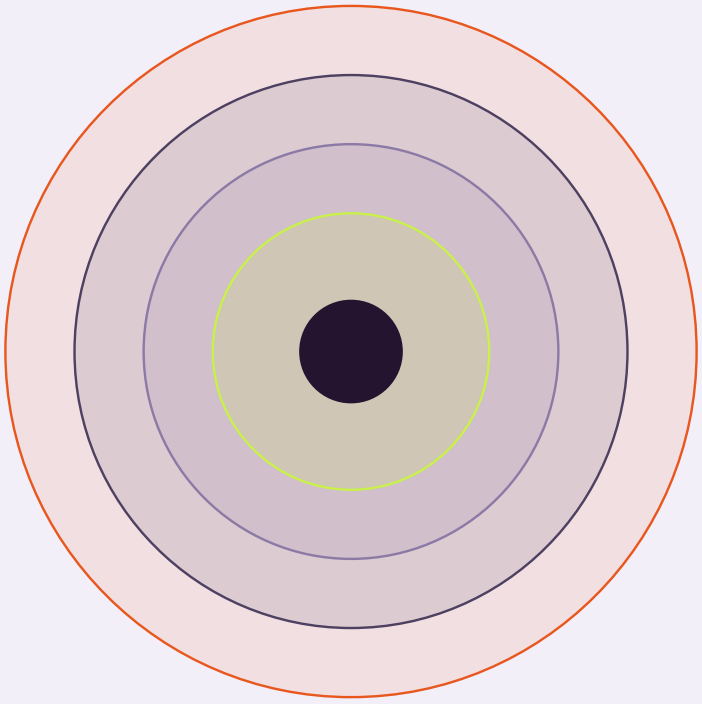


What to Expect When You're Ex-pecting

A reading of the book by Heidi Murkoff and Sharon Mazel (2016)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of What to Expect When You're Expecting, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

Heidi Murkoff wrote the first edition of this guide, published in 1984, with her mother Arlene Eisenberg and her sister Sandee Hathaway, after her own first pregnancy left her with more worries than answers. This fifth edition, written with Sharon Mazel, keeps the plan that made it a standard: one chapter for each month of pregnancy. Each month covers how the baby is growing, what is happening in your body, what you may be feeling, and the questions and worries that tend to come up, answered one at a time. Around the months sit chapters on getting ready for pregnancy, eating well, labour and delivery, and the first weeks after the birth. The tone is that of a calm, well-informed friend, and it keeps sending readers back to their own doctor or midwife for anything that concerns them.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Forty weeks is a lot to hold at once, so hold one month at a time.

The book is built around that idea. Each month gets its own chapter, so you can read the part you are living now and leave the later months for later. Reading ahead to the ninth month in week eight mostly adds worries you cannot act on yet.

2

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Most of what worries you has worried a great many people before you, and most of it is normal.

Much of each month is a run of everyday questions answered one by one: a strange twinge, a food you ate before you knew, a symptom that came or went. The answers explain what is common and say plainly when something is worth a call.

3

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Write your questions down when they come, because they never come in the exam room.

Worries tend to show up at night or between visits, and appointments are short. Keeping one running list and reading it out at each checkup means you leave with answers instead of remembering the question in the car park.

4

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Learn the few signs that mean call now, so you can stop scanning for everything else.

Heavy bleeding, a severe headache or changes in your vision, fluid leaking, a fever, severe pain, or your baby moving less than usual all mean calling your midwife, doctor or maternity unit straight away. Knowing that short list well makes the long list of ordinary aches easier to live with.

5

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Eat well most of the time; one imperfect meal does not undo a pregnancy.

The book gives eating well its own chapter: regular meals, protein, fruit and vegetables, whole grains, enough fluids, and a prenatal vitamin if your provider recommends one. Earlier editions were criticised for making every bite feel like a test, and later editions soften the tone. Steady habits matter more than a perfect day.

6 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Your due date is an estimate, not an appointment.

It is counted as 40 weeks from the first day of your last period, which is about two weeks before conception. Only a small share of babies arrive on the day itself. Treat it as the middle of a window, and plan for the weeks around it.

7 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

No two pregnancies follow the same script, not even two of your own.

Symptoms come early, late or not at all, and a friend's pregnancy or your last one predicts less than it seems to. The book describes what many people feel each month and keeps adding that you may feel all of it, some of it or none of it.

8 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Learn the range of ways labour can go, not a single script.

The labour chapters walk through the stages of labour, the options for pain relief, and caesarean births, so none of them arrives as a surprise. Knowing the range makes it easier to take part in decisions when plans change on the day.

9 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

The weeks after the birth deserve their own plan.

The book follows readers past delivery into the first weeks of recovery: healing, bleeding, feeding and sleep. Low mood or worry that lasts more than a couple of weeks, or any thought of harming yourself, is something to tell your provider about right away rather than wait out.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Work out your dates
- [ ] Start one questions list
- [ ] Save the call-now numbers
- [ ] Bring every medicine to your first visit
- [ ] Plan three easy meals for bad days

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Read only this month's chapter
- ◯ Clear your list at every appointment
- ◯ Check in with yourself each week

30 days · Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

- [ ] SETUP 1

Work out your dates

Find your due date or the first day of your last period, and use the tracker on this page to see your week and trimester.

Write the due date somewhere you will see it, and remember it is the middle of a window.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

Start one questions list

Make a single note on your phone called Next appointment.

Every question goes there, the moment you think of it.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

Save the call-now numbers

Put your midwife's or doctor's number, the after-hours line and your maternity unit in your phone today, next to your local emergency number.

Add the list of urgent signs to the same note.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

Bring every medicine to your first visit

List every prescription, over-the-counter medicine and supplement you take, with doses, and go through it with your provider.

Don't stop or change a prescribed medicine on your own; ask first.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

Plan three easy meals for bad days

Pick three meals or snacks you can face on a tired or queasy day and keep what they need in the house.

Regular small meals are easier to keep up than a perfect plan.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Read only this month's chapter

At the start of each month, read the part you are living now.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Clear your list at every appointment

Open your questions list at the start of each checkup and read it out before the visit ends.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Check in with yourself each week

Once a week, write one line about your sleep, your mood and any new symptoms.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
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December 2026

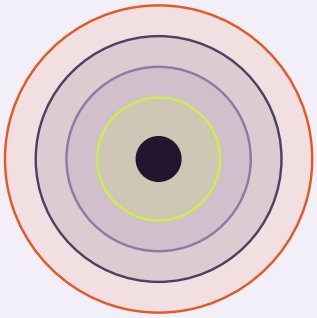
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28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



Take it one month at a time, write down what worries you, and ask.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER HEIDI MURKOFF