



# Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

## CenteringPregnancy: The benefits of group prenatal care

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Imagine an approach to prenatal care that is efficient for providers, well-liked by patients, and also results in healthier babies and moms. It's called CenteringPregnancy. This model of group prenatal care is rapidly spreading across the country and many parts of the world. Last year in June, the innovative approach made its way to Evans Army Community Hospital and the first groups were organized.

In CenteringPregnancy, 8 to 12 women with similar due dates begin their group care when they are around 16 weeks along. They meet monthly for two hour sessions until 28 weeks. Then, the group meets every two weeks.

During each session, women complete self-care activities, like checking their blood pressure and weight. Each woman is evaluated individually for the routine physical assessment. That includes reviewing vital signs, fundal height, fetal heart tones, lab findings and any concerns. Providers encourage each woman to bring her questions to the group because it's likely others share the same concerns..

In addition, sessions include an educational component developed by the Centering Healthcare Institute. Providers guide group discussion on topics like nutrition, contraception, labor, birth, breastfeeding and parenting issues. They introduce other colleagues such as dieticians, dentists, social workers, physical therapists, lactation consultants, nurse-anesthetists and pediatricians. Women in the group talk and develop supportive relationships with one another throughout those first 10 sessions.

CHI developed this model to allow the focus of care to be on the patient and her need for education and support, not the provider or health care system. Research suggests that CenteringPregnancy also improves perinatal outcomes while increasing satisfaction with care. It shows a decrease rate of preterm delivery and birth, increased breastfeeding rates, and increased knowledge and preparation by patients. The appointment times are set and there is never any non-productive waiting time. CenteringPregnancy often eliminates the need for women to attend additional childbirth education classes. Women benefit from the supportive relationships and are empowered by the information and self-care components of the program. Providers like it because it allows for the development of more meaningful relationships and improves efficiency and productivity.

While high risk and traditional prenatal care will always be available at the OB/GYN clinic at EACH, the CenteringPregnancy program offers an option to replace the traditional 10 to 15 minute "visit" with a 90 to 120 minute "interaction." To find out more about this program, please stop by the clinic.