



## **The 9<sup>th</sup> Month**

*Weeks 36 to birth*

### *Your Baby*

- Your baby grows 2 ½ inches and gains up to 2 pounds – now 7 ½ pounds and 20 inches on average
- The amniotic fluid equals about 1 liter
- Your baby settles into a head down position, if this hasn't already happened
- Baby may seem quieter since there is less space to move about
- Its definite sleep and activity periods continue
- Its eye color is slate blue, but that will probably change after birth
- Its fingernails become complete and may grow long
- All your baby's body systems and organs continue to mature; it will be ready to take that miraculous first breath and grow on its own just as soon as it is born

### *Your Body*

- You see your belly getting bigger and wonder how much longer you have before birth
- The early contractions become more frequent
- Your belly may look lopsided as baby moves arms and legs or shifts position
- You tire easily and frequently feel drowsy
- Your sleep may be interrupted by the need to urinate and/or change positions
- Your feet and hands may swell
- You may feel pressure low in your pelvis from the baby settling into position for birth
- You are tired of being pregnant and are ready for the birth

### *Your Responsibilities*

- Get prenatal check-ups each week
- Continue to eat a balanced diet but you may be more comfortable with smaller meals
- Continue to exercise and practice for birth
- Limit any out-of-area travel now
- Plan now for a birth control method after baby
- Pack what you need for labor
- Pack what you need for the hospital
- Set aside clothes for you and baby to wear home (clothes for you should be maternity or something you could wear when you were about 6-7 months pregnant)
- List people and phone numbers to call when the baby is born
- Take time to treat yourself and your partner to something extra special for both of you - a night out, a massage, etc.
- Cover your mattress with a plastic mattress pad or buy some disposable incontinence underwear in case your water breaks
- Reserve a few projects (folding all baby's clothes and putting away, putting a scrapbook of pregnancy photos together, baking something) that can distract you while you are in early labor at home