

# Guidelines for PERINATAL CARE

Eighth Edition

American Academy  
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



The American College of  
Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS

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WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS

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# Preface

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As we have done since the first edition, published in 1983, the eighth edition of *Guidelines for Perinatal Care* provides updated and expanded information from the seventh edition. All updates are taken from existing American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) or American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' (ACOG) documents as of July 2017. Several chapters have been reorganized and rewritten, and two chapters in the seventh edition ("Preconception and Antepartum Care" and "Intrapartum and Postpartum Care of the Mother") have been split into "Pregpregnancy Care," "Antepartum Care," "Intrapartum Care of the Mother," and "Postpartum Care of the Mother" for the current edition to improve the presentation of the expanded content. We continue to focus on reproductive awareness and patient safety as well as quality in obstetrics and neonatology and approach all topics from the vantage point of best care for the mother and newborn.

*Guidelines for Perinatal Care* represents a cross section of different disciplines within the perinatal community. It is designed for use by all personnel who are involved in the care of pregnant women, their fetuses, and their newborn infants in community programs, hospitals, and medical centers. An intermingling of information in varying degrees of detail is provided to address their collective needs. The result is a unique resource that complements the educational documents listed in Appendix H, which provide more specific information. Readers are encouraged to refer to the appendix for related documents to supplement those listed at the end of each chapter.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and ACOG will continue to update information presented in this guide through policy statements and recommendations that both organizations issue periodically, particularly with regard to rapidly evolving technologies and areas of practice.

*Guidelines for Perinatal Care* is published as a companion document to the ACOG's *Guidelines for Women's Health Care*, which is in its fourth edition. Although each book is developed with the aid of a separate committee, their contents are coordinated to provide comprehensive reference to all aspects of women's health care with minimal duplication.

The most current scientific information, professional opinions, and clinical practices have been used to create this document, which is intended to offer guidelines, not strict operating rules. Local circumstances must dictate the way in which these guidelines are best interpreted to meet the needs of a particular hospital, community, or system. Emphasis has been placed on identifying those areas to be covered by specific, locally defined protocols rather than on promoting rigid recommendations.

The content of this newest edition of *Guidelines for Perinatal Care* has undergone careful review to ensure accuracy and consistency with the policies of both groups. The guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive, nor do they always agree with those of other organizations; however, they reflect the latest recommendations of AAP and ACOG. The recommendations of AAP and ACOG are based on the best understanding of the data and consensus among authorities in the discipline. The text was written, revised, and reviewed by members of the AAP Committee on Fetus and Newborn and the ACOG Committee on Obstetric Practice. Consultants in a variety of specialized areas also contributed to the content. The pioneering efforts of those who developed the previous editions also must be acknowledged. To each and every one of them, sincere appreciation is extended.

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# Introduction

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Throughout its prior seven editions, *Guidelines for Perinatal Care* has focused on improving the outcomes of pregnancies and reducing maternal and perinatal mortality and morbidity by suggesting sound paradigms for providing perinatal care. Its strong advocacy of regionalized perinatal systems, including effective risk identification, care in a risk-appropriate setting, and maternal or neonatal transport to tertiary care facilities when necessary, has had a demonstrable effect on perinatal outcomes. This eighth edition expands the regionalized care concept further by describing levels of maternal care in detail in Chapter 1. Although a national dialogue about matching levels of hospital care to levels of care required for mothers and neonates has been ongoing since the publication of the March of Dimes Foundation's *Toward Improving the Outcome of Pregnancy* in the 1970s, this concept has only truly been implemented consistently for neonates. In Chapter 1, you can see that the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics now believe it is time to demand such levels for mothers as well. We present the suggested level of maternal care from birth centers to a described level IV institution. This edition also makes evidence-based recommendations on the use of safe and effective diagnostic and therapeutic interventions in maternal–fetal medicine and neonatology.

The full spectrum of high-quality perinatal care is covered by this eighth edition of *Guidelines for Perinatal Care*, from the principles of prepregnancy counseling and the provision of antepartum and intrapartum care in routine and complex settings to guidelines for routine and complex neonatal and postpartum care. The prepregnancy and antepartum care chapters introduce the concept and underscore the importance of interpregnancy care to maternal and fetal health. Chapter 5 from the seventh edition has been split into two chapters one of which includes prepregnancy and interpregnancy care, and the other of which covers antepartum care. We also have added sections

on screening for preterm delivery risk to the chapter on antepartum care. Chapter 6 from the previous edition has been split into two chapters: one of which covers intrapartum care, and the other of which covers postpartum care. New guidance concerning the timing of umbilical cord clamping, the need (or not) for bedrest, updates in hypertension, planned home birth, and immersion in the first and second stages of labor is also included. Guidance regarding postpartum contraception recommendations (aligned with the *U.S. Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraception* published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and obstetric and medical complications has been expanded to incorporate new information and evidence-based recommendations to guide clinical practice in these specialized areas. The chapter on perinatal infections now includes a section on mosquito-borne illnesses (including Zika) and a section on infections with high-risk infection control issues, emerging infections, and bioterrorism (including a discussion of Ebola).

The chapters on care of healthy and high-risk neonates include updated recommendations on neonatal resuscitation, screening and management of hyperbilirubinemia, and neonatal drug withdrawal. The addition of information on late preterm infants reflects the importance of this group of infants to the rate of prematurity and their increased vulnerability compared with term infants.

Updated recommendations for the conduct of perinatal care in a hospital setting are presented and continue to emphasize family-centered and patient-centered care, wherein patients and families are recognized and respected as true partners in their health care. The roles of hospitalists and laborists also are discussed.

As in previous editions, the concept of quality improvement in all aspects of perinatal care is a focus and we have updated the quality improvement and patient safety chapter and added a discussion of safety bundles. This chapter provides commentary on the need for procedures and policies to ensure effective communication among caregivers and between caregivers and patients, as communication remains a critical component of quality perinatal care. The concepts of team training, simulations and drills, and their roles in improving perinatal care continue to be featured.

Achieving the goal of optimal outcomes for newborns and mothers requires a coordinated system of perinatal care, including a multidisciplinary team of clinicians working in concert with the patient and within a

supportive community. This eighth edition of *Guidelines for Perinatal Care* provides a framework of recommendations based on the best available evidence. Wide implementation of these recommendations will bring us closer to our goal.



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