CONGRATULATIONS! The upcoming year is likely to be one of the most meaningful and joyous of your life. Often, it seems like a long time between when you get pregnant and your first prenatal visit. The purpose of this letter is to give you some information about our practice, answer some common early pregnancy questions and tell you about some problems that may require medical attention before your scheduled visit.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS: During office hours call 481-3366 (9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday). Our "medical team" consists of Dr. Lackore, an OB-GYN nurse practitioner, a Birthing Center Nurse, two office nurses who are specially trained and experienced in the area of Obstetrics, an office manager, a receptionist and an ultrasonographer.

OUR WEBSITE: You can gather general or very detailed information on nearly any OB-GYN issue. We provide practice announcements, maps, photographs, office handouts, summaries, my favorite OB-GYN web links, Online hospital registration, childbirth classes, Virtual tours, medical news and much more. You can download new patient information forms, past medical history forms, annual visit forms, transfer of medical records forms (in and out) all from this site. www.myobgyn.net

VISITS: An average uncomplicated pregnancy involves a schedule of office visits before your delivery. If worrisome symptoms are ongoing, a prompt office visit may be required. One of our obstetric nurses or nurse practitioner may also see you for some of your uncomplicated visits during pregnancy. We have found that this arrangement improves the flow of useful information to our patients, gives you a variety of perspectives and lets you gather information from nurses who have worked at the hospital Birthing Center where you will deliver. As a solo practitioner, the chances are very good (well over 90%) that Doctor Lackore will deliver your child and be available for any obstetric emergencies. If for any reason Dr. Lackore is unavailable (illness, injury, medical education or vacation) then a qualified Board Certified Physician will be available to attend to your Labor and Delivery. If you have any questions about this, please don't hesitate to discuss this with us.

APPOINTMENTS: Our office is open to patients Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. by appointment only. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please notify us at least 24 hours in advance. This will allow us to make that time available to another patient.

DR. LACKORE IS A SOLO PRACTITIONER AND TRUE EMERGENCIES ARE NOT UNCOMMON

We often run behind schedule and occasionally, we must reschedule office appointments because of emergency medical situations. We will try to phone you to reschedule if it is likely your appointment time will be significantly delayed or canceled. We ask for your patience and understanding in these special situations. If you should require emergency attention, this same level of priority would be extended to you, and other patients would on occasion be required to wait. In the event of illness or vacations, whenever possible Dr. Lackore will personally chose the physician who will be handling calls, problems and emergencies for him.

VAGINAL BLEEDING: Many women will have light vaginal spotting during the early months of pregnancy. This can be frightening. The most common time of spotting or light bleeding is three to four weeks after the start of the last menstrual period. This bleeding may be the result of the fertilized egg implanting in the uterus and may not be serious. Some other causes of bleeding are more serious. Please call the office during the day if you are having light bleeding and talk with one of our obstetric nurses. If you have ever had an ectopic pregnancy, a pelvic infection, or an IUD, please let us know. Visit our website to review a pamphlet on bleeding in pregnancy.
**MEDICATIONS:** If you are on any medications on a long term basis please call the office promptly and let us know - we may want to see you sooner than the scheduled visit. Please don't take any new medications without calling us. Tylenol, however, is generally felt to be safe after the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

**VOMITING:** No one knows exactly what causes the nausea and vomiting of pregnancy. Some women don't experience it. Fortunately for those who do it usually does not completely prevent eating. There is no absolutely safe medication for vomiting, so we prefer not to give any medication unless you really need it. Some women will have severe vomiting at the beginning of the pregnancy. It may be so bad that you are unable to keep down any liquids or solids for 24 hours. Please call us if this occurs. Intravenous fluids may be required to assure you are getting enough water in your body. Your developing baby can continue to grow even if you can't eat solids for a few days. However, the fetus cannot tolerate dehydration. Take comfort in the knowledge that the nausea and vomiting almost always get better by the end of the third month of pregnancy. Visit our website for a list of things you can do to help nausea and vomiting in pregnancy.

**NUTRITION:** Women often change their eating habits when they become pregnant. You should not skip meals, also, try to eat healthily and cut out junk foods. Many women avoid caffeine and most discontinue alcohol. All of these steps are wise! A well-rounded diet provides the best nutrition for your developing fetus. Start taking your prenatal vitamins as soon as possible (ideally, start before getting pregnant!). You may stop by to pick up a prescription from our office. It is impossible to advise you exactly how much you should eat, and this may be your biggest question. If you are suffering from nausea and/or vomiting, eat what you can. Many women find that small frequent meals and dry toast or crackers are the key to getting through this time. If you are one of the lucky ones whose appetite remains strong, then try to eat sensibly. Average weight gain for the first three months of pregnancy is about four pounds. Many women gain a little more or less than this. If that happens you should begin to carefully adjust the amount of food you’re eating. Our website has the most recent American College of OB-GYN pamphlet on nutrition in pregnancy. Nutrasweet has been well studied and is felt to be safe in pregnancy unless you have a disease called phenylketonuria. If you had that disease as a child you may have forgotten; you should ask your mother. As a child you would have been on a strict diet. This disease is uncommon. Coffee, tea or cola (caffeine) in moderation is felt to be safe.

