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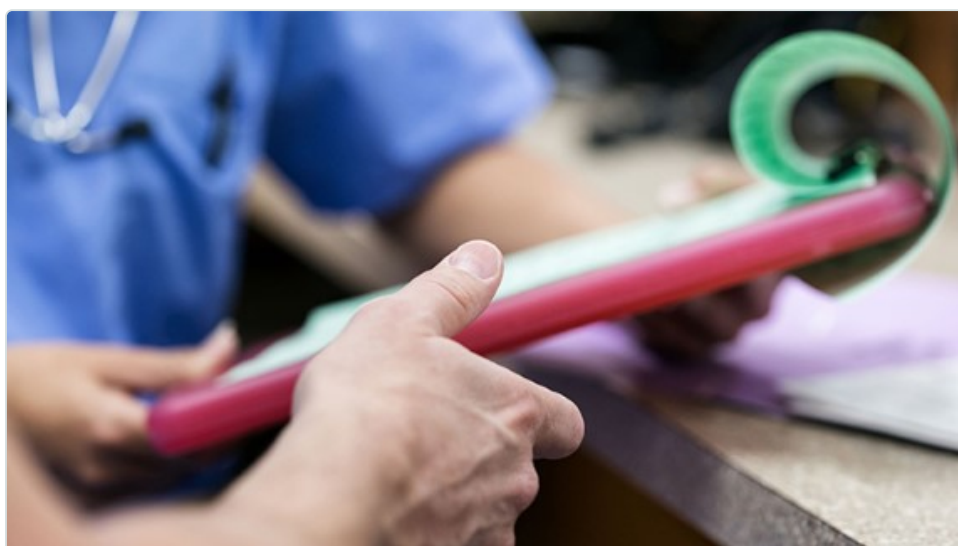
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# 5 Most Common Pregnancy Complications I Treat in My Office



by **Judy Koutsky**  
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Most women hope to have a routine pregnancy with few to no problems, followed by an uneventful labor and delivery. We asked Dr. Laura Zuidema, Division Chief for Maternal Fetal Medicine with Spectrum Health Medical Group in Grand Rapids, MI, who specializes in high risk obstetrics, to tell us about the most common pregnancy

conditions she sees in her office. The answers may surprise you:

### 1. Diabetes

"I see both [gestational diabetes](#) as well as pre-existing type 2 and type 1 diabetes," she says. By recent estimates, gestational diabetes affects around 10 percent of all women. Dr. Zuidema focuses on treating gestational diabetes with diet and exercise "and, if necessary, pills or insulin injections" during pregnancy.

### 2. Hypertension

Up to 8 percent of all expectant moms have [high blood pressure](#), according to the National Institutes of Health. "We treat both chronic and pregnancy-induced hypertension (PIH). For pre-existing hypertension, we recommend blood pressure medication during pregnancy," she says.

### 3. Asthma

[Asthma](#) affects about 8 percent of all pregnant women, according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology. "For patients with asthma, we recommend that they continue their routine medications to keep their asthma under control during pregnancy," she advises.

#### 4. Obesity

"The one symptom that the top three conditions have in common is obesity," says Dr. Zuidema. According to the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, over half of all pregnant women are overweight or obese.

"Obesity is increasing in the population."

[Obese pregnant patients](#) have a

chance of hypertension and diabetes.

Also, obesity often goes along with reflux, and that predisposes a patient to asthma," she says.

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#### 5. Preterm delivery

"The [preterm birth](#) rate increased 20 percent between 1990 and 2006," says Dr. Zuidema, though it seems to have recently leveled off at about 11.5 percent. "A variety of reasons can increase a woman's chance of preterm birth," she says, including a short interval between pregnancies, a urinary tract infection, gestational diabetes and periodontal disease.

To reduce your chances of having one of the above complications, try to enter pregnancy at a healthy weight. Once you do have a bun in the oven, stick to all of your doctor's appointments so she can help you stay on top of any health issues that require treatment. Talk to her about the [right amount of weight to](#)

[gain](#) during pregnancy, and ask for tips to manage your [caloric intake](#) and get regular exercise. If anything doesn't feel right or concerns you, don't hesitate to discuss it. Your practitioner is there to help!

