

## Preparation & Expectations for Pregnancy

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*This is a very exciting time! The following information is meant to provide considerations and recommendations on what to avoid, look out for, or be cautious of throughout your pregnancy. If you have any questions or concerns, please address them at any of your prenatal visits.*

### Expectations & Perinatal Care:

#### **First Trimester**

The first trimester of pregnancy is marked by the initial formation of the organ systems of your fetus and several changes to your body to prepare for development of your baby. Many women may experience feeling more tired than usual, feeling nauseated or breast soreness during this time. At this point in the pregnancy, you should expect to have visits with your doctor approximately every 4 weeks.

- Please be sure to take your prenatal vitamins every day. If you are having issues tolerating them, please notify us.
- To help relieve nausea and vomiting, you should get plenty of rest, avoid smells that bother you, attempt to eat five or six small meals each day instead of three large meals, and avoid eating spicy and fatty foods.
- *Will my due date change?*
  - We typically use your last menstrual period to calculate your due date if it coincides within 1 week of your first trimester ultrasound. If there is a discrepancy of more than 7 days we will usually change it to what is determined by the ultrasound.
- Please notify us if you experience any unusual or severe cramping or abdominal pain, vaginal bleeding, persistent diarrhea or vomiting, or any high fevers.

#### **Second Trimester**

The second trimester marks a period of fetal growth and a time when you first start to feel your baby move. Morning sickness and fatigue generally improve, and an ultrasound performed during this time may allow you to learn the sex of your baby.

- Avoid sleeping on your back. The two major blood vessels that go up and down parallel to the spinal cord are called the vena cava and aorta. When you lie flat on your back, those vessels are compressed and decrease blood flow to and from the uterus. Many women will feel faint and lightheaded when on their back for any length of time and will naturally change position. We recommend you sleep on your side.

- Continue to get moderate exercise daily, drink plenty of fluids and eat lots of fruits and vegetables to avoid constipation.

- The Glucola Test: This test is done to screen for diabetes in pregnancy and will be performed between 24-28 weeks. If this test is elevated, it will be necessary to have a 3-hour glucose tolerance test to determine if you have diabetes during the pregnancy.

### ***Third Trimester***

The third trimester is marked by further fetal growth, as well as maturation of the fetal lungs. Expect to be putting on weight at a rate of roughly ½ to 1 lb per week. Your body will also undergo changes to help prepare for labor.

- Backaches: The extra weight you have gained will put added pressure on your back, which can cause soreness. You may also feel discomfort in your pelvis and hips as your ligaments loosen to prepare for labor. Practice good posture to ease pressure on your back. Sit up straight and use a chair with good back support. Wear low-heeled, comfortable shoes with good arch support. At night, sleep on your side with a pillow in between your legs.

- Stretch Marks: About 90% of women will get them in the third trimester according to the American Academy of Dermatology. If your mother had stretch marks then you are more likely to have them too as genetics play a role. Unfortunately, there is no way to prevent stretch marks.

- Braxton Hicks Contractions: You may start to feel irregular contractions, which signify your body preparing for real labor to come. These contractions do not cause your cervix to dilate. They are often not as intense as real labor contractions, but may feel like labor and may eventually progress to it. One difference is that real contractions tend to get stronger and closer together over time.

### ***Post-Partum***

Before your baby is born, spend time thinking about the pediatrician you choose for care. Some offices will allow you to meet the doctors beforehand to get acquainted. Please ask if you have any questions regarding breastfeeding! Additionally, we recommend pelvic floor physical therapy after delivery to avoid leakage of urine later in life. This can be performed in our office.

### **When to Call Your Physician:**

- Unrelenting vomiting or diarrhea or you are unable to tolerate anything by mouth.

- If you experience signs of preeclampsia including vision changes, persistent headache, epigastric pain, nausea/vomiting or malaise in your second or third trimester.

- Some spotting during pregnancy is normal, especially during the early first trimester, after sexual intercourse or after a pelvic exam in the office. However, if you experience **any vaginal bleeding**, please call us.

