

## **Things you should know during your pregnancy**

### **Alcohol, Cigarette and Recreational Drug Use**

There is no safe amount of any of these substances. We strongly advise that you quit completely. If you used a small amount before you knew you were pregnant (before the 6<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy), any effects to the baby are highly unlikely. If you need help quitting, please tell us. We can help.

### **Vitamin and Mineral Use**

We recommend a prenatal multivitamin during your pregnancy. It may make nausea worse so you may temporarily stop it between 6 and 14 weeks if needed to ease nausea or try taking it after dinner. Do not take megavitamins or herbal supplements without checking with us first. You will need to get about 1200 mg of calcium per day using calcium tablets such as Citrucel or Tums (one in the morning and one at night.) Instead of using these supplements, you can pay careful attention to food sources such as dairy products, tofu, canned salmon. You will also need to get enough iron by eating iron-rich foods like beef, oysters, lentils, green vegetables and iron-fortified cereals. Your prenatal vitamin also contains iron. Only take an iron supplement if you have been told you are currently anemic.

If your prenatal vitamin does not contain DHA, we recommend you add this as a supplement.

Unless you are advised otherwise, we recommend taking Vitamin D, 2000 IU per day.

It is important to note that there are no prenatal vitamins that are better than others. They all have to meet certain standards. If you find one that seems to work for you, then keep taking it!

### **Hot Tubs and Saunas**

Brief exposure to hot tubs and saunas is not dangerous. It is important to listen to your body while in the heat. Your heat tolerance will most likely be lower during pregnancy. You may feel dizzy. The best way to avoid this is to always stay well-hydrated!

### **Pets**

Outdoor cats can carry a disease called toxoplasmosis which can harm your baby if you are exposed for the first time. Avoid cleaning the litter box of these cats. Most women are already immune. If you are worried that you might get infected, ask us to test you for the antibodies. Indoor cats (who have always lived indoors) are safe. Report any serious bites or scratches from a kitten. You will need antibiotics.

### **Nausea and Vomiting**

This is quite common during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. Nausea can be lessened by eating small amounts every 2 hours, eating crackers or hard candy before getting out of bed in the morning, drinking spearmint or peppermint teas, limiting fatty foods and strong smelling foods. You can try ginger capsules (250 mg 4 times per day), Unisom, and Vitamin B6 (50 mg twice per day) that are medicines sold without a prescription. Prescription medicines such as Phenergan, Hydroxyzine, or Zofran may be needed. Seabands are elastic wristbands that apply pressure to a pressure point and relieve nausea sometimes. They can be bought without a prescription. All of these are safe and quite helpful for most women. If your vomiting is severe enough to cause dehydration, we need to see you and may need to coordinate administration of IV fluids. Nausea often returns at the end of pregnancy, possibly due to acid reflux. If this is your experience, please let your provider know. We may be able to help.

### **Constipation and Bloating**

Constipation is difficulty having bowel movements. Frequency of bowel movements may vary from every other day to 2-3 times per day. Eat foods high in fiber like apples, pears, carrots, celery, whole wheat bread and cereal. Drink pear juice, prune juice, warm tea or coffee to aid in having a bowel movement. Getting lots of exercise and drinking lots of water will also help. You could try most kinds of stool softeners or fiber sources like Metamucil, Fibercon, Citrucel, Benefiber if you continue to have a severe problem. If these do not work, please let us know. We may advise using an OTC laxative or enema.

Intestinal gas is a bother during the first few months of pregnancy. Warm liquids may help. Some women have success with GasX, Digel, or Phazyme.

### **Ultrasounds**

Ultrasound is a scan that is usually done at about the 20<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy to check for birth defects in your baby and placental problems. We do not require a full bladder for this scan. Earlier scans might be done to help determine your due date, check for twins and find your baby's heartbeat. We may require that your bladder is full if you are having a first trimester scan. Later in your pregnancy, an ultrasound may be done to check on the growth of your baby or measure your amniotic fluid. This is usually done by moving a small transducer over your abdomen but may require a vaginal probe if done in the first three months. Most women need only one scan during their pregnancies but sometimes more are needed. Ultrasounds use sound waves and have never been found to cause problems for your baby. We will provide you with a complimentary DVD at your 20-week ultrasound and we will record a short section at the end of your scan for you to take home.

