

Frequently Asked Questions...

How much weight should I put on during my pregnancy?

The amount of weight you should put on may vary from person to person. As a general rule if you're at a 'normal' weight before pregnancy, then you should gain between 25 to 35 pounds during the course of your pregnancy. If you are overweight before pregnancy, gain 15 to 25 pounds. If you are underweight prior to pregnancy, gain 28 to 40 pounds, and for multiple births, consult your doctor (usually, you should gain about 35 to 45 pounds for twins).

The average woman should gain about 2 to 4 pounds during her first three months of pregnancy, and 1 pound a week for the remainder of her pregnancy.

How common is morning sickness?

Morning sickness is very common and affects up to 80% of pregnancies. Though it is usually limited to the first 7 to 12 weeks of pregnancy, approximately 20% of women may experience it during their entire pregnancy. If you are experiencing morning sickness talk to your care provider to see what treatment options are available. Morning sickness can usually be treated with conservative measures but if severe enough may require a prescription to prevent dehydration, electrolyte imbalances and adverse effects on pregnancy.

Is it safe to exercise during pregnancy?

Baby and mom can benefit from exercise in pregnancy. Regular light to moderate activity can help you prepare for birth, alleviate typical pregnancy complications including fatigue, poor sleep, back pain, constipation, and help you return to your daily routine after your baby is born.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that you focus on non-weight-bearing activities and those that don't require an enormous amount of balance.

What Should I, or shouldn't I eat during pregnancy?

You need to get all your essential vitamins and minerals daily. That means sticking with the prenatal vitamins you started prior to becoming pregnant, as well as eating a healthy diet. Make sure you have lots of leafy greens, fruits, veggies, and whole grains (like wheat breads and cereals). Get plenty of calcium-rich foods like broccoli and low fat milk and yogurt, to help build your baby's bones and teeth. Stick to lean meats like chicken and turkey. Some people may feel more nauseous on prenatal vitamins. Taking them in the evening might help with nausea. If nausea continues, please speak to your health care provider.

You should avoid fish with lots of mercury. (Swordfish, Shark) and have moderate amounts of fish like Tuna and Snapper once a week. High levels of mercury can damage a baby's developing brain.

Don't cut out fish completely – they provide you with important omega-3 fatty acids. It is safe to eat two servings of fish like salmon, catfish, mahi mahi, and cod, along with shellfish like shrimp, crab, and scallops.

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Avoid raw fish like sushi and sashimi and cold meats like hot dogs and luncheon meats as they may contain bacteria called listeria, which could lead to serious pregnancy complications.

Avoid unpasteurized milk and soft cheese like Brie, Camembert, Feta, Gorgonzola, and Roquefort. They may also contain listeria.

Reheat food until they are steaming.

Cut out uncooked or cured eggs and meats, like prosciutto, runny eggs, and sauces made with raw eggs (like some hollandaise sauces).

Alcohol should be avoided completely. There is no known safe level of exposure to alcohol for a fetus. Prenatal exposure to alcohol can interfere with healthy development and lead to fetal alcohol syndrome, one of the most common causes of mental retardation and the only one that is completely preventable.

While some studies show that moderate caffeine intake during pregnancy is OK, others have found a link to miscarriage, so it's particularly important to steer clear of caffeine during the first trimester. Large amounts of caffeine have been linked to premature birth and low birth weight, so do your best to switch to decaf. If you can't cut it out entirely, limit to 300 milligrams per day or less (1-2 cups of coffee).

Is it safe to have sex during pregnancy?

Yes! Unless your care provider has told you otherwise. You may want to avoid lying flat on your back during sex, especially later in pregnancy, as the weight of the baby may compress some blood vessels causing you to get light headed or nauseous.

Can I travel by airplane?

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) states that the 2nd trimester is the safest time by air because you're at the lowest risk of miscarriage or premature labor. If you have had a healthy, uncomplicated pregnancy, there's no special risk posed by commercial air travel. ACOG recommends that pregnant women stop flying at 36 weeks' gestation. Be sure to stay hydrated during the flight by drinking plenty of fluids, and get up to move around every so often, and be sure to stretch your legs and back.

Can I change my cats litter box?

No. Cat feces can transmit an infection called toxoplasmosis, which can lead to severe problems in newborns.

Can I use my hot tubs?

In general anything that causes a rise in your body temperature should be avoided (Hot tubs/saunas/tanning beds). Excessive heat can affect your growing baby.

Can I paint the nursery?

Pregnant women should avoid exposure to the harsh chemicals found in some paint products.

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Can I get an X-Ray while I am pregnant?

You should not get an X-Ray or mammogram unless absolutely needed during pregnancy. If you need to get one please make sure the radiology technician is aware you are pregnant.

When should I call my doctor? How do I know what's normal and not for pregnancy?

Your body is changing almost daily and it may be hard to tell if what you are feeling is normal or not. If unsure always call your care provider.

Here are a few symptoms that are not normal:

- Unusual or severe cramping or abdominal pain
- Significant reduction in the baby's movements after 28 weeks (less than 10 movements in a 2-hour period)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Any bleeding in the second or third trimester
- Signs of premature labor, such as regular pains or tightening in the lower back or abdomen or significant fluid discharge
- Pain or cramping in the arms, legs or chest
- Fever over 100 Fahrenheit (37.5 Centigrade)
- Severe or persistent diarrhea or vomiting
- Fainting spells, dizziness, blurred vision or spots in front of your eyes
- Swelling in your hands, fingers, or face

What is fifth disease, and what happens if I am exposed to it during my pregnancy?

Fifth Disease ('aka' slapped cheek disease or Parvovirus) is a viral infection common among school age children particularly in the spring and winter. It is relatively harmless to the child affected, but may cause serious complications to the pregnant women. Symptoms include sudden onset of red cheeks (like they have been slapped) fever followed by lacy rash on chest. If a pregnant woman is exposed during the first half of pregnancy there is a small risk of severe anemia in the baby and miscarriage.

Your care provider will check to see if you are immune to the virus early in your pregnancy. If you have been exposed let your care provider know.

Resources:

<http://www.motherisk.org/>

<http://www.acog.org/> (American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology)

<http://www.uptodate.com/home>