

**Virginia Department of Health
Standards of Care: Normal Pregnant Female Exam**

Quality Standard: Maternity clients receiving ongoing medical evaluation in a health department clinic during their pregnancy can expect the following health screening assessment to be performed. Parameters and normal values are based on Physical Examination and Health Assessment by Carolyn Jarvis, W. B. Saunders Co., 3rd Edition, and A Guide to Physical Examination and History taking by Barbara Bates, J.P. Lippincott Co., 1998 and the Guidelines for Perinatal Care, 4th Edition, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Refer to normal parameters already detailed in the VDH Standards of Care: Normal Male/Female Adult Exam. Normal variances due to pregnancy are presented below.

GENERAL SURVEY/SKIN

- Baseline measurement of blood pressure at entry into care within first trimester determines the usual range of normal for the individual client. Hypertension is defined as a sustained blood pressure increase to levels of 140 systolic or 90 diastolic. Baseline weight is that reported by the patient as normal weight prior to pregnancy. A gain or loss of 5 lbs or more in a week indicates a variance from normal.

HEENT

Head

The mask of pregnancy (chloasma) is normal. This consists of irregular brownish patches around the eyes or across the bridge of the nose.

- Oiliness or dryness of the hair may be noted.
- Generalized minor hair loss may occur.

Nose

- Nasal congestion and nosebleed are common during pregnancy.

Mouth and Throat

- Gingival enlargement with bleeding is common during pregnancy.

Neck

- Symmetrical enlargement of the thyroid is expected in pregnancy.

BREAST/CHEST

- Breast enlargement, tenderness and increased nodularity are normal during pregnancy. The nipples and areola are dark and the venous pattern may be marked. Compression of the nipple may express a normal discharge of colostrum. Inverted nipples are a normal finding, but must be addressed for the client intending to breastfeed.

HEART/LUNGS

Heart

- Soft blowing murmurs are common in pregnancy.

ABDOMEN

- Purplish striae and linea nigra are normal in pregnancy.
- Fetal movements can be felt by the examiner after 24 weeks.
- Palpate the abdomen for organs or masses, fetal movements and measure fundal height if client is 16 weeks or more gestation.
- Auscultate the fetal heart rate using the Doppler at 10 weeks or the fetoscope at 18 weeks. Normal FHT's are 120-160.

GENITOURINARY

- Enlargement of labia and clitoris are normal in pregnancy.
- Frequency of urination may be normal in the absence of infection.
- The cervix is friable and may bleed.
- Check the cervix for any dilatation or effacement. Normal cervical length prior to 34-36 weeks is 1.5 cm to 2 cm.
- The vaginal walls are violet or bluish in color with deep rugae and may have increased white discharge.

MUSCULOSKELETAL

- Physiologic, dependent edema is normal in pregnancy.
- Pretibial edema < 2+ may be normal in the absence of elevated blood pressure.