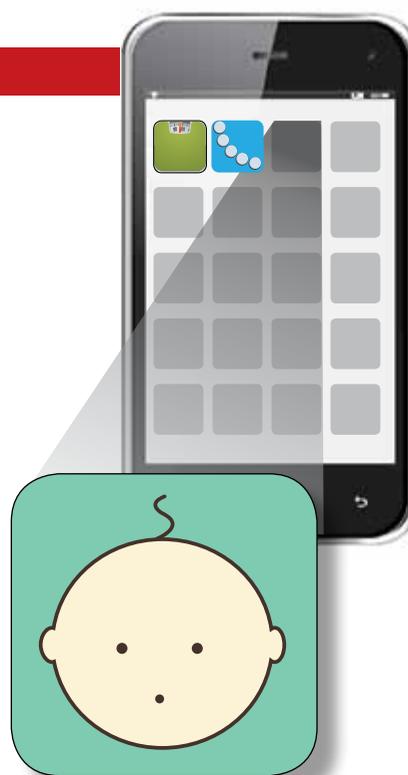


PRACTICE EXTENDERS: AN OCCASIONAL SERIES

# An app to help your patient track her pregnancy

➔ This handy toolkit helps mothers-to-be record important details like weight gain, kicks, and contraction times, with personalized timelines, checklists, comprehensive information about fetal development, and a journaling option

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In this series, I review what I call prescription apps—apps that you might consider recommending to your patient to enhance her medical care. Many patients are already looking at medical apps and want to hear your opinion. Often the free apps I recommend to patients are downloaded before they leave my office. When recommending apps, their cost (not necessarily a measure of quality or utility) and platform (device that the app has been designed for) should be taken into account. It is important to know whether the app you are recommending is supported by your patient's smartphone.



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*Dr. Gunter reports no financial relationships relevant to this article.*

## For moms-to-be: quality information and a tracking tool

When I practiced obstetrics, my group provided patients with a pocket-sized, trifold pregnancy tracker at their first prenatal visit for them to bring to each subsequent appointment. In addition to data such as Rh status and estimated due date, blood pressure, weight, and fundal height were also recorded. The pregnancy tracker served two purposes: **1)** a backup mini medical record in case their chart didn't make it from the medical records department to the clinic on a particular day and **2)** a keepsake.

Pregnancy apps take the concept of that little piece of cardboard to a whole new level. One highly rated pregnancy app is **Sprout™ Pregnancy Essentials** (recommended by *Consumer Reports*<sup>2</sup> and named one of the *50 Best iPhone Apps in 2012* by *Time* magazine<sup>3</sup>) from Med ART Studios.<sup>4</sup>

With **Sprout**, the user enters her due date and the app automatically tracks the pregnancy week by week. Each time the app is accessed, the screen shows a realistic

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image of a developing fetus at the appropriate gestational age along with a pregnancy timeline. Tools allow the user to track her weight at each Ob visit. There is also a kick counter as well as a contraction timer for when the time comes.

Each week of the pregnancy is linked to medical information appropriate for the gestational age, such as second trimester screening at week 15 and group B streptococcus testing at week 35. The information is brief, but high-quality, and covers everything from prenatal testing and screening for gestational diabetes to stretch marks and carpal tunnel syndrome. From each topic, the user seamlessly can add preloaded questions to an “M.D. visit planner” or pregnancy-related tasks (such as making an appointment for a glucose challenge test) to a “to do” list.

A free version called **Sprout Lite** comes in English and Japanese. The premium version for \$3.99 is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, and Portuguese. The premium version is free of ads; has more advanced images of a developing fetus, with striking graphics; allows the user to share information via Facebook and e-mail; and has a timeline that adjusts to the baby’s gestational age. Both **Sprout** apps are currently only available for the iPhone and iPad.

**Pros.** **Sprout** is easy to use, has beautiful graphics, and the medical information is accurate and accessible. **Sprout Lite** contains the same high-quality information.

**Cons.** There is no way to track other medical data in addition to weight, such as fundal height, Rh status, or vaccinations. There is also a price tag to have the app be free of advertisements, get the best graphics, and have a more interactive user experience.

**Verdict.** It is always nice to be able to recommend a product with high-quality medical information. **Sprout Lite** always can be road tested first, but for those who live on Facebook, enjoy a more interactive product, hate advertisements, or love

impressive graphics, the \$3.99 may very well be worth it.

### Keep a journal and create a book

While leaving the app with its data on the iPhone or iPad may be enough of a keepsake for some women, those who want to create a pregnancy book can obtain a separate **Sprout Pregnancy Journal app-to-book™**.<sup>5</sup>

This app allows the user to write journal entries, upload photos, and then, if desired, download a PDF of the journal or incorporate the beautiful images from the **Sprout** app to create a bound pregnancy journal (softcover: \$19.95 for the first 40 pages; hardcover: \$34.95 for the first 40 pages; additional charge for added pages).

The journal app is free to download for a 2-week trial. At the end of 2 weeks there is a choice:

- \$4.99 to continue to use the app; includes cloud backup of data
- \$7.99 to get cloud backup plus the PDF download (includes a discount for prepaying for the PDF plus \$7.99 discount for a print book)
- If the \$7.99 prepaid option isn’t chosen at the end of the 2-week trial, the PDF is \$9.95.

The **Sprout Pregnancy Journal** app is available for iPhone, iPad Touch, and iPad. 📱

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