GLOSSARY

abortion  Termination of pregnancy before the fetus is viable and capable of extrauterine existence.

amniocentesis  The withdrawal of an amniotic fluid by insertion of a needle through the abdominal and the uterine wall.

amnion  A smooth, slippery, glistening innermost membrane that lines the amniotic space.

amenorrhea  The cessation of menstruation.

antepartal  See prenatal.

attitude  The degree of flexion of the fetus body parts (body, head, and extremities) to each other.

ballottement  The fetus, when pushed, floats away and then returns to touch the examiner’s fingers.

basal body temperature (BBT)  A means to identify the time that ovulation occurs.

Bartholin’s gland  Two, small mucous glands situated on each side of the vaginal opening that secrete small amounts of mucus during intercourse.

breech  Delivery of an infant feet or buttocks first.

blastocyst  The inner solid mass of cells within the morula.

Braxton-Hick’s contractions  Painless uterine contractions occurring throughout pregnancy.

broad ligaments  Two wing-like structures that extend from the lateral margins of the uterus to the pelvic walls and divide the pelvic cavity into an anterior and posterior compartment.

breast stimulation test (BST)  A test that involves stimulation of the nipples (rubbing) which causes the posterior pituitary to release the hormone oxytocin, which in turn, causes contractions.
**cardinal movements**  Movements made by the fetus during the first and second stage of labor.

**cervix**  The narrow, inferior outlet that protrudes into the vagina.  
**Chadwick's sign**  Violet tinge of the cervical and vaginal mucous membranes due to the increased vascularity as a result of increased hormones.

**chorion**  The outer fetal membrane that forms a large portion of the connective tissue thickness of the placenta on its fetal side.

**chorionic villi**  Fingerlike tissue projections of chorion on the outer wall of the fertilized egg.

**chromosomes**  Small, threadlike structures within each cell that contain genes which carry genetic instructions.

**conception**  Fertilization; the joining together of the female sex cell and the male sex cell.

**conjugate**  An important diameter of the pelvis, measured from the center of the promontory of the sacrum to the back of the symphysis pubis.

**corpus luteum**  The yellow mass found in the graafian follicle after the ovum has been expelled.

**contraction stress test (CST)**  A test to evaluate the respiratory function in the placenta.

**Cowper's glands**  Two tiny pea-sized glands that are situated on either side of the membranous portion of the urethra inferior to the prostate.

**dyspnea**  Difficult breathing.

**EDC**  Estimated date of confinement.

**edema**  Abnormal, excessive fluid within the body tissues.

**embryo**  The early stage of development of the young of any organism when specific identification is difficult.

**endometrium**  The inner lining of the uterus.
**engagement**  The entrance of the presenting part of the fetus into the true pelvis or the largest diameter of the presenting part into the true pelvis.

**epididymis**  A coiled tube about 20 inches long which serves as a temporary storage site for immature sperm.

**estrogen**  The genetic term for the female sex hormones.

**fallopian tubes**  Oviducts or uterine tubes leading from the uterine cavity towards each ovary.

**fertilization**  The union of the male and female sex cells

**fetal**  Pertaining to or related to the fetus.

**fetus**  The child in utero from about the seventh to ninth week of gestation until birth.

**fimbriae**  Fringes; especially the fingerlike ends of the fallopian tubes.

**follicle**  A pouch-like depression or cavity.

**follicle stimulating hormone (FSH)**  A hormone produced by the anterior pituitary during the first half of the menstrual cycle.

**fundus**  The superior, rounded region above the entrance of the fallopian tubes.

**fraternal twins**  Fetuses that develop from two fertilized oval; also referred to as dizygotic twins. They may be the same or different sex.

**gene**  The smallest unit of inheritance; genes are located on the chromosomes.

**genitalia**  Organs of generation, or reproduction.

**gestation**  The period of intrauterine development from conception through birth; pregnancy.

**Goodell’s sign**  Marked softening of the cervix.

**graafian follicle**  A mature, fully developed ovarian cyst containing a ripe ovum.

**grandmultipara**  A woman who has had six or more births past the age of viability.
**gravida**  A pregnant woman; refers to any pregnancy regardless of duration.

**Hegar's sign**  Softening of the lower uterine segment just above the cervix.

**hormone**  A chemical substance produced in an organ, which, being carried to an associated organ by the bloodstream, excites in the later organ a functional activity.

**hydatidiform mole**  An abnormal growth of a fertilized ovum.

**hyperemesis gravidarum**  Severe nausea and vomiting that lasts beyond the fourth month of pregnancy.

**identical twins**  Twins developed from a single fertilized ovum, they are of the same sex.

**in utero**  Within the uterus.

**ischial spines**  Two relatively sharp bony projections protruding into the pelvic outlet from the ischial bones that form the lower lateral border of the pelvis. It is used in determining the progress of the fetus down the birth canal.

**ischial tuberosities**  The major bony sitting support; important in measuring a transverse diameter of the pelvis.

**isthmus**  The portion of the uterus that joins the corpus to the cervix.

**labia majora**  Two fleshy, hair covered folds located on both sides of the perineal midline, extending from the mons veneris almost to the anus in women.