- Decreased fetal movement

- Signs or symptoms of labor:

- Please telephone us if you believe that you are in labor (strong regular contractions) or if your bag of waters breaks, even if you are not having any contractions with it. Call if you think your "water" is leaking. Or call if you are in doubt. If labor is starting, **DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING**.
- Vaginal bleeding. While some spotting in the third trimester may be normal, it may also signify early labor. Call us with **any vaginal bleeding**.

## Exposures & Things to Avoid

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**Alcohol and Tobacco:** Refrain from smoking or consuming alcohol during your pregnancy for the health of you and your developing infant. We further recommend avoiding exposure to second-hand smoke as much as possible.

**Cats:** Owning and being around a cat during pregnancy is generally safe; however, there are several steps you can take to avoid exposure to toxoplasmosis:

- Avoid allowing the cat to remain outdoors for long periods of time.
- **Avoid changing the litter box yourself**, if possible, otherwise use gloves to do so and be sure to wash your hands afterwards. The litter box should be changed daily.
- Feed your cat canned or dry food, never raw or undercooked meat.
- We recommend that you **not** get a new cat while you are pregnant.

**Hair Care:** Hair color is safe to use during pregnancy, as hair that is outside of the scalp is dead tissue and does not absorb anything into the blood stream. Please AVOID any LASER hair removal treatments or electrolysis.

**Heat:** Avoid exposure to very high temperatures including saunas and hot tubs throughout your pregnancy, especially during the first trimester.

**Zika:** While Miami is no longer considered a cautionary area for the Zika virus, we recommend the use of mosquito repellent to avoid possible infection. Wear protective clothing while outdoors to avoid bites and use repellents containing Deet, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, or IR3535. For a current list of Zika and malaria outbreak areas, please go to [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/).

### **General Safety:**

- **Driving:** Continue to use your seatbelt throughout your entire pregnancy. Buckle your seatbelt below your belly. Place the shoulder belt off to the side of your belly and across the center of your chest (between your breasts), the same as how you wear it when you are not pregnant.

- **Sports & Exercise (see below):** Avoid contact sports or activities that may result in abdominal trauma or have an increased risk of falling including but not limited to skiing, horseback riding, skydiving, competitive weight lifting, scuba diving, etc. It is safe (and recommended!) to continue your otherwise routine exercise that includes swimming, running, biking, etc.

### **Travel Restrictions:**

For most women, travelling during pregnancy is safe. As long as you and your fetus are healthy, you may travel safely until you are about 36 weeks pregnant.

- Travel is NOT recommended if you have the following complications: preeclampsia, premature rupture of membranes and preterm labor. We do not recommend extensive travel if you are pregnant with more than one fetus.

- Let us know if you plan to travel to a developing country during your pregnancy to discuss precautionary measures and possible vaccinations.

- Prolonged travel times may increase your risk for a deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a condition in which a blood clot forms in the veins in the legs or other areas of the body. A DVT can lead to a dangerous condition in which the clot can travel to the lungs. Sitting or not moving for long periods of time (as with long-distance travel) can increase your risk of DVT. Pregnancy further increases your risk of DVT.

*If you plan to travel during your pregnancy, consider the following tips:*

- During a car trip, make each day's drive as short as possible. Wear your seatbelt every time you ride in a car. Plan to make stops every 2-3 hours so you can move around and stretch your legs to avoid blood clots.
- Keep your due date in mind and avoid scheduling air travel after 36 weeks. Some airlines may not allow pregnant women over 35 weeks to travel. International flight cut-offs may be as early as 28 weeks.
- Plan to bring over-the-counter medications you may need, such as pain relievers, hemorrhoid ointment, and prenatal vitamins.

