

Caring for Our Region's Families

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**Intermountain
Health**



A Letter to Our Communities

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

For well over a century, our Intermountain Health hospitals have served communities across Montana and northern Wyoming, rooted in the values of our Catholic tradition and legacy. Our mission calls us to protect the sanctity of life, support the vulnerable, and provide compassionate care for all. Today, we want to address a matter that touches the very heart of our mission—ensuring access to quality care for mothers and babies.

From the earliest moments of life, both mother and child require not only medical care but also emotional, social, and spiritual support. At St. Vincent Regional Hospital in Billings, St. James Hospital in Butte, Holy Rosary Hospital in Miles City and our Intermountain Health clinics throughout the state, we recognize the importance of ensuring that every expectant mother receives comprehensive prenatal care, that she has access to specialized services such as maternal-fetal medicine when needed, and that her baby is cared for in the best possible way, including through neonatal intensive care when required.

At Intermountain Health, we are committed to ensuring that every mother and baby in our community has access to the care they need—before, during, and after birth. Our mission is to reveal and foster God’s healing love by improving the health of the communities we serve, especially the poor and vulnerable. This is more than just a healthcare mission for us; it is a reflection of our Catholic values and our belief in the dignity of all human life. We are here to serve, to support, and to walk alongside families as they navigate the joys and challenges of pregnancy, childbirth, and parenthood.

Thank you for the trust and confidence you show in us and for the privilege of caring for you and your loved ones.

With gratitude and blessings,

Lee Boyles

President

Intermountain Health Montana | Wyoming Market
St. Vincent Regional Hospital

Karen Costello

President

St. James Hospital

Ben Uhlich

President

Holy Rosary Hospital





The foundation for a **HEALTHY START**

Quality prenatal care is one of the most important factors in ensuring a healthy pregnancy and delivery. This care is not just about physical health—it's about empowering mothers with the knowledge and support they need to give their babies the best possible start in life.

“Prenatal care is essential because it allows us to monitor the health of both mother and baby from the very beginning. Early and regular check-ups help identify potential complications before they become serious, ensuring the best possible

outcome for both,” said Dr. Erica Smith, MD, a maternal fetal medicine specialist with Intermountain Health in Billings. “It’s about giving every baby a healthy start and every mother the support she needs.”

Early detection of potential issues such as gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, or growth concerns in the baby can be lifesaving. Prenatal care is the first opportunity to ensure that both mother and baby are on a path to health and wellness.

Intermountain Health is committed to removing barriers to care, whether that means providing transportation assistance,

offering affordable payment options, or working closely with community partners to ensure access to services.

Capturing every moment is hard. Choosing where they’ll be born is easy.



Learn more about St. Vincent services at svh.org/baby



Learn more about Holy Rosary services at hrh-mt.org/baby

Specialized care for high-risk pregnancies

For some mothers, pregnancy brings additional medical challenges that require specialized care. The maternal fetal medicine (MFM) specialists at Intermountain Health are trained to care for women who face high-risk pregnancies due to conditions such as preexisting health issues, multiple gestations, or concerns about the baby's development.

These highly trained specialists work closely with obstetricians, family physicians and nurse midwives to develop personalized care plans that prioritize the health and well-being of both mother and child. Telehealth is used, when possible, to decrease the number of trips patients have to make to Billings so they can stay closer to home for their care.

Intermountain Health's 24/7 MFM services are designed to address complex pregnancies with the highest level of expertise and compassion. From advanced imaging and diagnostic tests to genetic counseling and specialized monitoring, Intermountain Health provides comprehensive care to ensure the best possible outcomes for mothers and their babies.

The team currently provides services in the following locations:

- St. Vincent Regional Hospital (Billings)
- St. James Hospital (Butte)
- Holy Rosary Hospital (Miles City)
- Sheridan Memorial Hospital (Sheridan, WY)
- Sidney Health Center (Sidney)
- Frances Mahon Deaconess Hospital (Glasgow)

To learn more about MFM services or to schedule an appointment, please contact our clinic at 406-237-8480.

