

Healthy Pregnancy Tips At-a-Glance

Eat this. Don't eat that. Do this. Don't do that. Pregnant women are bombarded with Dos and Don'ts. It's tough to keep it all straight. Here's help.

Dos

Get all essential vitamins and minerals everyday.

Get 400 micrograms of folic Acid daily.

Eat a healthy diet.

Gain a healthy, not excessive amount of weight.

Get enough sleep.

De-stress

Get Moving!

Get a handle on health Problems.

Ask your doctor before Taking any medicines.

Consider getting a flu shot.

See your doctor regularly.

Wear your seat belt correctly.

Don'ts

Don't eat fish with lots of mercury.

Don't disregard food borne illness.

Don't use chemicals

Don't clean or change a cat's litter box

Don't take very hot baths, hot Tubs, or saunas.

Don't use scented feminine hygiene products.

Don't douche.

Don't have optional x-rays.

Don't Smoke

Don't drink alcohol

Don't use illegal drugs.

Pregnancy Dos

Follow these helpful hints for a healthy pregnancy.

- **Get all essential vitamins and minerals every day.** Women need a lot more iron when pregnant. And sometimes it's hard to get enough by eating alone. Ask your doctor if you should be taking a daily prenatal vitamin or multivitamin.
- **Get 400 micrograms (or 0.4 mg) of folic acid daily.** Getting enough folic acid (or folate) reduces the chances of some birth defects. Some women eat lots of certain foods and others take multivitamins to get enough folic acid during pregnancy. Find out how to get you're daily dose of folic acid.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Load up on fruits, vegetables, and whole-grains (such as whole-wheat breads or crackers). Eat plenty of calcium-rich foods (such as non-fat or low-fat yogurt, milk, and broccoli) that your baby needs for strong bones and teeth. If you live in areas where fruits and vegetables aren't in season, frozen vegetables are a good option. Avoid eating a lot of fatty foods (such as butter and fatty meats). Choose leaner foods when you can (such as skim milk, chicken and turkey without the skin, and fish).
- **Gain a healthy, not excessive amount of weight.** Research shows that women who gain more than the recommended amount during pregnancy have an elevated risk of obesity. On average, 25 to 30 pounds is a healthy weight gain over the 40 weeks of pregnancy. Check with your doctor to find out how much weight you should gain during pregnancy.
- **Get enough sleep.** (try to get seven to nine hours every night). Aches, pains, anxiety and bathroom runs keep many pregnant women awake at night. To get some zzzzs, eat any large meals at least three hours before going to bed, get some easy exercise (like walking) and avoid long naps during the day. Sleep on your left side and use pillows between your legs and under your belly to help you get comfortable.

- **De-stress.** If you can, control the stress in your life. When it comes to work and family, figure out what you can really do. Set limits with yourself and others. Don't be afraid to say NO to requests for your time and energy.
- **Get Moving!** Getting regular, low-impact exercise is good for you and your baby. Talk to your doctor about what is safe.
- **Get a handle on health problems.** Talk to your doctor about how your health problems can affect you and your unborn child. If you have diabetes, control your blood sugar levels. If you have high blood pressure, monitor it closely. If you are overweight, talk to your doctor about whether you should lose weight.
- **Ask your doctor before taking any medicines.** Prescription, over-the-counter, and herbal medicine all can harm the baby. Find out if you should continue taking prescription medicines. Get more facts on taking medicine during pregnancy.
- **See your doctor regularly.** Prenatal care can help keep you and the baby healthy, spot problems if they occur and prevent difficulties during delivery.
- **Consider getting a flu shot.** The flu can be dangerous for some moms-to-be. The centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests vaccinations for all women who are at least 14 weeks pregnant during the flu season. Ask your doctor if you should get a flu shot.
- **Wear your seatbelt correctly.** Seat belts used correctly protect you and the baby during a crash. The American Academy of Family Physicians recommends that pregnant women use seat belts that have a lap belt and a shoulder strap. Seat belt straps should never go across your belly. The lap strap should go under the belly, across the hips. The shoulder strap should go off to the side of your belly and between your breasts.

Pregnancy Don'ts

- **Don't eat fish and lots of mercury.** Make sure to find out what fish to eat and what fish to avoid when pregnant.
- **Don't disregard foodborne illness.** Eat, cook, handle, and clean food safely! For both mother and baby, foodborne illness can cause serious health problems – or even death. Follow these simple food safety tips to keep yourself and your baby safe.
- **Don't use chemicals.** Products including herbicides, pesticides, paint, stains, and some cleaning solutions may be harmful to your baby. If you must use these things, wear gloves, a mask, and keep the room well ventilated.
- **Don't clean or change a cat's litter box.** This could put you at risk for an infection called toxoplasmosis. Toxoplasmosis is caused by a parasite that cats can carry in their feces. Toxoplasmosis can harm a fetus.
- **Don't take very hot bathes, hot tubs, or saunas.** High temperatures can be harmful to the fetus, or cause you to faint.
- **Don't use scented feminine hygiene products.** Pregnant women should avoid scented sprays, sanitary napkins, and bubble bath. These products might irritate your vaginal area, and increase your risk of a urinary tract infection or yeast infection.
- **Don't douche.** Douching can irritate the vagina, force air into the birth canal and increase the risk of an infection. Find out why you should always ask your doctor before douching.
- **Don't have optional x-rays.** X-rays are a form of radiation that is linked to very small risk of cancer for an unborn baby. But x-rays are usually safe during pregnancy. So if your doctor says you need x-rays for a health problem you should follow her advice. But sometimes doctors can use other tests in place of x-rays. And other times, x-rays can wait until after the baby is born.

- **Don't smoke tobacco.** Tell your doctor if you smoke. Quitting is hard, but you can do it. Ask your doctor for help. Smoking during pregnancy passes nicotine and cancer-causing drugs to your baby. Smoke also keeps your baby from getting needed nourishment and raises the risk of stillbirth and premature birth (a small baby born too early).
- **Don't drink alcohol.** Stop drinking alcohol if you drink regularly. Experts are still unsure of the exact amount of alcohol needed to cause problems in your baby. But, both drinking everyday and drinking a lot of alcohol once in a while during pregnancy can harm the baby.
- **Don't use illegal drugs.** Tell your doctor if you are using drugs. Marijuana, cocaine, heroin, speed (amphetamines), barbiturates, and LSD are VERY dangerous for you and your baby.

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