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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. Should I take prenatal vitamins?

- Except for iron, folic acid, and possibly calcium, a well-rounded diet should supply all of the nutrients you need during your pregnancy. A multivitamin or mineral supplement may be required to get enough of these nutrients. Take prenatal vitamins as directed. Large doses of anything, even a good thing, can be harmful. Don't take more than the RDA for any vitamin or mineral - especially vitamin A without getting your doctor's approval. Very high levels of vitamin A have been linked with severe birth defects. Your prenatal multivitamin should contain no more than 5,000 IU of vitamin A. If you are already taking a multivitamin, let your doctor know.
- If your prenatal vitamin makes you sick, try taking it at a different time of day, or with a meal. Try over-the-counter vitamins with at least 400 micrograms of folic acid in them. If you are still unable to tolerate the vitamins because of nausea, please call us during office hours and we will prescribe a vitamin with folic acid that may also improve nausea.

### 2. What can I do (take) for...

- Morning sickness (may also be noon or night)
  - Try small, frequent feedings especially high carbohydrate snacks. It is important to keep yourself hydrated. Even if you are having trouble keeping foods down, constantly sip fluids (such as Gatorade, Ginger Ale or juices). You may also try Vitamin B6 50 mg twice a day with or without one-half Unisom pill (OTC). You may try ginger capsules 250 mg four times a day. You may also try wearing sea bands, (anti-motion sickness wrist bands available at drug or marine supply stores). If you are unable to keep any type of foods or liquids down for over 12 hours or if you have lost greater than five pounds please call us.
- Cold or sinus congestion.
  - Saline only nasal spray, Vicks Vapor Rub, and Tylenol, antihistamines and decongestants on the medication sheet. If your symptoms continue see your primary care doctor.
- Sore throat or cough.
  - Over-the-counter cough drops, plain Robitussin Cough DM and Tylenol.
- Headache or muscle ache.
  - Tylenol, Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin). (No Ibuprofen before 13 weeks or after 28 weeks)
- Constipation.
  - Increase fiber and water intake. Increase fruit and vegetable intake and try raisins or prunes. May take Metamucil, Fibercon, Psyllium or Colace (stool softener). Next try small amounts of laxatives such as Senokot, Ducolax, or milk of magnesia.
- Indigestion/heartburn.
  - Eat small, frequent meals. Avoid eating large meals before bedtime. Avoid spicy/fried foods. May try Mylanta, Maalox, TUMS and Roloids, Zantac 75-150 mg once or twice a day, Tagamet or Pepcid AC according to package directions.
- Diarrhea.
  - Avoid spicy, fried foods. Drink plenty of clear liquids. May take Imodium AD, Metamucil, or Kaopectate according to package instructions
- Yeast infection.
  - Monistat, Gyne-Lotrimin or Mycelex 7 (all OTC) once you are finished your twelfth week of pregnancy. In the first trimester try warm Sitz baths, patting the vulva dry and using a hair dryer to keep the area dry for symptomatic relief, Zinc Oxide or Aquaphor ointment may be applied externally as needed for relief of irritation.

**See the "Pregnancy Medication List" for specific information.**

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**3. What can I do for hemorrhoids?**

- Avoid constipation. You can use Preparation H, Anusol, Anusol HC, Tucks pads or Witch Hazel on cotton balls.

**4. What can I do for leg cramps?**

- Increase milk and other dairy products. Decrease carbonated drinks. Increase Potassium by drinking Gatorade, orange juice or eating bananas. Do not stretch in bed. Calcium supplement - 500-600 mg once a day.

**5. What can I do for swollen ankles, feet and legs?**

- It is very common for pregnant women to retain fluid. Many women will find that their feet and ankles will be most swollen at the end of the day and that their hands and face will be more swollen in the morning when they get out of bed. Try elevating your feet and lying on your left side as much as possible during the day. Increase fluid consumption and decrease salt intake to try to flush the salts out of your body. You can also try maternity support stockings. If you have a sudden increase in the amount of fluid retention that doesn't seem to improve significantly with bed rest and the above recommendations, please call the office.