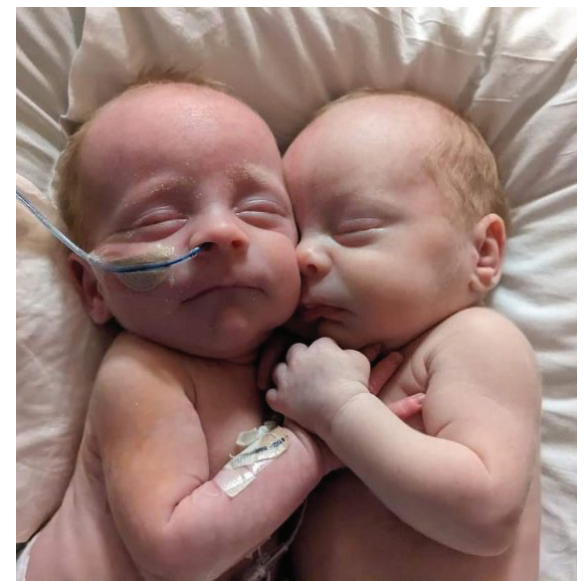


Wyoming family benefits from maternal fetal medicine and NICU care close to home

Kimi and Greg Bush, of Sheridan, Wyoming, learned early in their pregnancy with twins that there was a possibility of complications. At just 13 weeks into the pregnancy, the twins were diagnosed with twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome, a rare condition when the formation of blood vessels in the placenta impacts blood flow between twins. In these cases, one twin may receive too little blood while the other receives too much blood.

They were referred to Intermountain Health Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialist Dr. Michael Gordon at St. Vincent Regional Hospital. Over the next several months, Kimi and her twins were closely monitored and had weekly appointments with Dr. Gordon.

Twin boys, Zander and Corbin, were born prematurely at just 29 weeks and were admitted to St. Vincent's Level III neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) for specialized care.



Just four days after they were born, the family learned that Zander would need surgery for necrotizing enterocolitis, an intestinal disease that primarily affects premature infants.

Because of the partnership between St. Vincent and Intermountain Primary Children's Hospital and its pediatric surgery team that provides 24/7 access to pediatric surgery services, Zander was able to have his procedure done at St. Vincent.

"We are so thankful for the collaborative, specialized care we received at St. Vincent and through Intermountain Health," said Kimi. "If not for the services now offered at St. Vincent, we could have been in a situation where one of the babies would have been transferred out of state, and one would have stayed here. I don't know what we would have done.

During the procedure, Zander had a portion of his intestine removed due to the infection and needed an ostomy and fistula that allowed waste to pass outside his body and allow his bowel to heal. He would need a second surgery to reconstruct his bowel.

The twins would spend more than three months in the St. Vincent NICU, and Zander would need special care for an additional infection. Corbin came home after 73 days, and Zander was quick to follow 11 days later. Now, at 21 months old, the boys are thriving.

Kimi credits the providers and caregivers in the NICU for their attentiveness and constant monitoring to identify emergent issues with the twins and respond quickly.

"I am certain without those caregivers, we wouldn't have brought two babies home," said Kimi. "They saved Zander's life."

Since 2016, St. Vincent has partnered with Intermountain Primary Children's Hospital and the University of Utah School of Medicine to offer 24/7 advanced care to children in Montana and surrounding communities, including pediatric surgery.



Caring for our tiniest and most vulnerable

Sometimes, despite everyone's best efforts, babies are born prematurely or with medical conditions that require immediate, intensive care. The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at St. Vincent Regional Hospital has provided comprehensive, intensive and progressive care for our tiniest patients since 1972. As a level III B NICU, St. Vincent serves Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota, up towards the Canadian border, and into Idaho. St. Vincent provides the highest level of intensive care for newborns with conditions related to prematurity, congenital anomalies, respiratory or cardiac conditions and term complications of birth.



8 steps for a healthy pregnancy

Pregnancy is an exciting journey filled with anticipation and joy, but it also brings with it a significant responsibility to ensure the health and well-being of both mother and baby. A healthy pregnancy begins with good habits and regular medical care.

1. Start Prenatal Care Early

The first step toward a healthy pregnancy is to schedule prenatal care as soon as you know you're expecting. Regular prenatal visits allow your healthcare provider to monitor your pregnancy, track your baby's development, and address any concerns early on. They also offer a space to ask questions about diet, exercise, and lifestyle choices that will support a healthy pregnancy.

During your visits, your provider will check your weight, blood pressure, and urine, and perform ultrasounds to ensure that both you and your baby are progressing well. It's crucial to attend all scheduled appointments, as they provide valuable insight into your baby's health and development.

2. Eat a Nutrient-Rich Diet

What you eat during pregnancy directly affects your baby's growth and development. A well-balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats is key. Aim to include foods that are high in essential nutrients, such as:

Folic acid: Helps prevent neural tube defects. You can find it in leafy greens, beans, and fortified cereals.

Calcium: Supports your baby's bone development. Dairy products, fortified juices, and leafy greens are good sources.



Iron: Helps produce extra blood for both mother and baby. Include lean red meats, beans, and spinach in your diet.

Additionally, it's important to avoid harmful foods like undercooked meat, unpasteurized dairy, and high-mercury fish like shark or swordfish, which can pose risks to your baby's development.

