

Key Terms in Maternal Health

Antenatal: the time between conception and birth; also known as prenatal

Birth plan: a written document outlining a woman's preferences for care during labor and delivery

Conception: the process of fertilization, when a sperm and egg join to form an embryo

Complication: disease or health condition that happens as a result of another condition, such as pregnancy-related high blood pressure

Fetus: an unborn baby, from 9 weeks after conception until birth

Gestation: the length of time that a baby is in the uterus

Gestational diabetes: a condition that develops during pregnancy when blood sugar levels become too high because the body is not producing enough insulin

Health insurance marketplace: a government operated service that helps individuals shop for and enroll in health insurance through websites, call centers, and in-person assistance; also known as a health exchange

High-risk pregnancy: a pregnancy that involves increased health risks to the mother, baby, or both

Induction: when a health care professional artificially initiates the labor process with medications and procedures

Lactation: the production of breast milk

Maternal health: the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of a woman before, during, and after pregnancy

Medicaid: an insurance program that provides free or low-cost health coverage to certain low-income individuals, families, and children, pregnant people, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities; program qualifications, benefits, and names differ by state

Neonatal: the time between a baby's birth and 4 weeks of age

Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT): transportation services provided for individuals to access health care but are not in an emergency

Perinatal: the time period from the start of a pregnancy through one year after birth

Postpartum: the time period immediately following birth through the first 6 weeks

Preconception: the time period before pregnancy

Preeclampsia: a condition that develops during pregnancy (usually 20 weeks or later) or postpartum, characterized by high blood pressure and protein in the urine

Prenatal: the time between conception and birth; also known as antenatal

Preterm birth: when a baby is born before 37 weeks of pregnancy

Uterus: organ located in lower abdomen of a female that houses a baby during pregnancy; also known as a womb