

A Healthy Pregnancy

Get good medical care beginning early in your pregnancy. There are things you can do to take care of yourself and your baby.

Food and Drinks

- Eat balanced meals that include grain breads, cereals, fruits, vegetables, meat and milk. Avoid fried and high sugar foods.
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water each day.
- Try eating smaller meals more often.
- Avoid or limit food and drinks with caffeine to 1 to 2 cups each day. Caffeine is in chocolate, colas, teas and coffee.
- Limit your intake of artificial sweeteners, including diet sodas, to 2-3 servings each day. Nutrasweet and Equal (aspartame) and Splenda (sucralose) in small amounts are okay but do not use any saccharin (Sweet 'N Low).
- The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program is available to provide free nutritious food and health information for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and children. Contact the state or local agency to check for eligibility. In Ohio call 1-800-755-4769 or go to www.fns.usda.gov/wic to find the toll-free phone number for your state.

Weight Gain

Total weight gain depends on your pre-pregnant weight, eating habits, exercise and your metabolism. The average weight gain during pregnancy for a normal weight female is 25-35 pounds. You should gain 2 to 4 pounds in the first 3 months and about $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 pound per week after that. If you were under or over weight before pregnancy, ask your doctor or dietitian about how much weight you should gain.

If you are gaining weight too fast:

- **Limit** sweets and high fat foods. Choose low fat items, fruit or a small serving of frozen yogurt, sherbet, pudding or jell-o.
- Use very little butter, margarine, sour cream, mayonnaise or salad dressing. Try reduced calorie varieties.
- **Avoid** fried foods. Choose baked, broiled, grilled chicken, fish or turkey.

Medicine

- Take your prenatal vitamins each day.
- Check with your doctor or clinic before taking any medicines such as prescriptions, over the counter medicines or herbals.
- Take only medicines prescribed by your doctor.

Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

- Do not smoke and avoid being in the same room with people who are smoking.
- Do not drink alcohol or take drugs during your pregnancy.

Activity and Sleep

- Get plenty of rest. Try to get 8 hours of sleep.
- Rest throughout the day. It is best to lie on your left side.
- Exercise by walking, swimming or biking for 15-30 minutes each day.
- Learn and practice the exercises from your childbirth class.

Other

- Avoid having x-rays while you are pregnant.
- Avoid paints (except latex), pesticides, sprays and other strong chemicals.
- Do not clean a cat litter box. Animal feces can harm your baby.
- Wash hands well after touching raw meat. Cook meat well.
- Wear seat belts low over your hips.
- Buy well fitting support bras.

Talk

- Share good or bad feelings about your pregnancy, your body changes and having a baby with your partner, friends and family. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you are having problems coping.
- Write down questions to ask your doctor or nurse. If needed, ask for more information on breastfeeding, birth control to use after delivery or choosing a doctor for your baby.

Appointments and Classes

- Make an appointment as soon as you think you are pregnant to start prenatal care.
- Go to your regular prenatal check ups, even if you feel well. At the end of your pregnancy your check ups will be every 1-2 weeks.

- Go to classes to help prepare you for labor and delivery, breastfeeding and baby care. Take you partner or other support person with you.

Planning Ahead

- Check if you have insurance for pregnancy and baby benefits. Ask for an interpreter and financial help if needed.
- List phone numbers of people to call when labor begins. Arrange for a ride to the hospital.
- Get a baby car seat and install it in your car.
- Pack your suitcase. Put in clothes and other items to use at the hospital and that you and your baby will wear home.
- Plan for things you will need the first 6 weeks, such as baby items, diapers, clothes and easy to prepare foods for meals.
- Plan for someone to help you at home after the birth.
- Make arrangements for child care if needed.