3. Take Prenatal Vitamins

While eating a nutritious diet is essential, prenatal vitamins ensure you're getting the critical nutrients needed for a healthy pregnancy. Folic acid, in particular, is vital in the first trimester to reduce the risk of birth defects. Your doctor will recommend prenatal vitamins tailored to your specific needs, which often include folic acid, iron, calcium, and DHA.

4. Exercise Regularly

Staying active during pregnancy can improve your mood, increase energy levels, and promote

better sleep. Moderate exercise, such as walking, swimming, and prenatal yoga, helps manage pregnancy-related discomfort and promotes cardiovascular health. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week, but always consult your healthcare provider before starting or continuing an exercise routine, especially if you have any medical concerns.

5. Stay Hydrated and Rested

Hydration plays an important role in maintaining healthy amniotic fluid levels and supporting blood circulation. Aim to drink about 8-12 cups of water daily to keep hydrated.

Adequate rest is also essential, especially as your pregnancy progresses. Sleep can become more difficult in the later stages, so it's helpful to use pillows to support your body and rest in comfortable positions.

6. Avoid Harmful Substances

One of the most critical

aspects of a healthy pregnancy is avoiding harmful substances like tobacco, alcohol, and recreational drugs. These substances can lead to serious complications, including premature birth, low birth weight, and developmental problems. Even secondhand smoke should be avoided, as it can affect the baby's health.

7. Monitor Your Health and Your Baby's Movements

Throughout your pregnancy, it's important to stay in tune with your body and your baby. Be aware of any unusual symptoms such as severe headaches, swelling, or persistent abdominal pain. As you enter the later stages of pregnancy, monitor your baby's movements and report any noticeable changes to your healthcare provider.

8. Manage Stress and Mental Health

Pregnancy can be emotionally taxing. Taking care of your mental health is as important as your physical health. Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or prenatal yoga, and don't hesitate to seek help if you feel overwhelmed.

A healthy pregnancy requires a balanced approach that includes regular medical care, a nutrient-rich diet, exercise, and mental well-being. By following these guidelines and maintaining an open line of communication with your healthcare provider, you are laying the foundation for a safe and healthy pregnancy, ensuring the best possible start for your baby.

Recognizing and Planning for Emotional Changes During Pregnancy and After Delivery

Being pregnant and having a baby often brings about unexpected emotions like feeling unsure of yourself, sad or overwhelmed. While these feelings are normal, many women go on to experience more complicated symptoms of depression and anxiety. It is important to watch for the signs.

<p>If you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't feel like yourself • Have trouble managing your emotions • Feel overwhelmed, but are still able to care for yourself and baby 	<p><i>You may be experiencing mood swings, or baby blues, that many pregnant women and new mothers experience. These feelings should go away within 10-14 days.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be gentle with yourself, ask for help, get a babysitter so you can rest, exercise and have time out of the house • Share your experience with your partner, family and friends • Join a support group for new mothers • If you feel unsure about how you are feeling or what you should do contact your health care provider
<p>If you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience mood swings or the baby blues for more than 2 weeks • Have symptoms of anxiety or depression for more than 2 weeks during the 12 months after delivery • Feel like you are "just going through the motions" • Feel foggy, have difficulty completing tasks or making decisions • Have repeating or upsetting thoughts that won't go away • Feel guilty or like you are failing at being a mother • Feel anxious around your baby or older children 	<p><i>You may be experiencing perinatal depression or anxiety. These feelings will not likely go away on their own.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get help. Contact your healthcare provider for evaluation and resources • Talk to your partner, family and friends about how you are feeling so they can help • Call Postpartum Support International at 1-800-944-4PPD (4773) to speak with a coordinator who can provide phone support, information about resources in your area and help you find a therapist who is contracted with your insurance company • Join a local support group: http://www.postpartum.net/locations/montana • National Maternal Mental Health Hotline (833-TLC-MAMA or 833-852-6262)
<p>If you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel total despair without hope • Feel out of touch with what is real (see, hear, feel or smell things that other people do not) • Feel afraid that you may harm yourself, your baby, or someone else 	<p>Get help now!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 911 or go to an emergency room for immediate help • If you cannot call for yourself, have a support person call 911 or take you to an emergency department • Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 • Call Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA), 1-800-662-HELP (4357) • Call the Montana Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Figure 1. Recognizing and planning for emotional changes during pregnancy and after. Adapted from "Moms' mental health matters: action plan for depression and anxiety around pregnancy," by Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Health and Human Development, NIH, DHHS. (2016). Adapted with permission.



Are you expecting or new to parenting? We're here to help.

We know having a baby can sometimes be overwhelming, but at St. Vincent Regional Hospital, our team of expert providers are here for you through pregnancy and after your little one arrives.

Classes for Expecting and New Parents

Getting Ready for Baby:

intermountainhealthcare.org/classes-and-events/list/getting-ready-for-baby

