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Staying Healthy During Pregnancy



Staying Healthy During PREGNANCY

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Staying healthy during pregnancy is especially important, not just for you, but for your baby as well. You will probably get lots of advice from well-meaning family members, friends, co-workers and even strangers. Eat this. Don't drink that. Exercise. Get plenty of rest. Don't smoke. There are lots of do's and don'ts to think about while you're pregnant.

Here are a few tips to help you stay healthy and have a healthy baby.

Get regular prenatal care. Your health care provider will check your weight and blood pressure on a regular basis, while also watching your baby's development. Certain medical conditions, such as high blood pressure or gestational diabetes, must be closely monitored. It will be important to have sufficient amounts of iron to help your baby's tissues and organs get oxygen and

folic acid to help prevent neural tube defects. Pregnant women also should get enough vitamin D, calcium, vitamin A and vitamin B₁₂.

"Eating for two" does not mean you can eat twice as much as you did before you got pregnant. Rather, the foods you eat provide the nutrients for both you and your baby. Most pregnant women need an additional 300 calories per day to support a baby's growth and development. That's why it's important to make smart food choices and eat well-balanced meals that include lean meats, fruits, vegetables, whole-grain breads and low-fat dairy products. If you have problems

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with nausea, try eating five or six small meals a day, rather than three large ones.

Drink plenty of fluids, but stay away from large amounts of caffeine, which have been associated with a higher rate of miscarriage. Becoming dehydrated can cause premature or early labor. Avoid drinking alcohol while pregnant, as this can damage a developing baby's nervous system, as well as cause growth retardation or facial abnormalities. Also stop smoking. Smoking is linked to stillbirth, prematurity, low birth weight, sudden infant death syndrome, asthma and other respiratory problems.

Check with your doctor or certified nurse-midwife about starting or continuing an exercise program. The U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services recommends that healthy pregnant women get at least two and a half hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week or about 30 minutes every day. Exercising regularly can help improve sleep, prevent excess weight gain, lower the risk of developing preeclampsia or gestational diabetes, reduce recovery time and ease pregnancy-related problems, such as back pain, constipation, varicose veins, swelling and exhaustion.

Over-the-counter or prescription medications may not be safe for a developing fetus. If you were taking a medication before you became pregnant, ask your health care provider if it is safe to continue. Have regular dental check-ups because some pregnant women may experience red, swollen gums that bleed

easily. During pregnancy, women should avoid exposure to environmental hazards including lead, mercury, arsenic, pesticides, solvents and secondhand smoke that could potentially lead to miscarriage or birth defects.

Healthy pregnancy habits should start early as early in the pregnancy as possible, or even before you get pregnant. For more information about staying healthy and safe during your pregnancy, talk with your doctor or visit the March of Dimes Web site at www.marchofdimes.com.

North Shore Medical Center offers advanced medical care by skilled professionals, who have the experience to handle routine deliveries and fully address any complications that may occur. NSMC has been delivering babies for a half century, and their services

have earned the highest quality ranking. The facilities at North Shore Medical Center are designed for the comfort of you and your family. Each member of our staff is trained to enhance the experience of giving birth. From prenatal educational classes to our Neonatal Intensive Care, from our obstetricians to nursing staff, all North Shore's services are focused on you and your baby.

North Shore Medical Center also features the only Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in Northern Miami-Dade county. Services include 24-hour coverage of certified neonatologists, perinatologists to treat high risk pregnancies, and pediatric surgeons.

For more information on maternity services or classes at North Shore Medical Center, please call 305-835-6000.