**ALCOHOL:** It is unknown how much alcohol is safe in pregnancy therefore it should be avoided. If you consumed alcohol before you realized you were pregnant please try not to be alarmed. We will discuss this with you more at your first visit.

**EXERCISE:** Moderate exercise in pregnancy is good for you. If you already exercise regularly then generally speaking you may continue it. Please avoid hot tubs, scuba diving, and skiing. If you exercise during the summer take extra care not to get overheated or dehydrated. Keep your pulse below 140 beats per minute and avoid pain during your exercise. If you do not exercise regularly then this is not the time to start high impact aerobics or to train for a marathon. A daily long walk, bike ride, or swim are all reasonable for the usual patient and will help you to overcome feeling tired. If you feel that you are exhausted and cannot even think of exercise - listen to your body and get lots of rest. The feeling will usually pass! Read our website pamphlet on exercise in pregnancy.

**INTERCOURSE:** Intercourse is generally safe during pregnancy. However, if you are having bleeding, unusual discharge or pain, it is wise to avoid intercourse until Dr. Lackore evaluates you.

**WARNING SIGNS:** If you notice any of these signs, CALL US - do not wait for your next check-up

- Sharp or prolonged pain in your abdomen
- Severe or repeated headaches
- Bleeding from the vagina, rectum or nipple
- Blurred vision, flashes of light, spots before eyes
- Sudden escape of fluid from the vagina
- Severe or continued vomiting
- Regular tightening of the uterus before 37wks
- Other symptoms that cause you fear of danger

During office hours: 481-3366, If no answer call 398-5276
If no response, go to Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital Birthing Center or Emergency Room
Also, call us if you're just uncertain. If you are having any light bleeding without pain, please try to stay at bed rest until you talk with us. If you are unsure about whether your concern is an emergency then please feel free to call. Sometimes, medical problems occur that may require attention or consultation before your first visit. If you feel this might be true, please let us know; an earlier appointment may be necessary.

**MEDICAL INSURANCE:** We participate with most major insurance carriers. Please make an attempt to understand your insurance including your deductible and required co-payments. Payment for routine annual examinations is expected at the time services are rendered. Your insurance is a contract between you and your insurance company. You are responsible for your bills regardless of what your insurance pays - unless the contract between the physician and your insurance company states otherwise. When you check out from our office, you are given a receipt form that is to be used for insurance purposes.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** Our practice has financial policies that will be further explained to you during your first office visit. For your convenience, our office staff will file insurance claims for surgical care or office procedures that clearly exceed the amount you were quoted when you scheduled your appointment. Our fees are within the customary range for this area. If you have questions about your financial arrangements or if it is not feasible for you to make a payment when it is due, PLEASE speak with our office manager who will attempt to work with you to develop a payment plan that is best suited for your budget. If neither payment nor communication is received within thirty days, the account will be reviewed for collection activity.

**VIRGINIA BIRTH-RELATED NEUROLOGIC INJURY COMPENSATION PROGRAM:** – Yes we do participate. To Read the complete Brochure on this subject, visit our website and look under the heading Pregnancy-Normal.

**CHANGES IN INFORMATION:** Please help us to maintain accurate records by notifying us of any change in your address, telephone number, or insurance carrier.

**CHILDREN:** We love to see newborn babies at your postpartum visit and babies in car seats are not a problem. However, We have no means of providing childcare in our office. Please remember we have pregnant women and newborn infants frequently visiting our office. Young children one to eight years old are the main way viral infections are spread through a community. We strongly prefer that you try to make other arrangements for your child to avoid spreading infections to pregnant women or their newborns. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Also, for the safety of your child and for Insurance reasons, you MUST hold infants and toddlers in your arms (or in infant car seat carrier) if they are in the examination room. Biohazard (infectious materials), electrical injury, mechanical injury are all issues. For your child's safety and the safety of other pregnant women, Please make arrangements for your child before your office appointment. Children under ten years old may not be left in the front waiting room under any circumstances. We truly apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you.

**CELL PHONES:** We ask that you turn off cell phones while inside of our office.

**TEST RESULTS:** For routine screening tests, normal results and Pap smear reports we ask that you call our office on Fridays from 9:30 A.M. until 12:00 P.M. at 481-3366. When we receive abnormal test results we will try to contact you immediately.

**PRESCRIPTION REFILLS:** The best quality of medical care requires that these be provided during office hours so that we will have your chart available to make sure that a refill is in fact the best course of treatment. Please have the phone number for the pharmacy available when you place your call. Note there is a phone number for a 24 hour pharmacy at my website www.myobgyn.net

**ONCE AGAIN** .... We are honored that you have selected us for your health care, and will strive to justify this honor with the quality of the services that we provide for you.

Raymond C. Lackore M.D. OB-GYN, Board Certified & Staff

Thank you.