## Weight Gain, Diet & Exercise

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Pregnancy should not be an excuse for eating endless calories! The amount of weight gained during pregnancy depends on several factors. If you gain too much weight, you are at risk for conditions such as diabetes in pregnancy, and too little weight gain can lead to having a baby with low birth weight. The following outlines our general recommendations:

### **Appropriate Weight Gain**

- If you are at normal weight before pregnancy (BMI 18.5 – 24.9), gain between about 25-35 pounds during pregnancy.
- If you are overweight before pregnancy (BMI 25 – 29.9), gain about 15-25 pounds.
- If you are underweight (BMI < 18.5), gain about 28-40 pounds.
- For multiple births, you should gain about 35-40 pounds.
- \* The average woman should gain about 2-4 pounds during her first three months of pregnancy, and ½ to 1 pound per week for the remainder of the pregnancy.

### **Diet**

It is important to attempt to eat all of your essential vitamins and minerals daily. Continue to take your prenatal vitamins every day. Fill your plate with leafy greens, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Try to include plenty of calcium-rich foods and lean meats like chicken and turkey.

### **Foods to Avoid**

- Fish with lots of mercury including swordfish, tilefish and shark. High levels of mercury can damage your baby's developing brain and should be avoided. But do not cut out fish completely! You may continue to eat fish but try to limit your servings to one to two per week. For a more detailed list of fish and their mercury levels, visit <http://www.americanpregnancy.org/pregnancyhealth/sushimercury.htm>.
- Raw fish
- Unpasteurized milk and soft cheeses including brie, feta, gorgonzola and Roquefort. They may contain bacteria like listeria that can cross the placenta and potentially cause miscarriage or lead to life-threatening infection.
- Cold ready-to-eat meats such as hot dogs and lunch meats, which can also contain listeria. Be sure to reheat these foods until they are steaming.

- Uncooked or cured eggs and meats like prosciutto, runny eggs and sauces made with raw eggs such as hollandaise and carbonara.
- Alcohol

### ***Exercise***

Light to moderate exercise during pregnancy is good for you! Strengthening your back and abdominal muscles will help to speed recovery after delivery. Physical activity does not increase your risk of miscarriage, low birth weight or early delivery. Regular exercise may reduce back pain, ease constipation and decrease your risk of diabetes and preeclampsia.

### ***Recommendations***

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that pregnant women get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise every week. Moderate intensity means you are moving enough to raise your heart rate and start sweating.
- Examples of moderate-intensity activity include brisk walking and general gardening (raking, weeding or digging). You can divide the 150 minutes into 30-minute workouts on 5 days of the week or into smaller 10-minute workouts throughout the day.
- If you are new to exercise, start out slowly and gradually increase your activity. Begin with as little as 5 minutes a day. Add 5 minutes each week until you can stay active for 30 minutes a day.
- If you were very active before pregnancy, you can keep doing the same workouts with your health care professional's approval. If you start to lose weight, you may need to increase the number of calories that you eat.
- When you exercise, drink plenty of water before, during and after your workout. Signs of dehydration include dizziness, a racing or pounding heart, and urinating only small amounts or having urine that is dark yellow.
- Wear a very supportive sports bra to help protect your breasts. Later in pregnancy, a belly support belt may reduce discomfort while walking or running.
- Exercises that are safest for pregnant women include: walking, swimming and water workouts, stationary bicycling, modified yoga and modified pilates (though avoid poses that require lying on your back for long periods and "hot yoga").

### ***Exercises to Avoid***

- During your second and third trimester, avoid exercises that require lying on your back and never do exercises that pose a risk of trauma to your belly
- Contact sports including ice hockey, boxing, soccer and basketball
- Skydiving
- Activities that may result in a fall such as downhill snow skiing, water skiing, off-road cycling, gymnastics and horseback riding
- "Hot yoga" or "Hot pilates"
- Scuba diving
- Activities performed at 6,000 feet

### ***Warning Signs to Stop Exercising***

- Vaginal bleeding, regular contractions or fluid leaking from the vagina
- Feeling dizzy or faint
- Shortness of breath before starting exercise, chest pain, headache or muscle weakness
- Calf pain or swelling