**6. What can I do for varicose veins?**

- Elevate feet as much as possible during the day. Wear maternity support stockings if you will be on your feet for long periods of time. Varicose veins, which are superficial veins in the legs that are swollen, DO NOT increase your risks for a deep vein blood clot.

**7. I had some bleeding after my vaginal exam and pap smear in the office**

- It is not unusual to have a small amount of bleeding after an internal examination. This is in no way harmful to the baby or yourself. The bleeding should get darker in color and less in amount over the 12 hours following the exam. If it is significantly increasing in amount and becoming brighter red, please notify us.

**8. Can I have intercourse?**

- There is no harm to the baby or you with sexual activity during a pregnancy unless you think that you have broken your water or you have a pregnancy complication (such as low placenta or pre-term labor) that has been diagnosed by your physician and you have been specifically advised to avoid intercourse.

**9. I had some bleeding after intercourse.**

- A small amount of spotting is o.k. and not a sign for alarm. However, do not have intercourse again until you have not bled for 24 hours. If the bleeding continues and if it is bright red, please call the office during office hours.

**10. When should vaginal bleeding warrant an emergency call to the physician?**

- If you have a persistent red flow of blood at any time after 20 weeks gestation, please call the office or the answering service. Before 20 weeks, please wait and call during office hours unless you are soaking pads every two hours or more frequently. Then please call the answering service if the office is not open.

**11. I haven't felt the baby move a lot today.**

- Many women do not feel fetal movement until approximately 20 weeks gestation and will not feel it on a regular, daily basis until after 26 weeks gestation. However, after that time, you should feel your baby move multiple times every day. If the movement seems much less than what you are used to as being normal, we recommend that you lie on your left side and drink a sweet, cold drink. Place your hand on the uterus and count the movements that you feel over the next hour. You should feel the baby move at least six times. If you are more than 26 weeks or unable to get the six movements as described above, please call the office or answering service right away day, night or weekend.

**12. I haven't heard about the results of my blood test yet.**

- No news is good news. We always call you if any test result is abnormal. You may request results by calling the office test result line

**13. Can I use Splenda, Nutri-Sweet or caffeine?**

- Yes, as long as they are used in moderation (no more than two to three drinks containing those products a day).

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**14. Can I use sun-less tanning lotion?**

- We recommend that you don't because we aren't certain of its safety in pregnancy.

**15. Can I use a tanning bed?**

- We recommend against it during pregnancy.

**16. Can I tan at the beach?**

- You may tan at the beach, however, pregnant women tend to burn more easily or get increased dark, splotchy pigment changes and get dehydrated very easily. Therefore, we urge you to use a sunscreen at all times and drink plenty of liquids when your sun exposure is prolonged.

**17. Can I use a hot tub?**

- Yes, for up to 15 minutes at 98 degrees or less.

**18. Can I paint the nursery?**

- At this time there are no harmful effects that are known from paint fumes. If you do paint, we recommend that you use a latex paint in a well ventilated room.

**19. Can my house be exterminated?**

- Yes, however, ask for an odorless spray. Do not walk barefoot on freshly sprayed carpets and have someone return to the house before you do and air out the house well.

**20. Can I change the cat litter?**

- It is desirable if someone other than you change the cat litter during pregnancy. If there is no one but yourself available to change the cat litter, we recommend that you wear plastic gloves and wash your hands well afterward. Make sure feces are removed daily. However, you do not have to be afraid to cuddle or pet your kitten.

**21. Can I exercise during pregnancy?**

- It is fine to exercise during pregnancy and, in fact, we strongly encourage it. However, we recommend that you exercise your body to no more than a "moderate amount." Do not exercise to the point that you are so breathless that you are huffing and panting, or that your muscles feel achy during or after the exercise. There is no specific recommendation against abdominal muscle exercising as long as it does not cause significant discomfort. Do not do any high impact or jarring exercises.

