

Client Information

TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER PREGNANCY

Congratulations – you're pregnant! It is important for you to choose a health care provider and get started with prenatal care early in your pregnancy. This paper provides some tips for a healthier pregnancy.

Dating your pregnancy:

Based on your last period, you are _____ weeks and your due date is _____.

Your provider will confirm your dates at your first pre-natal visit. The due date is 40 weeks from your last normal menstrual period. Babies born after 37 weeks of pregnancy are considered full-term, and it is normal to have a baby between the 37th and 42nd weeks of pregnancy.

First trimester	Up to 12 weeks
Second trimester	13 to 27 weeks
Third trimester	28 to 42 weeks

What you can do to stay healthier during your pregnancy:

- *Take a prenatal vitamin with folic acid.* Taking folic acid early in your pregnancy helps to prevent some problems with the brain and spine of your baby.
- *Eat a well-balanced diet.* Make sure you get enough calcium, protein, fruits and vegetables. Foods to avoid: raw meat, unpasteurized milk and cheese, deli meat, shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tilefish. Eating other fish is healthy, but avoid eating too much due to mercury, which can harm your baby's nervous system. For details on which fish are safe to eat, go to: www.womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/mom-to-be-tools/fish-facts.pdf
- *Stop smoking.* Smoking increases the risk of high blood pressure, problems with your placenta, low birthweight, preterm labor and heart defects in your baby.
- *Don't drink alcohol.* Alcohol increases the risk of miscarriage, preterm delivery and mental retardation in your baby.
- *Wear a seatbelt.*
- *Exercise.* You should get 30 minutes of exercise per day while pregnant. Avoid any exercise in which your abdomen might be hit or jolted (like contact sports). Walking is a great form of exercise.
- *Check your medication.* If you take any medication on a regular basis, check with your provider to see if this medicine is safe during pregnancy. Do not take any other medications (including herbs and over the counter medication) without checking with your provider. For instance, aspirin and ibuprofen are generally not recommended during pregnancy, but Tylenol is considered safe.

Tips for dealing with some common discomforts of pregnancy:

- *Fatigue.* Take naps or rest whenever possible.
- *Nausea/vomiting.* Eat small meals or snacks every two hours. Sip on fluids every hour. Ginger often helps with nausea (ginger ale, ginger snaps, etc.).
- *Constipation.* Eat small frequent meals. Increase your fiber intake – fruits and vegetables. Walk. Drink enough water to make your urine light yellow.
- *Breast tenderness.* Wear a supportive bra and keep in mind that breast tenderness usually goes away by the end of the first trimester.

Warning signs to report to your health care provider:

- Sharp one-sided pelvic pain that doesn't go away quickly
- Heavy bleeding or cramping
- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Unable to eat or drink anything for 24 hours
- Pain with urination

For more information, go to www.mymidwife.org/momstobe.cfm or www.marchofdimes.com.