Level: Some babies may need their blood sugar levels monitored in the first 48 hours. These are usually babies whose mothers have Gestational Diabetes, are preterm (less than 38 weeks) or look to have lost some weight in utero (that's in the womb) in the past few days

Breech: Upside down baby with either the feet or the bottom in the pelvis

C

Cephalic: Head, usually used to describing the presenting part in the pelvis.

Cervix: The neck of the uterus that juts into the vagina.

D

DVT- Deep Vein Thrombosis: refers usually to a clot in one of the deep veins of the body – usually in the leg in the calf region.

E

EBM: Expressed breast milk

EDB or EDC: Expected Date of Birth or Confinement

EFW: Estimated fetal weight

Embryo: The baby is referred to as an embryo until about the 12th week of pregnancy

Epidural or EDB: Epidural Block. An anaesthetic that numbs you from about the waist down

Episiotomy: A surgical incision made between the mothers vagina and anus that may be done during delivery.

F

Fetus: The term for the baby after 12 weeks

FAS: Foetal Anomaly Scan attended at 19 weeks

Folate/Folic Acid: An important B group vitamin. Protects against neural tube defects

FBC: Full Blood Count

Forceps: Metal instruments that look scarier than they really are. Sometimes if the baby gets stuck in the birth canal, forceps may be needed to safely deliver the baby

Full Term: A pregnancy is considered full term after 38 weeks

G

GBS: Group B Streptococcus. A bacteria present in the gastrointestinal tract and vagina. Approximately 15-45% of women carry the bacteria and do not have any symptoms. If present in pregnancy woman are given intravenous antibiotics during labour or when their “waters” break, if this occurs as the first sign. A low vaginal swab (LVS) is attended in the third trimester to detect the bacteria

Gestation: The length of pregnancy usually measured in weeks

GDM: A woman who has diabetes newly diagnosed in pregnancy. It usually resolves

GCT: Glucose Challenge test with 50 gram glucose load (1 hour blood test), which is a screening test for diabetes

FGTT- Full Glucose Tolerance Test: with 75 gram glucose load (2-3 Hour blood test), a diagnostic test for diabetes

H

Haemoglobin: is an iron containing protein found in red blood cells. Oxygen moves into the red blood cell and binds to haemoglobin which allows it to be transported around the body

Hypertension: Often referred by midwives and doctors as HDP or Hypertensive Disease of Pregnancy. In the “old” days it was called eclampsia.

I

Induction or IOL: Induction of Labour. Usually combines an ARM – artificial rupture of membranes and syntocinon given intravenously

Iron: Is the building block needed to produce haemoglobin. Red cells are continuously being replaced and the iron is recycled, however, our body still needs iron from our diet.

J

Jaundice: A yellow pigmentation of the skin associated with an elevated bilirubin. Common in newborns and is monitored.

K

Konakion or Vitamin K: Given to babies immediately after birth (with parents permission) prevents Haemorrhagic disease of the newborn – an often fatal disorder.

L

Lactation Consultant: A Board Certified Lactation Consultant is the ideal person to be helping you with breastfeeding problems. Most of our maternity hospitals in Sydney have dedicated Lactation Consultants as part of their staffing. We of course have Angela Smith

Leukorrhoea: Normal odourless white/yellow vaginal discharge

Lightening: When the baby begins to move into the pelvis or “dropped”. Not a predictor of labour. It will often be easier to breath but the woman will need to urinate more frequently and now feel like they “waddle” when walking

LMP: Date of your Last Menstrual Period. A term used mostly by midwives

Lochia: The vaginal blood loss that occurs after delivery. Initially it is rich red for three to five days then it becomes a watery pink loss til about the tenth day then then finally a discharge that can be whitish or yellow/brown. That can last up to six weeks.

M

Mastitis: Usually starts as an inflammation of the breast but can progress quickly to an infection.

N

NICU – Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: This is where specially trained Doctors and Nurses care for sick and preterm infants

NT plus or NT scan: Nuchal Translucency plus blood test. An ultrasound of the baby to view fluid level in nuchal area (back of neck) and view nasal bone and a blood test for the mother

NIPT – Non –invasive prenatal testing: A new test taking a maternal blood sample, which analyzes cell-free fetal DNA circulating in maternal blood. It can be done after 10 weeks of pregnancy. The test may be done electively at 12-22 weeks or when there has been an abnormal NT plus result, or when an abnormality has been found on ultrasound. The blood sample is currently sent to the USA and may take two weeks to receive the result. See October 2013 Newsletter.

P

Paediatrician: Doctor specializing in the care of babies, infants and children

Pap Smear test: A screening test for cervical (cervix) cancer. Usually done at the six week postnatal visit

Perineum: The area between the vagina and anus

Phototherapy: Is a treatment for jaundice in the baby, whereby ultra violet light is used to break down the bilirubin in an infants skin. Sometimes done in the special care nursery, but more often will be done bedside

Placenta Praevia: When the placenta is close to, or covers the cervix

Postnatal: The first six weeks following the birth of the baby

Postpartum Haemorrhage or PPH: When more blood loss than normal occurs after birth

Pre- eclampsia: A very serious condition that can occur after 23 weeks, with elevated blood pressure. Symptoms may include: headache /visual disturbances/epigastric pain/ generally feeling unwell. Liver and kidney function can be affected. See November 2013 newsletter

PROM: Premature Rupture of Membranes. "Waters" break before 37 weeks

PUPPPS – Pruritic Urticarial Papules & Plaques of Pregnancy: Non harmful but very irritating rash in pregnancy. Generally starts on abdomen and then spreads to other parts of trunk and limbs. It can take up to 6 weeks to resolve and will spontaneously resolve with in two weeks of birth. Treatment is available.

Q

Quickening: When the mother first feels the baby moving.

S

Show: Passing the mucous plug, will be slightly bloody

Serum Bilirubin or SBR: The blood test used to measure jaundice level in hospital. It involves a small heel prick to gather the blood sample

SROM: Spontaneous Rupture of Membranes (37-41 weeks) "Waters" break, usually occurs in active labour, but can occur before labour starts.

T

Tightening (Braxton Hicks): Uterus contracting which causes abdomen to become very firm to touch and may cause irregular shape, not painful

V

Vertex: Baby's head presenting into pelvis.

Vacuum extraction (Ventouse): A cup like instrument is attached to the baby's head using suction, which allows the doctor to pull while the mother pushes to get the baby out

VBAC – Vaginal Birth after Caesarean Section: Women may elect to try for a vaginal birth after a previous section. This needs to be discussed with the Obstetrician first