Most ultrasounds for pregnancy are done in our office but some are done at Maternal Fetal Medicine. If your BMI is over 35, we will recommend you have your ultrasounds at MFM in order to attain the best possible image. We will also recommend ultrasounds

at MFM for any high risk situation such as advanced maternal age, twins, diabetes, small or large baby, etc. Some women have the opportunity to get a 3-D or 4-D ultrasound for fun outside the office. An ultrasound service providing recreational ultrasounds may require an approval note from us. Please do not let these optional ultrasounds replace any ultrasound recommended by your provider. Be sure you have undergone the routine 20 week ultrasound in our office first.

You are welcome to have two guests in the ultrasound room during the entire exam. Near the end of the scan, other guests and supervised children may join during the digital recording portion. Please do not bring unaccompanied children.

Please turn off cell phones and pagers during your appointment.

### **Seat Belt Use**

Always use a seat belt no matter how far along you are in your pregnancy. Be sure to wear the shoulder belt across your chest between your breasts and the lap belt low around your hips.

### **Diet**

We recommend eating normal portions of healthy foods at least 3-4 times per day. Protein builds strong

babies. Good sources of protein come in several categories:

- Dairy products like milk, yogurt, and cheese (Pasteurized cheese is safe, even if it is a soft cheese. Do not eat homemade cheese.)
- Plant sources like tofu, soy nuts, regular nuts, whole grain bread, lentils and beans
- Meat sources like chicken, turkey, beef and pork (Do not eat raw meat.)
- Fish is healthy and recommended in pregnancy, following some basic guidelines. Salmon, cod, scallops, shrimp, tilapia, and canned light tuna are all fine to eat 2-3 times a week. Sushi is safe, as long as it is not raw. Be sure your sushi is being properly handled and is refrigerated. This is an excellent time to experiment with vegetarian sushi. Please see the link below for more details to keep your seafood intake low in mercury.

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/oehas/fish/fishadvwomen.htm>

Vitamins are important. Good source of high vitamin foods include:

- Vegetables like spinach, asparagus, squash, and broccoli

- Fruits like berries, melons, apples, oranges, and pears
- Dark, leafy greens such as kale and kohlrabi

Water prevents and treats lots of problems in pregnancy. Drink at least 8 glasses of water per day and avoid more than 1 caffeinated beverage per day. Clear urine is the best indicator of proper hydration.

Avoid large or frequent servings of rice, juice, pasta, bagels, muffins, ice cream, cake, cookies, fast food, and soda.

The concern over deli meat involves a very rare infection called listeria. While it is recommended to heat your deli meat, the risk is very low to contract listeria, even without heating the meat. Please see the links below for more information.

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/pregnancy\\_gateway/infections-listeria.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/pregnancy_gateway/infections-listeria.html)

[AskKaren.gov](http://AskKaren.gov) for food safety questions.

1-888-674-6854 USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline

1-888-723-3366 FDA Food information Line

### **Weight Gain**

If you are underweight (BMI<19), try to gain about 28-40 pounds in pregnancy.

If your weight is normal (BMI 19-24), try to gain about 25-35 pounds.

If you are overweight (BMI 25-29), try to gain about 15-25 pounds.

If you are quite overweight, (BMI>30), try to gain about 15 pounds.

Women who are obese or gain more than is recommended are at higher risk for very large babies, high blood pressure, fetal distress, and Cesarean birth.

### **Domestic Violence**

If you are being hurt emotionally or physically, please report this to us. It generally worsens as your pregnancy progresses. WE CAN HELP! You may also call 1-800-562-6025. This is a city-supported help line.

### **Exercise**

It is important to get daily exercise while pregnant as your labor will be shorter and less painful and you will have a lower chance of a Cesarean birth. Twenty to thirty minutes of brisk walking, swimming, yoga, aerobics, or weight machines is very helpful. Avoid sports such as skiing, horseback riding, or contact sports that could cause serious injury or abdominal trauma. Listen to your body when you exercise. Your tolerance will be

lower and it is important to slow down or stop if you are out of breath. Exercise to tone your muscles, but not to the point of exhaustion. Abdominal crunches are not recommended during pregnancy.

