

Placenta Previa

Placenta

The placenta attaches to the wall of your uterus and gives your baby nutrition and oxygen.

Early in pregnancy, it is common for the placenta to be low in your uterus. During pregnancy, the placenta will move to the top of your uterus so you can deliver your baby.

Placenta Previa

Placenta previa is a condition that happens when the placenta covers some or all of the cervix. There are two types of placenta previa:

- low-lying (marginal) previa – the placenta lies close to the cervix, but does not cover the cervix
- complete previa – the placenta covers all of the cervix.

Placenta previa can cause heavy bleeding during pregnancy and delivery.

Causes

The cause of placenta previa is unknown. It is more common in women who:

- are age 35 or older
- smoke or use cocaine
- have been pregnant before

- are pregnant with twins, triplets or more
- have had surgery on the uterus (such as a Cesarean section or dilatation and curettage)

Symptoms

The most common symptom is heavy vaginal bleeding during the second half of pregnancy. Some women may also have cramps or contractions. There are also women who have no symptoms at all.

An ultrasound will be done to confirm if you have placenta previa.

Treatment

If placenta previa is diagnosed in early pregnancy, it is more likely to get better on its own.

Your health care provider may recommend one or more of the following to help treat this condition:

- limiting or stopping some of your activities (such as running or squatting)
- not having sex
- not using tampons or douching.

If any complications such as bleeding or contractions occur, you may need to stay in the hospital so you and your baby can be monitored closely.

You will need to have a Cesarean birth if this condition does not get better on its own.