**labia minora**  Two small folds of tissue covering the vestibule located just under the labia major in women.

**lactation**  The production of milk by the mammary glands.

**leukorrhea**  A white or slightly grey discharge from the vagina or cervix.

**lie**  Refers to the position of the spinal column of the fetus in relation to the spinal column of the mother.

**lightening**  The sensation of decreased abdominal distention produced by the descent of the uterus into the pelvic cavity.
**linea nigra**  A black line in the midline of the abdomen that may run from the sternum or umbilicus to the symphysis pubis.

**lunar months**  A period of four weeks (28 days).

**luteinizing hormone**  A hormone produced by the anterior pituitary that stimulates ovulation and the development of the corpus luteum.

**mask of pregnancy**  The brownish hyperpigmentation of the skin over the face and forehead. Also referred to as chloasma.

**meiosis**  The process of cell division that occurs in the maturation of sperm and ova that decreases their number of chromosomes by one half.

**menstruation**  The periodic discharge of blood, mucus, and epithelial cells from the uterus.

**menopause**  The cessation of menstruation.

**miscarriage**  Lay term for spontaneous abortion.

**mons pubis**  The fatty, rounded area overlying the symphysis pubis and covered with thick coarse hair.

**Montgomery's glands**  Small nodules located around the nipples that enlarge during pregnancy and lactation.

**morning sickness**  Refers to nausea and vomiting usually in the morning during the first weeks of pregnancy.

**mucous plug**  A collection of thick mucous that blocks the cervical canal during pregnancy.

**multifetal pregnancy**  Pregnancy involving two or more fetuses.

**multigravida**  A woman who has been pregnant more than once.

**multipara**  A woman who has delivered two or more fetuses past the age of viability.

**myometrium**  The muscle component of the wall of the uterus.

**non-stress test (NST)**  A test to evaluate the ability of the placenta to supply fetal needs in a normal daily uterine movement.
nulligravida  A woman who has never been pregnant.

nullipara  A woman who has not delivered a child who reached viability.

obstetrics  The branch of medicine concerned with the care of a woman during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartal period.

oxytocin challenge test (OCT)  A dilution of I.V. solution of oxytocin administered to the mother until a contraction pattern is developed.

oocyte  A developing egg in one of two stages.

oogenesis  The production of female sex cells.

ovaries  Two almond shaped glands that produce female hormones and female sex cells.

ovulation  The release of an egg cell from a mature ovarian follicle.

ovum  The female reproductive cell.

palpation  Examination by touch or feel.

para  A woman who has delivered a viable child (not necessarily living at birth).

penis  The male organ of reproduction or copulation.

perineum  The area of tissue between the anus and scrotum in the male or between the vagina and anus in the female.

peritoneum  A strong, serous membrane that lines the abdomina-pelvic wall.

placenta  A specialized disk-shaped organ that connects the fetus to the uterine walls for gas and nutrient exchange; also referred to as the afterbirth.

placental abruption  Premature separation of a normally implanted placenta.

placenta previa  A placenta that is implanted in the lower uterine segment so that it adjoins or covers the internal os of the cervix.

position  The relationship between a predetermined point of reference or direction on the presenting part of the fetus to the pelvis of the mother.
postnatal  Occurring after birth.

prenatal  Before birth; also referred to as antepartal.

prenatal care  The medical and nursing supervision and care given to the pregnant woman during the period between conception and the onset of labor.

pregnancy  The condition of having a developing embryo or fetus in the body after fertilization of the female egg by the male sperm.

presentation  That part of the fetus which is coming through or attempting to come through the pelvis first.

primigravida  A woman pregnant for the first time.

primipara  A woman who has delivered one child after the age of viability.

progesterone  The pure hormone contained in the corpora lutea whose function is to prepare the endometrium for the reception and development of the fertilized ovum.

prostate gland  A single gland about the size and shape of a chestnut.

quickening  Fetal movement within the uterus.

reproduction  The process by which an offspring is formed.

scrotum  Pouch forming part of the male external genitalia containing the testicles and part of the spermatic cord.

seminal vesicles  Two pouches that store sperm.

sex chromosomes  The X and Y chromosomes which are responsible for sex determination.

sperm  The male sex cell.

spermatogenesis  The formation of sperm.

spermatozoa  Mature sperm cells of the male produced by the testes.
station  The depth that the presenting part has descended into the pelvis in relation to the ischial spine of the mother's pelvis.

striae gravida  Marks noted on the abdomen and/or buttocks, commonly known as stretch marks.

term pregnancy  A gestation of 38 to 42 weeks.

testes  Two almond-shaped glands whose functions are for the production of sperm and testosterone.

testosterone  The male sex hormone; responsible for the development of secondary male characteristics.

toxoplasmosis  A congenital disease characterized by lesions of the central nervous system which may lead to blindness, brain defects, and death.

trimester  A time period of three months.

uterus  A hollow, muscular organ that serves as a protector and nourisher of the developing fetus and aids in its explosion from the body.

vagina  Canal opening between the urethra and anus in the female that extends back to the cervix of the uterus.

varicose veins  Permanently distended veins.

vas deferens  Excretory duct of the testis.

vertex  Top or crown of the head.

vestibule  A space or cavity at the entrance to a canal.

viability  The capability of a fetus to survive outside the uterus at the earliest gestation age, approximately 22 to 23 weeks gestation.

vulva  The external structure of the female genitals, lying below the mons veneris.

X chromosome  The female sex chromosome.

Y chromosome  The male sex chromosome.

zygote  The combined ovum and sperm; a fertilized egg.