Signs of pregnancy and using an ovulation calendar by Debra Aspinall

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When you are desperate to have a baby youâ€™ll be on the look-out each and every day for the slightest signs you might be pregnant.

So what are the first signs of pregnancy?

While some of the following may not necessarily mean you are expecting, these are the signs most women experienceâ€¦

Missed period

Obviously a major clue, but only for a woman who has always been regular. Not all women have regular periods and some also miss periods for other reasons

such as emotional upset, anxiety about getting pregnant, illness, severe weight loss, over-exercising, onset of menopause and sometimes coming off the pill.

Tender breasts

Many women say that their breasts feel different from day one and itâ€™s an immediate tell-tale sign of pregnancy, but for others the changes donâ€™t happen until the second trimester.

The nipples may be more sensitive or the breasts just feel heavier, fuller and ache a little. There is often an increase in superficial veins over the breasts and tiny nodules may appear in the areola.

Sickness

Nausea is a common early sign of pregnancy for some women. It doesnâ€™t always occur in the mornings (despite its name of morning sickness) and it can last through the first trimester or all the way through a pregnancy. It is thought to be caused by high levels of the hormone progesterone.

Frequent Peeing

Peeing more often during the first three months of pregnancy is due to pressure from the enlarging uterus on the bladder.

Feeling tired

Women who are usually full of energy may find they are so tired they have to take a rest during the day. This overwhelming tiredness in the early months is caused by the body adapting to rapidly changing hormone levels.

Altered tastes

Many women report a strange metallic taste in their mouths in early pregnancy. Many women also go off certain foods and develop a strong aversion to the smell of cigarette smoke and the smell or taste of alcohol or other particular smell. Others may suddenly develop a strong craving for a certain food.

Bloating, cramps, backache and headache

All of these can be caused by hormonal changes and the growth of the uterus.

Signs not there?

If you are still desperately waiting for any of the above signs of pregnancy you can increase your chances of conceiving by using an ovulation calendar.

Ovulation occurs 14 days before a period, so if you have 28 day cycle this is exactly halfway between periods. If your cycle is regularly 30 days you can calculate ovulation by subtracting 14 days from the first day of the next expected period.

But donâ€™t worry about the maths. Use an online calculator or ovulation calendar to give you the optimum date for conceiving.

Simply type in the date of your last period and how long your cycle usually lasts, and it will let you know when you are at your most likely to conceive.

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