### **Headaches**

Headaches are common in the first 4 months of pregnancy. While not usually severe, they often last for several days. Extra sleep, regular small meals, cold compresses to forehead, drinking fluids, and extra-strength Tylenol every 4 hours might be helpful. Narcotics are safe but are discouraged as they can cause worsen headaches with prolonged use. Migraine symptoms often improve during pregnancy. Do not use your usual migraine medicine while pregnant until you check with your provider.

### **Dental Health**

Oral health continues to be important during pregnancy. You should go for your routine exams/cleaning as recommended by your dentist. We recommend having your teeth cleaned in your second trimester. X-rays are safe with proper shielding. If you need any dental work performed, local lidocaine with epinephrine and most antibiotics are safe for you and your baby. Nitrous oxide may be used for limited amounts of time. Chewing xylitol-containing gum four to five times a day, or using xylitol rinses, after eating, has been shown to decrease the bacteria which can cause dental caries/decay. This will benefit you and your baby. In a mother prone to cavities, decreasing the oral bacteria when pregnant may decrease a young child's potential for cavities. The bacteria that cause cavities are transmitted to the fetus through the placenta.

### **Traveling**

Air travel is safe. Flying does not harm the baby or cause labor but you should not fly in the last 4 weeks of pregnancy just in case you go into labor. When flying, drink lots of water and avoid the salty snacks which can make the inevitable swollen ankles much worse. Sit in the aisle seat so you can get up and move often. Moving your legs frequently (walking or doing calf pumps while you sit) will help prevent blood clots. Compression stockings may be helpful for long trips. It is a good idea to bring your prenatal records with you in case you develop a problem.

If your flight is over two hours, it is recommended you take a low dose baby aspirin (81mg) to help prevent blood clots. Take one the day before you travel, one the day that you travel, and one the day after. Repeat this on the trip home.

If traveling to developing countries, avoid fruits that you cannot peel, tap water, lettuce, and vegetables that may be washed in tap water. Avoid foods sold by street vendors and do not have ice in beverages. Get a hepatitis A vaccine before going to Mexico or any third world country.

### **Vaginal Infections**

Yeast infections are common in pregnancy. They cause vaginal itching, burning, and lots of white discharge. It is safe to use Monistat, Gyne-Iotrimin, or any vaginal cream made for yeast infections. We recommend the 7-day treatments. Vagisil does not cure yeast infections.

Bacterial infections cause a thin, cream-colored, fishy-smelling discharge especially after intercourse. Your provider will need to diagnose this infection in the office and then you will be treated with an antibiotic. Properly diagnosing a vaginal infection is important because some bacteria may lead to preterm premature rupture of membranes.

Sexually transmitted diseases must be treated during pregnancy to protect your baby. If there is a chance that you have been exposed, please tell us so you can be tested.

### **Sexual Intercourse**

Sex is generally safe in pregnancy unless there is concern for possible miscarriage or preterm labor. Avoid lying on your back during sex once your belly is big as it can be very uncomfortable. Orgasms will give you uterine cramps but are rarely dangerous. It is true that sex can trigger labor if you are near your due date.

### **Colds, Flu, and Sinus Infections**

You are more susceptible to these when pregnant. Try to drink lots of fluids and get more rest as it can take longer to recover than usual. You may use OTC throat lozenges, Sudafed, Robitussin, or Tylenol to relieve symptoms. Make sure the cold medicine you take does not contain alcohol. Antibiotics may be recommended if symptoms persist over two weeks. Please contact your primary care physician for diagnosis and management. Nasal irrigation is very helpful for sinus congestion. You may buy this over-the-counter (Neti-Pot.) Flu vaccines are highly recommended. You may get them wherever they are available. We carry the preservative (thimeresol) free vaccines. Coverage is subject to your insurance.

