

Pregnancy FAQs

How much weight should I gain?

We always encourage our patients to eat nutritiously; not only for your benefit, but now for your developing baby. Pregnant women typically need an additional 300 calories/day. There is no set amount of weight that is recommended to be gained during pregnancy; it depends on your pre-pregnancy weight. Typical weight gain is 25 lbs.

What can I eat and what foods should I avoid?

1500 mg of calcium/day (from dairy products and/or supplements) is recommended, as well as drinking plenty of water (up to 3 liters/day). Drinking one 12 oz. cup of coffee or caffeinated soda/day is okay, but you should not exceed this amount regularly. Raw or undercooked food should always be avoided, including undercooked meat, batter or dough with raw eggs, sushi and unpasteurized products like some ciders and soft imported cheeses (i.e., goat, brie and blue cheese). We do not recommend any alcohol.

Is seafood healthy for pregnant women?

Some seafood contains high levels of Methyl mercury, which can harm the development of an unborn child's nervous system. The types of fish that are harmful are the larger varieties, such as *Shark, Swordfish, King Mackerel and Tilefish*. Thus, pregnant women, nursing mothers and children should not eat these four types of fish. Some freshwater fish, like those caught in Lake Michigan, may also contain higher levels of mercury. The Michigan Department of Community Health recommends the following to reduce the health risks from chemicals in fish:

- Choose smaller fish, generally pan fish and those just over the legal size
- Choose lean fish, including pan fish, brook trout and brown trout that live in streams and rivers
- Choose fish that don't eat other fish. Large predator fish such as large walleye, northern pike, muskie, bass and lake trout tend to have more chemicals and should be avoided

Pregnant women may enjoy other varieties of fish/seafood as part of a healthy diet including shellfish, canned fish, smaller ocean fish and tuna fish. If you choose albacore tuna, you should limit your intake to 6 oz./week due to the increase in mercury.

What about Nutrasweet/Splenda?

Moderate use of these is considered safe during pregnancy.

PROMOTING WOMEN'S WELLNESS

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STOP SMOKING!

Smoking is dangerous to your health whether you are pregnant or not. It can increase your risk of miscarriage, small babies and placental abruption. If you can't stop, the less you do is better. NONE IS BEST.

Is it safe to color/perm my hair while pregnant?

To date, there is no evidence that either of these processes can cause birth defects. If you feel that one or both of these treatments will improve how you feel, then it is probably ok to do, but wait until after the first trimester. (The first trimester is when a baby's organs are being formed and chemical exposure could theoretically cause a problem.) Highlighting is also ok. Perms may not take as well. Use of hairsprays and aerosol deodorants are safe if used in a well-ventilated area.

Can I paint while pregnant?

In general, it is safe for a pregnant patient to paint with latex/water-based paint. The biggest risk to a pregnant patient would be falling off the ladder trying to paint a higher spot. So, keep both feet on the ground and paint in a well-ventilated area. If redoing an older home and there is a question about the paint base (lead or mercury), it is better not to be around when sanding, etc, is being done. Also, avoid paint removers, polyurethane and varnishes.

Is it safe to have dental work done?

Necessary dental care can and should be done during pregnancy. This includes cleanings, filling of a cavity, extractions or a root canal, if necessary. Dental x-rays, when necessary for treatment, can be done with abdominal shielding. Local anesthesia is ok but nitrous oxide is not recommended. Antibiotic prophylaxis when indicated should still be done (no tetracycline). We are happy to provide a letter for your dentist outlining these recommendations, if requested.

Can I travel during pregnancy?

Yes, travel is generally safe to 34 weeks. If traveling by car for long periods of time, be sure to get out of the car every 2 hours to stretch your legs. It is also very important to wear your safety belt, adjusting the strap below your abdomen so that it is comfortable. If you have extended travel plans, it is best to discuss this with your provider. Travel after 34 weeks is discouraged (unless absolutely necessary). Many airlines will not allow you to fly after 36 weeks.

