



# healthy PREGNANCY

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## you're pregnant NOW WHAT?

- **One of the important things** to do right away is schedule an appointment with a medical professional who takes care of pregnant women; an obstetrician, family doctor or certified nurse midwife.
- Eat a healthy diet, drink a minimum of eight glasses, approximately 64 oz of water per day and get at least eight to nine hours of sleep each night.
- Stop using anything that can hurt your baby, such as tobacco, alcohol, marijuana or other drugs. If you need help in stopping these habits, let your prenatal\* caregiver know. They will have tools that make it easier.

\* Prenatal refers to the time before birth.

## COMMON SYMPTOMS OF PREGNANCY:

- Some nausea and vomiting, also known as “morning sickness,” that usually subsides after about 12 weeks
- Fatigue and being more tired than normal
- Being more thirsty and hungry than normal
- Minor aches, pains and discomforts
- Headaches
- Bleeding gums when you brush or floss your teeth
- Heartburn or indigestion
- Being more emotional than normal

## WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR PRENATAL APPOINTMENTS:

You will be asked a lot of questions about your health and habits. Questions might include: general health habits (eating, exercise, and sleep), sexually transmitted infections, Group B Streptococcal infection in a prior pregnancy, and your immunizations records. You will also be asked about your health history. Many health problems or inherited conditions may require special observations during pregnancy. It is very important that you be completely honest, regarding any previous pregnancies, miscarriages, abortions, and surgeries on your cervix or uterus. This will help the medical staff give you and your baby the best care possible.

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*Make a list of questions to take to every appointment  
so you don't forget what to ask your doctor.*  
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- Your height, weight and blood pressure will be measured. If possible, your health care professional will also listen to your baby's heartbeat and measure how much he or she is growing.
- At one of the first appointments you may have a pelvic exam, a PAP test and screening for sexually transmitted infections or diseases. Some blood will be taken for other tests.
- If you aren't already taking prenatal vitamins, you will be asked to start right away. You may also be advised to take an additional folic acid supplement every day.
- Other tests are done at different times to make sure your baby is healthy and growing normally.
- An ultrasound is usually done in the first trimester and repeated at 18-20 weeks. Additional follow-up scans may be ordered by your physician as your pregnancy progresses.

#### TYPICAL APPOINTMENTS ARE SCHEDULED:

- *Once a month until you are about 28 weeks pregnant.*
- *Twice a month until 36 weeks.*
- *Weekly after 36 weeks until your baby is born.*

## CALL YOUR PRENATAL CAREGIVER RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You experience pelvic cramping, spotting, bleeding or abnormal vaginal discharge.
- You experience fever, chills or stomach pain.
- You're feeling more tired than normal, are short of breath or feel dizzy or weak.
- You're feeling extremely sad, hopeless or have thoughts of hurting yourself or your baby.
- You experience blurred vision, excessive thirst or urination.
- You experience sudden, excessive swelling in your hands, face or feet.



## WHAT SHOULD I EAT?

Every day eat nutritious foods to take care of you and your baby.

- Fresh fruits and vegetables—5 to 9 servings
- Protein (such as chicken, turkey, pork, lean beef, eggs, nuts, beans and tofu)—2 to 3 servings
- Whole-grain cereals, breads and brown rice—8 servings
- Dairy products like milk, yogurt and cheese—3 to 4 servings
- Healthy oils like olive and canola, or those found in foods with omega-3 fatty acids. Ask your health care professional about eating fish during pregnancy.
- Limit processed foods such as white bread or rice, boxed or frozen meals, fast and fried foods, and sugary items like juice, soda and candy.
- Be careful not to overeat. You only need about 300 additional calories per day to nourish your baby; that is about a glass of milk and a sandwich.

### HEALTHIER FAST-FOOD CHOICES:

- *Grilled chicken instead of breaded or fried*
- *Fruit instead of french fries*
- *Fruit smoothie or water instead of a soda*
- *Condiments on the side (at your request)*

## DURING PREGNANCY AVOID:

- *Hot tubs*
- *Cat litter boxes*
- *Raw and undercooked meats and eggs*
- *Excessive Caffeine intake (no more than 2 cups a day) including coffee, tea, and soft drinks*
- *Over-the-counter medication, unless cleared by a medical professional*
- *Gases and fumes like exhaust, paints, cleaning supplies*
- *X-rays, unless ordered by a medical professional*
- *Avoid direct contact with persons who have a respiratory infection – later in pregnancy it is not unusual to have more shortness of breath because the lungs are being compressed by the enlarging uterus*



## HOW MUCH WEIGHT SHOULD I GAIN?

Ask your caregiver, because this will be different for every woman. Based on your weight at the beginning of pregnancy and if you are carrying one baby:

IF YOU ARE:	YOU SHOULD GAIN:
normal weight	25-35 lbs.
underweight	28-40 lbs.
overweight	15-25 lbs.

## SHOULD I EXERCISE?

- Absolutely—and every day if possible. Moderate exercise during pregnancy is safe for the baby and beneficial to you.
- Pregnancy is not the time to start a strenuous program, but aim for 30 minutes of walking, stationary bicycling or swimming every day, or a class designed specifically for pregnant moms.
- Talk with your caregiver about specific recommendations if you like to lift weights for exercise.





## HOW WILL I AFFORD THIS?

- Below are some national assistance programs for health insurance, food and other support available to you and your baby:

Every state in the United States has a program to assist women in pregnancy. Call **800-311-BABY** (800-311-2229) to be connected with a health department in your area.

Medicaid can assist with medical costs: [www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov)

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) can be obtained from the U.S. Department of Agriculture: [www.fns.usda.gov/snap](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap)

Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) has a variety of support programs: [www.fns.usda.gov/wic](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic)

Help with your baby's medical costs can be sought through your state's health insurance program for children: 877-KIDS-NOW (877-543-7669) [www.insurekidsnow.gov](http://www.insurekidsnow.gov)

- If you are considering the idea of adoption, ask your pregnancy resource center or a licensed adoption professional for more information about making an adoption plan for your baby and what support is available to you.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Whether you choose to parent or find a loving adoptive home for your baby, it's never too late to start taking care of yourself and your baby. Taking care of yourself will give your baby the best possible start in life, and you will enjoy a healthier pregnancy.



## Sources:

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(all Web addresses as of 3/20)



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PROGRAM

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