

Healthy Pregnancy (07/2019)

Healthy Living

Exercise The more you move in pregnancy the more comfortable you will be throughout. Listen to your body and don't push yourself too hard, but walking, swimming, yoga, even jogging if you are a jogger are all great for you.

Eat Unprocessed Whole Food Whole grain bread and pasta, fresh or frozen veggies, fruit, beans and legumes, meats, tofu, cheeses, etc. are all good for you. Don't forget what you eat is the building material for your baby, so eat well.

Stop Drinking Sugars Juice, chocolate milk, pop, double-doubles/ mocha lattes etc. should be saved for occasional treats. Sugary drinks encourage blood sugar problems and excessive weight gain.

Take Care of Yourself Too Take time for yourself. We often give all of our energy to others and forget to take time for ourselves. You are growing a person inside of you - that is a big job that deserves some rest and relaxation.

Recommended Vitamins and Supplements

Prenatal Vitamins Prenatal vitamins have many vitamins and minerals that will help you and your baby stay healthy in pregnancy. If your prenatal vitamins make you nauseated or constipated you can switch temporarily to taking a calcium supplement (1200 - 1500 mg per day), and Floravit a herbal liquid iron supplement (one capful/ day)

Folic Acid Folic acid is key to spine development in the baby in early pregnancy. Ideally you start folic acid (at least 1 mg a day) starting three months before you get pregnant and carry on throughout your pregnancy and while breastfeeding.

Fish Oil Fish oil supplementation is good for all of us. It improves vascular health - decreasing the risk of high blood pressure, hemorrhoids, and varicose veins. It helps to relieve constipation and improves mood. Babies benefit from mothers' taking fish oil. The blood flow to the placenta is improved and it aids in fetal brain development. Not all fish oils are the same. Ideally, you want a fish oil made from non-predatory fish, like sardines, which is tested for purity and carefully formulated. Naturopathic doctor's offices carry this quality of fish oil, and some supermarkets health food sections are carrying them too.

Vaccinations in Pregnancy

It is recommended that pregnant women receive the seasonal inactivated influenza vaccine and tetanus toxoid, diphtheria toxoid, and acellular pertussis vaccine (Tdap) during their pregnancy. The seasonal influenza and Tdap vaccinations are safe to administer during pregnancy and protect mothers and babies before birth, and for the first few months of life, when infants are at the greatest risk of severe disease or death.

A Note About Addictions

For many pregnant women pregnancy can be a stressful time and a tough time to break addictions. At the same time, most pregnant women want to quit and can find pregnancy a good time to change. The more times you try to cut down or quit a bad habit, the better you get at doing it. When you are quitting or cutting down, try to focus on your successes rather than your failures.

Smoking

Smoking is bad for us and is equally as bad for babies. When pregnant women smoke they are more likely to have an underdeveloped/ too small baby. Smoking increases the risk of high blood pressure in pregnancy, preterm labour and still birth.

***** Don't forget, second hand smoke increases the risk of SIDS and asthma, so after the baby is born make sure everyone smokes outside*****

Some women are able to quit smoking during pregnancy. The less you smoke the less effect on the baby. If you can cut back to less than 5 cigarettes a day in pregnancy, the effects are much less. Aids to quit smoking can be safe in pregnancy - talk to your midwife about strategies for cutting back/ quitting.

Alcohol

Drinking alcohol is dangerous to the baby in pregnancy. In the first few weeks of pregnancy before you even know you are pregnant alcohol can cause a miscarriage, but if you do not miscarry, alcohol this early on will not cause problems for the baby. So rest assured, if you had a few drinks before you knew you were pregnant you have not caused any problems for your baby. However once you are past 4 or 5 weeks, drinking has a big effect on the developing baby. We don't know if there is a safe low level of consumption, so we recommend not drinking in pregnancy.

Marijuana

Cannabis (marijuana) is one of the most commonly used drugs in Canada. Evidence-based data has shown that cannabis use during pregnancy can adversely affect the growth and development of the baby, and lead to long-term learning and behavioural consequences. There have been sufficient studies with comparable results, showing that cannabis use during pregnancy raises concerns of impaired neurodevelopment of the baby. Pregnancy is a critical time for brain development of the baby and the adverse effects caused by cannabis exposure can be life-long. Similar effects can occur in babies of mothers who use cannabis while breastfeeding. As well, cannabis can result in decreased milk supply. It is recommended that pregnant and breastfeeding women discontinue use of cannabis, and if it is being used for medicinal purposes, that alternative therapies be used instead.

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