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Other general guidelines

- Hot tubs are safe during pregnancy if the temperature is not higher than 98 degrees Fahrenheit
- Sexual intercourse is safe during pregnancy, up to delivery, unless you are told otherwise by your physician
- **Notify our office if you experience any vaginal bleeding at any time during your pregnancy**
- **Notify us immediately if you are not feeling regular fetal movement**

Medications

The following over-the-counter medications are generally considered to be safe to use during pregnancy:

PAIN RELIEF

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 650 mg every 4-6 hours

COUGH/COLD

Dextromethorphan (Robitussin DM) 10 mg; Guaifenesin (100 mg per 5 ml) 10 ml (2 tsp) every 4 hours

SINUS CONGESTION

Sudafed, as directed; Afrin nasal spray on a short-term basis only

ALLERGY SYMPTOMS

Benadryl, Chlortrimeton, Claritin, Zyrtec, as directed

NAUSEA/VOMITING

Emetrol 15-30 ml every 1-2 hours; Antivert, as directed; ½ Unisom tablet with one 50 mg Vitamin B Complex at bedtime

INDIGESTION

Maalox, Mylanta, Rolaids, Tums, Zantac, Prilosec OTC, as directed

CONSTIPATION

Psyllium (Metamucil) 1 tsp in 8 oz. of water or 1 wafer 1-3 times daily; Perdiem (Senna-fiber) start with 1 tsp daily and if needed increase to 2 tsp as often as 4 times daily; Colace or Senokot

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DIARRHEA

Kaopectate or Immodium AD, as directed

HEMMORRHOIDS

Preparation H and Tucks

SLEEP

Tylenol PM, as directed; Benadryl 25-50 mg

If you are unsure, please call our office before taking anything.

Relieving Morning Sickness

- Eat something high in protein before going to bed – this helps your blood sugar stay more level.
- “Two crackers before your head leaves the pillow” is old, but wise, advice. You can also try peanut butter or another protein snack before getting out of bed.
- Have sips of ice water as the urge to purge strikes. Many women say that this helps them keep meals down as well.
- Flat soda can help keep the stomach from churning.
- Avoid food and smells that seem to trigger nausea.
- Ginger teas, cookies, candy, even the spice itself can be helpful in preventing nausea.
- Peppermint, either smelling it in aromatherapy form or sipping the tea, can help curb nausea. It’s also known to help with sagging energy levels.
- Try a salty and sour combination like potato chips and lemonade.
- A teaspoon of cider vinegar in a cup of warm water can be effective.
- Smaller frequent meals can help keep an ailing belly at bay.
- Comfort foods! Eat what you can... if it stays down, it’s probably a good thing. Slowly add more foods to your diet as possible.
- When possible, avoid hunger – learn to graze.
- Take a deep breath. It might be mind over matter sometimes.
- Over-the-counter remedies as listed above.

If nothing is working, please call the office for other prescription options.

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Information on First Trimester Bleeding

- **Does bleeding during pregnancy always mean there is a problem?**

Vaginal bleeding during pregnancy has many causes. Some are serious, whereas others are not. Bleeding can occur early or later in pregnancy. **Bleeding in early pregnancy is common.** In many cases, it does not signal a major problem. Bleeding later in pregnancy can be more serious.

- **How common is bleeding during early pregnancy?**

Bleeding in the first trimester happens to about 15-25% of pregnant women. Light bleeding or spotting can occur 1-2 weeks after fertilization when the fertilized egg implants into the lining of the uterus. The cervix may bleed more easily during pregnancy because more blood vessels are developing in this area. It is not uncommon to have spotting or light bleeding after sexual intercourse or after a Pap test or pelvic exam.

- **When to seek medical care**

If you experience pain that is uncontrollable or if you are bleeding and soaking more than 2 pads/hour seek medical care at the emergency department or local hospital maternity unit

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