### **Trouble Sleeping**

Insomnia is very common in pregnancy due to worries, excitement, and discomforts. Try warm baths and warm, non-caffeinated beverages before bed. Use lots of pillows to get into comfortable positions. Once your belly becomes larger, it can be uncomfortable to lie on your back. While laying on your back may become uncomfortable after about 20 weeks of pregnancy, it is not dangerous for your baby. Prop yourself with pillows on your side and/or with the upper body slightly elevated if needed. Avoid stimulating activities before bed. You may use Unisom, Tylenol PM, or Benadryl safely.

### **Heartburn/Acid Reflux**

This is quite common in pregnancy, especially in the later months and in overweight women. Eat small meals and avoid lying down for several hours after eating. You may

use Tums, Zantac (150 mg twice per day which may be increased to 300mg twice per day if needed), Prevacid, Pepcid, Nexium or Prilosec OTC safely. If you need medication every day, ask for a prescription. Some insurances require you try over-the-counter medicine first.

### **Hemorrhoids**

These are swollen veins at the rectal opening. They may feel like bulging skin and they may bleed, itch, or throb. You need to avoid constipation to prevent them from getting worse. You may purchase Tucks or Anusol without a prescription. If these do not help, please ask your provider for a prescription for Analpram HC or Anusol HC. Occasionally surgery may be needed for very hard or enlarged hemorrhoids. These will shrink after your delivery, but women are often left with a little loose skin at the rectal opening.

### **Hair Dyes, Perms, Foiling, Tanning Beds, Manicures, Artificial Nails**

These beauty treatments are all safe during pregnancy. Tanning beds, however are bad for your skin and have been proven to contribute to skin cancer.

### **Group B Strep**

This is a bacteria that is often found in a woman's vagina, rectum, or urine. This is considered a normal bacteria and rarely causes any problems for you or your partner but could make your infant ill after delivery. We test for the presence of Group B Strep in your urine at the first visit and then retest for presence in the vagina and rectum after 35 weeks. If found, we will treat you with antibiotics in labor to prevent illness in your baby.

### **Back Pain**

Most women have back pain at some time in their pregnancy due to hormonal changes causing loose joints. To lessen back pain, avoid sitting for long periods. If you are unable to do this, put a stool or box under your feet. Avoid bending, arching or twisting motions. When lifting heavy things, squat down keeping back straight and use leg muscles instead of your back.

Try moist heat or cold packs to area, getting massages, or sitting in a warm bath. Some women are helped by chiropractic care, physical therapy, or acupuncture. Wearing supportive, low-heeled shoes or an abdominal binder may help. Taking Tylenol is safe and may help. Gentle exercise will strengthen back muscles to prevent strain.

Sciatica is a type of sharp pain in the nerve that runs down your buttock and back of your leg. Try the things listed above, but this usually goes away in 1-2 weeks. We can give you a list of back strengthening exercises that may help. If the pain is very bad or is lasting a long time, a referral to a physical therapist may be advised.



Please call us if you have mid-back pain that is off to one side (kidney region) or if you have intermittent back pain that comes every few minutes BEFORE 37 weeks (this could be preterm labor.)

### **Fetal Movement Counting**

Mothers usually feel movements by the baby around 20-22 weeks, though some mothers feel this much earlier. Healthy babies are very active, particularly in the evening. Some perfectly normal babies may sleep quietly for as long as 60 minutes without moving. Counting your baby's movements beginning at about 28 weeks can be helpful in finding problems. Pick a time during the day or evening that your baby is normally active and count 10 separate movements. Record the time you started counting until you feel the 10<sup>th</sup> movement. If you feel 10 movements in less than 2 hours, stop counting until the next day. If you do not feel 10 movements within one two-hour period, contact your provider.

### **Forms Completion**

If you need to have any forms completed by your provider, please allow 7 business days for processing. All fees (\$25) must be paid in full prior to completion. This includes, but is not limited to, forms for FMLA, Disability, and Leave of Absence.

### **Contacting Us**

If you have any concerns about your pregnancy, please feel free to call our office. There is always a consulting nurse available to help. We are best prepared to serve you if you call, rather than drop by the office. Sometimes we can help you over the phone. If you need to be seen, we will set up an appointment for you.