Prenatal Care for a Healthy Start

Why are we concerned about prenatal care?
Prenatal care helps to keep you and your baby healthy. Babies born to mothers who do not get prenatal care are three times more likely to have a low birth weight and five times more likely to die.

Why do I need prenatal care?
Regular appointments with your doctor help to spot potential health problems for early treatment and/or prevention. Your doctor will also talk to you about what you can do to give your unborn baby a healthy start in life. You should plan on seeing your doctor for checkups at least once a month during your pregnancy.

How do I prepare for my first prenatal checkup?
The chances are good that you will not have any serious problems during your pregnancy. But it is easier to treat problems if they are found early. During your first appointment, your doctor will perform a complete physical exam including a pelvic exam and Pap test. Your provider will also talk to you about your health so be prepared to discuss:

- Your health history including operations, diseases, prior pregnancies, family and partner health history, etc.
- Medicines you take or are allergic to
- Lifestyle habits like exercise, drinking, smoking, drug use, etc.
- Check your blood pressure, height, and weight
- Take blood and urine for lab work
- Calculate your due date
- Answer any questions you might have

For more information: www.cdc.gov/pregnancy