### 3 Things to Read Next:

- [Overweight and Pregnant: 8 Strategies to Stay Healthy](#)
- [Pregnancy Complications](#)
- [Best Foods for Pregnant Women](#)

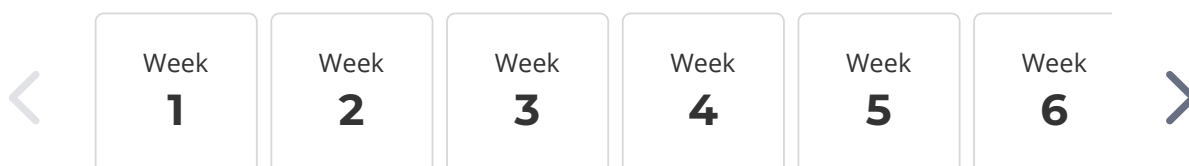


Written by **Judy Koutsky**

Judy Koutsky is the former Editorial Director of KIWI magazine, a green parenting publication. She was also Executive Editor of Parenting.com, AOL Parent and BabyTalk.com. Her work has appeared in over 30 publications. Follow her on twitter [@JudyKoutsky](#).

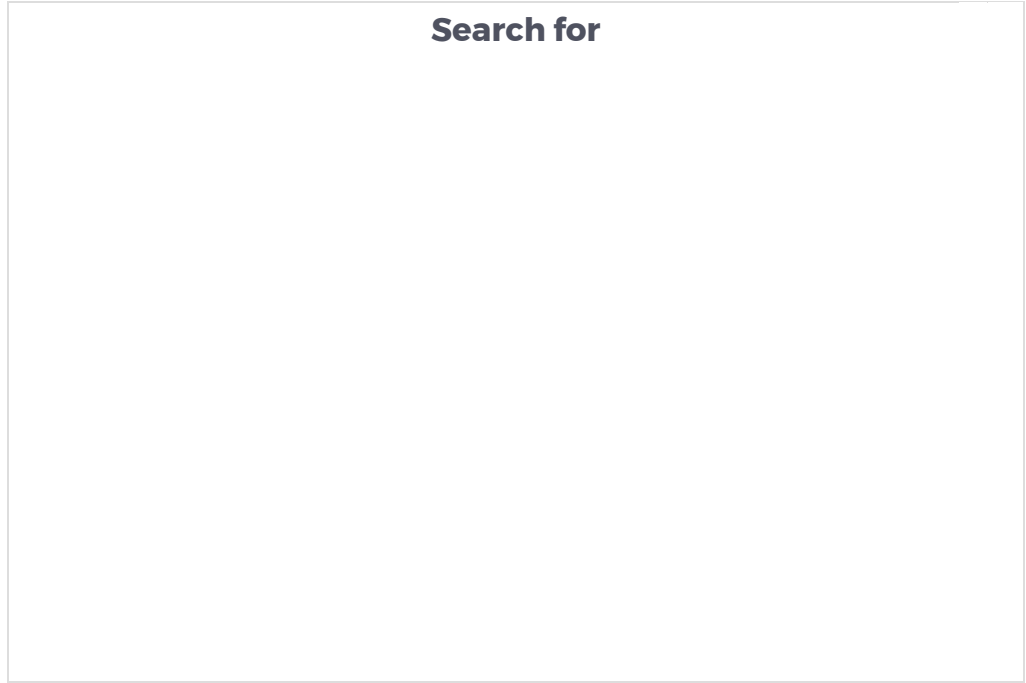
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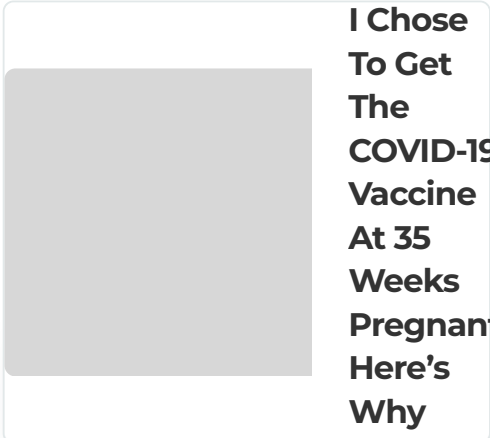


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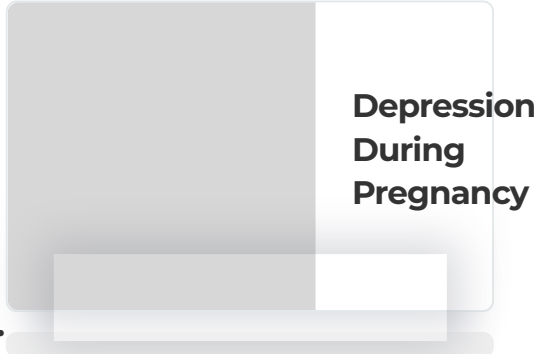
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