38 weeks

By 38 weeks, your baby weighs around 6.8 pounds in weight and is about 19½ inches long (about the size of a leek). Your baby will start to shed some of the white vernix that coats the skin. Now is a good time to make sure things are in order for bringing baby home. Many women feel a strong urge to clean and organize things in the nursery; this is called “nesting.”

Baby at 38 weeks

Caring for baby – essential equipment

Car seat
- A rear-facing car seat is required by law to bring your baby home from the hospital.
- Follow instructions to install the car seat correctly in the back seat.
- A safety check for the car seat should be done at a local fire department or call Safe Kids at (573) 884-3660.
- Your car seat should have a five-point restraint system with the clasp raised high on the chest and the straps snug enough that they cannot be pinched. When your child is rear-facing, his neck and head are well-supported in the event of a motor vehicle crash. It is recommended that you keep your child rear-facing until your child is at least two years of age. Some families choose to keep their children rear-facing much longer than that. You can keep your child rear-facing as long as the height and weight requirements of the car-seat safely allow. Consult the car-seat manual for your car seat restrictions.

Crib or bassinet
- Babies should always be put to sleep on their backs to help reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death syndrome (SIDS).
- The safest place for your baby to sleep is in your baby’s own bed, in your room, without any fluffy pillows, blankets, or stuffed animals that could pose a suffocation risk.

Safety-proof your home including installing fire alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

Baby sling or wrap
- Wearing your baby in a sling, wrap, or carrier helps free up your hands and lets your baby feel close to you.
- Fussy or colicky babies seem to benefit the most from baby wraps.

Nursing cover
- Some women prefer using a nursing cover while in public or while having visitors.

Caring for your infant after birth

Erythromycin ointment
- After birth, your baby will be given erythromycin ointment on his eyes to prevent blindness and serious eye infections caused by vaginal bacteria.

Circumcision
- Circumcision is the removal of the foreskin that covers the tip of the penis. It is an optional procedure done in the hospital after your baby is 12 hours old and has urinated. Circumcision is often done for religious, personal, or cosmetic reasons.
- Benefits of circumcision include decreased risk of urinary tract infections, penile cancers, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) when your baby is older.
- Risks of circumcision include pain and bleeding during the procedure, poor cosmetic outcome, or narrowing of the urethra where baby urinates.

Vitamin K
- After birth, your baby will be given a shot of vitamin K that helps normal blood clotting and prevents bleeding in the brain.

Immunizations
Immunizations protect your baby from disease. Your baby will get his first vaccine, Hepatitis B, while in the hospital. Your baby will get his next set of immunizations at 2 months old. This includes vaccines to protect against hepatitis B, diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis, rotavirus, haemophilus influenzae, pneumococcus, and polio. Each of these diseases can be harmful for your baby. Vaccinations protect your infant.
Choosing a health care provider for your baby

Pediatricians and Family Medicine health care providers can see your baby for all of baby’s well-child checks including immunizations. An appointment will be made with your baby’s health care provider 1 to 2 days after discharge from the hospital to measure baby’s weight and check for jaundice.

Physicians at University Physicians see children at clinics in Columbia:
- South Providence Pediatrics clinic (573) 882-4730
- South Providence Family Medicine clinic (573) 884-7733
- UP Woodrail General Internal Medicine/Pediatrics clinic (573) 884-2356
- UP Keene Family Medicine clinic (573) 882-8000
- UP Smiley Lane Family Medicine clinic (573) 884-8980
- City of Columbia Family Health Center (573) 214-2314
- Fulton - Callaway Physicians (573) 642-5911
- Fayette – UP-Fayette Medical clinic (660) 248-2217

Notepad: A little space for notes, questions, thoughts, or photos