



# Helpful Tips For Your Pregnancy

## Pregnancy Do's:

**Take a prenatal vitamin every day.** Prenatal vitamins are essential for pregnant women as they provide more folic acid and iron, necessary all throughout the pregnancy for the development of the baby's brain and spinal cord. It may be difficult to consume enough by eating alone therefore, it is important to take a prenatal or multivitamin daily.

**Consume 800 micrograms (0.8 mg) of folic acid daily.** Consuming enough folic acid (or folate) lowers the risk of neural birth defects. Folic acid may be consumed by taking vitamins, a folic acid supplement or eating certain foods ex: oranges, dried beans, peas, lentils, whole-wheat products, asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and spinach.

**Eat a well-balanced diet.** The pregnant woman usually only requires about 340 additional calories per day starting in the second trimester. Daily dietary intake should include: Fresh vegetables, fruits and whole-grains (whole-wheat breads or crackers). Frozen fruits and vegetables are a good option for items not in season. Plenty of calcium-rich foods (non-fat or low-fat yogurt, milk and broccoli) to help baby develop strong bones and teeth. Avoid eating large amounts of fatty foods like butter or fatty meats. Choose leaner foods when available (skim milk, chicken and turkey without the skin and fish). For more tips on healthy eating for two visit: <https://www.MyPyramid.gov>.

**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. Your provider will advise you on weight gain unique to your pregnancy.

**Get enough sleep.** Aim for seven to nine hours every night. Aches, pains, anxiety and bathroom runs may keep pregnant women awake. To aid sleep: do not eat large meals within three hours of bedtime; do easy exercises like walking, yoga, or stretching; and avoid long daytime naps. Sleeping on your left side with pillows between your legs and under your belly should help with comfort.

**De-stress.** If possible, control the stress in your life. Identify what you are able to do when it comes to work and family. Set limits with yourself and others. Don't be afraid to say NO to requests for your time and energy.

**Get a handle on health problems.** Talk to your doctor about how your health problems can affect you and your baby. 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.



**Get Moving!!** Participating in regular, low-impact exercise is good for you and your baby. Talk to your provider to obtain guidelines on safe exercise during pregnancy.

**Ask your doctor before taking medications.** A list of pre-approved medications has been included in this packet. These may be taken as needed. It is important to consult your provider before taking other prescription, over-the-counter and herbal medications.

**See your provider as directed.** Prenatal care can help keep you and your baby healthy, spot problems if they occur and prevent difficulties during delivery.

**Consider getting a flu-shot.** The flu can be dangerous for moms-to-be. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests vaccinations for **all** pregnant women during flu season.

**Wear your seat-belt correctly.** Seat belts used properly protect you and your unborn baby during collisions. The American Academy of Family Physicians recommends that pregnant women use seat belts that have a lap belt and a shoulder strap (3-point restraint). Seat belts should never go across your belly. The lap belt should go under the belly and across the hips. The shoulder strap should go off to the side of the belly and between the breasts. If you are not driving, the back seat is the best place to sit.

**Ease the aches and pains.** Don't just accept discomfort as a necessary part of pregnancy. Hemorrhoids, heartburn, and leg cramps may be helped. Refer to pages 107 through 114 of the Purple Book.

## Pregnancy Don'ts

**Don't eat fish with lots of mercury.** Stay away from eating certain fish such as mackerel, shark, tilefish, tuna steaks, albacore tuna, and swordfish. These types of fish contain high levels of mercury, which may have neurological effects on your baby. You may have fresh water fish and shellfish if you aren't allergic. *Limit fish intake to no more than 12 ounces per week, and stick with fish like salmon.*

**Don't disregard foodborne illness.** Eat, cook, handle and clean food safely! Practice proper hand hygiene before, during and after meal preparation and consumption. Cook foods thoroughly to the proper temperature for the appropriate amount of time. Heat all lunchmeats to steam temperature. Make sure you follow food safety guidelines and comply with recalls. For both mother and baby, foodborne illness may cause serious health problems or even death.

**Don't use chemicals.** Products including herbicides, pesticides, pain, stains and some cleaning solutions may be harmful to your baby. If you must use these items, wear gloves, a mask and keep the room well-ventilated.



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**Don't clean or change a cat's litter box.** This may 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 baths; sit in 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 or yeast infection.

**Don't douche.** This may irritate the vagina, force air into the birth canal and increase risk for infection.

**Don't smoke tobacco, marijuana or vape.** Inform your provider if you are using any of these substances. Quitting is hard but you can do it and your provider can help! Smoking during pregnancy passes nicotine, THC and cancer-causing chemicals to your baby. It may also prevent the baby from receiving necessary nourishment and raises the risk of stillbirth and premature birth.

**Don't drink alcohol.** It is important to stop consuming alcohol (wine, liquor, and beer) while pregnant. Experts remain uncertain of the exact amount of alcohol that causes problems in the developing baby. Alcohol can quickly pass through the placenta and umbilical cord and affect the baby's developing brain and organs, which may cause birth defects, premature birth, brain damage, miscarriage, and stillbirth.

**Don't use illegal drugs.** Tell your doctor if you are using any illegal or illicit drugs. These include but are not limited to, cocaine, heroin, speed (amphetamines), barbiturates and LSD. These substances are very dangerous for you and your baby.

