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UPDATE 1 -- Britain;s Prince William, Catherine expecting first baby

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USPA News - Britain`s Prince William and his wife Catherine, the Duchess of Cambridge, are expecting their first child, St James`s Palace announced in a communique on Monday. It said Catherine has been hospitalized after experiencing acute morning sickness.

"Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are very pleased to announce that The Duchess of Cambridge is expecting a baby," the royal palace said in a brief statement. "The Queen, The Duke of Edinburgh, The Prince of Wales, The Duchess of Cornwall and Prince Harry and members of both families are delighted with the news." The palace said Catherine, who married William in April 2011, was hospitalized at King Edward VII Hospital in central London on Monday afternoon with Hyperemesis Gravidarum. The rare condition is a very acute morning sickness which requires supplementary hydration and nutrients. "As the pregnancy is in its very early stages, Her Royal Highness is expected to stay in hospital for several days and will require a period of rest thereafter," the statement added. It did not say when the baby is due, but unconfirmed reports first emerged late last month that Catherine was pregnant. The child will be destined to be the future monarch after Commonwealth leaders in October 2011 agreed to change succession laws. While the law has not yet been altered, it will give the daughter of any future monarch equal rights to the throne as a son. This will put the child third in the line of succession, behind Prince Charles and Prince William. In a brief message on the social networking website Twitter, British Prime Minister David Cameron welcomed the news and said William and Catherine will make wonderful parents. "I?m delighted by the news that the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are expecting a baby," he said. "They will make wonderful parents." Prime Minister John Key of New Zealand, part of the Commonwealth, also congratulated the royal couple. "This is fabulous news for Prince William and Catherine, and I know the Queen and Prince Phillip will be extremely pleased," he said. "It is an important day in any young couple`s life when a baby is expected and I know that Catherine and William will be as nervous and excited as anyone." Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond, who heads the Scottish Government, also responded to the news through Twitter. "Warmest congratulations and sincerest best wishes to the Earl and Countess of Strathearn on their wonderful news," he wrote, referring to William and Catherine by their Scottish titles. In the United States, White House spokesman Jay Carney welcomed the announcement on behalf of President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle. "On behalf of everyone here in the White House .. we extend our congratulations to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on the welcome news this morning out of London that they are expecting their first child," he said. William and Catherine first met at Scotland`s St. Andrew`s University in 2001 and began dating two years later, in 2003. They became engaged in October 2010 during a private holiday in Kenya and married at London`s Westminster Abbey in April 2011. The royal wedding was watched by hundreds of millions of people around the world, including 72 million people on YouTube alone.

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