

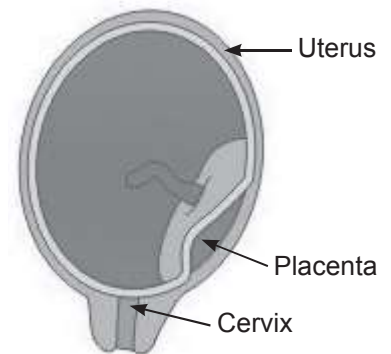
# Placenta Position

## What is the placenta?

- The placenta develops in the uterus during pregnancy to give the fetus oxygen and nutrients. It's connected to the fetus by the umbilical cord.
- Normally, the placenta attaches to the uterus more than 2 cm away from the cervix.

## What is a low-lying placenta?

- Sometimes the placenta is low-lying. This means it is less than 2 cm from the cervix.
- Usually as the pregnancy progresses, the uterus grows and the placenta ends up in a safe place.
- If the measurement was taken using a vaginal probe, you don't need another ultrasound. If the measurement was taken with an abdominal ultrasound, it isn't as accurate and you'll need to have another ultrasound in your third trimester.
- If you have a low-lying placenta, there's no treatment or anything special you need to do.



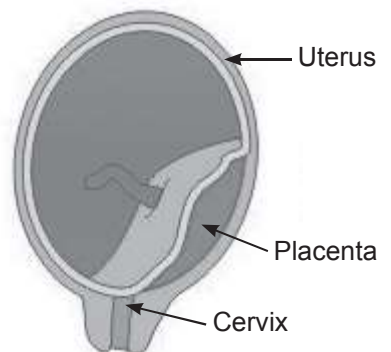
Low-Lying Placenta

## What is a placenta previa?

A placenta previa can be marginal or complete.

### Marginal Placenta Previa

Sometimes, the placenta is right at the edge of the cervix—this is called marginal placenta previa. Healthcare providers have different ways to manage this. As long as the placenta doesn't go over the cervix at all, Maternal Fetal Medicine specialists don't usually recommend treatment before you're 28 weeks (unless you have bleeding).



Marginal Placenta Previa

If you have any vaginal bleeding, go to the labor and delivery unit at the nearest hospital **right away**.

Most marginal placenta previas are in a safe position by the third trimester. If there are any problems, you'll likely see an obstetrician. After 28 weeks, if the placenta is still right at the edge of the cervix, you'll be treated the same as if you have a complete placenta previa (see next section).

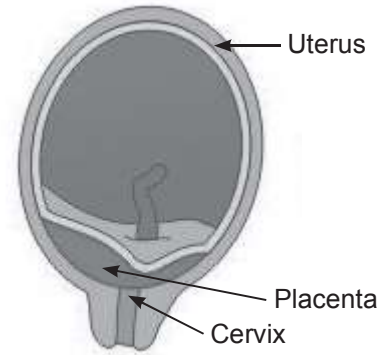
If you have a marginal placenta previa **after 28 weeks**:

- nothing should be put in your vagina except a speculum or ultrasound probe (to help your doctor see your cervix without touching it)
- don't travel unless your doctor tells you it's okay because there's a risk of bleeding—if you travel outside Canada before 28 weeks, it may cause problems with your insurance coverage (talk to your health insurance provider about your coverage)

### Complete Placenta Previa

Sometimes, the placenta is right over the cervix—this is called complete placenta previa. This can be very dangerous if it separates and bleeds. If you have a complete placenta previa, **don't**:

- have sex
- do intense exercise (e.g., running)
- have a vaginal exam by a healthcare provider without a speculum



**Complete Placenta Previa**

To keep you and your baby safe, don't travel anywhere unless there's a medical facility that offers emergency obstetrical services. International travel is **not** recommended. Your insurance provider may not cover you because this is a pre-existing condition.

Many complete placenta previas move up and out of the way by the third trimester, which means you can still have a vaginal delivery. If the placenta previa is still there in the third trimester, you'll need to see an obstetrician and you'll need a caesarean section to keep you and your baby safe.

*All images from [news-medical.net/health/What-is-the-Placenta.aspx](http://news-medical.net/health/What-is-the-Placenta.aspx)*

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