

Healthy Pregnancy

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 Foods Whole grain bread & pasta, fresh or frozen veggies, fruit, beans & 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 can cause higher than normal blood sugar levels, which can have a damaging affect on you and baby and lead to long term health issues for both.

Take Care of Yourself Too! Take time out for yourself. We often give all our energy to others and forget to take some down 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 vitamin makes 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 (0.4 am - 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 small non-predatory fish like sardines, and anchovies 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.

Vitamin D Vitamin D promotes a healthy immune system and is important for overall health. We recommend 2000 IU per day. Having enough Vitamin D can help your body fight off viruses and infections.

Safety of Medications in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Many people wonder about the safety of medications in pregnancy and breastfeeding. Here is an excellent website that has up to date research and information sheets.

<https://mothertobaby.org/>

Mental Health

1/3 people will have a mental health struggle in their lifetime. You can talk to your midwife about strategies and supports. Everyone's mental health journey is unique and for some it can include counselling and/or medications. If you're struggling seek help. Untreated depression and anxiety aren't good for you or your baby. If you need mental health medications in pregnancy and breastfeeding, the benefits most often outweigh any small risks. Check out mothertobaby.org for more detailed information about safety.

If you are in crisis, please contact St. Leonard's Mental Health Crisis Support Line (available 24 hours a day, every day) at 519-759-7188 or toll-free at 1-866-811-7188.

For a list of therapists in Brantford go to:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/therapists/on/brantford>

A Note about Addictions and Drug Use

For many 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 bad for babies. When pregnant women smoke they are more likely to have an underdeveloped/too small baby. Smoking increases the risk high blood pressure in pregnancy, preterm labour and stillbirth.

***** 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 the effect on the baby. If you can cut back to less than 5 cigarettes a day in pregnancy the effects to the baby 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 before you even know you are pregnant alcohol can cause a miscarriage, but if you do not have a miscarriage, 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. The more you drink the greater the effect – binge drinking is particularly bad for the baby. We don't know if there is a safe low level of consumption so we recommend not drinking in pregnancy.

Cannabis/Marijuana

Cannabis is one of the most commonly used drugs in Canada. Evidence-based data has shown that cannabis use during pregnancy and breastfeeding can adversely affect the growth and development of the baby and lead to long-term learning and behavioural consequences. As well, in breastfeeding, cannabis can result in decreased milk supply. It is recommended that pregnant and breastfeeding people discontinue the use of cannabis and if being used for medicinal purposes that alternative therapies be used instead.