**22. Are there any physical activities I should avoid?**

- After 14 weeks, we recommend that you avoid physical activities where there is chance for significant injury such as skiing, football, or karate. After 20 weeks, we recommend that you avoid physical activities that loss of balance could result in injury such as bicycle riding and climbing ladders.

**23. Can I travel during pregnancy?**

- The ideal time to travel long distances (greater than two hours away) is between 14 and 28 weeks. Travel at any time during pregnancy does not pose a risk to the pregnancy; however, you need to be prepared to obtain care where ever you are should a problem arise. We recommend you take this into consideration when making any travel plans.

**24. What should I do when I pass my mucous plug**

- Call if you pass your mucous plug BEFORE 35 weeks. After 35 weeks, it is not uncommon to pass the mucous plug. It might still be several weeks before you go into labor. There is no need to call the doctor if you are after 35 weeks.

**25. What does it feel like to break my water and what should I do?**

- If you have broken your water, you will have a continuous or frequent leakage of fluid. It might be a small or a large amount. If you are unsure if you have broken your water, change your underwear and if a large or small amount of fluid continues to trickle out of you, please let us know so we can evaluate you. The fluid will have essentially no odor to it and will either be clear like water with possibly small, white flecks in it or a dark green or brown colored fluid.

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## **26. Can I lie on my back?**

- Lying flat on your back in the third trimester (28 weeks and beyond) may decrease the circulation of blood to your heart and uterus and make you feel light-headed. For this reason, we encourage you not to lie flat on your back for long periods of time. However, as long as you are not feeling light-headed, there is no harm in lying on your back for short periods of time and there is no harm if you wake up and find that you have rolled onto your back in your sleep.

## **27. Can I take herbs during pregnancy?**

- The use of any herbs, or herbal supplements is of no proven benefit, and may possibly be harmful to the pregnancy. If you feel you need to use something for a specific reason, please consult one of our doctors.

## **28. Can I dye my hair?**

- There are no known adverse effects. Try not to use before 20 weeks. Probably OK in third trimester.

## **29. Are there any foods that I should avoid?**

- Meats should be thoroughly cooked (red meats at least medium). Because of concern of a listeria infection during pregnancy, hot dogs and lunch meats should be heated so the center is steaming. Avoid unpasteurized cheeses such as brie, feta and blue veined cheese. While seafood is healthy for you, the mercury content in certain fish or excessive amounts of seafood can be dangerous for a fetal or child's developing brain. See [www.epa.gov/mercury/advisories.html](http://www.epa.gov/mercury/advisories.html) and [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Protect\\_Your\\_Baby/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Protect_Your_Baby/index.asp) for further information on listeria and seafood consumption in pregnant women.

## **30. Can I eat fish and shellfish?**

- Do not eat (because they may contain high levels of mercury):
  - Shark
  - Swordfish
  - King Mackerel
  - Tilefish
- Eat up to 12 ounces (2 average meals) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury or 6 oz. of tuna per week.
- Five of the most commonly eaten fish that are low in mercury are shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, Pollock, and catfish.
- Check local advisories about the safety of fish caught by family and friends in your local lakes, rivers, and coastal areas.
  - For Maryland locally caught fish visit the MDE Fish Consumption Advisory website and the Maryland Fish Consumption Guidelines.

## **31. Where can I get tips on healthy eating?**

- The My Pyramid for Pregnancy and Breastfeeding web site can be accessed from the [www. MyPyramid.gov](http://www.MyPyramid.gov) home page. Pregnant and breastfeeding women visiting the site can obtain a meal plan personalized for their age, size, and activity level. You can also find tips on eating a balanced diet, healthy weight gain, food safety, physical activity, and use of dietary supplements.

## **How do I know if my hospital registration form was received?**

Call (443) 481-6906

**Additional information on many of these questions is available in the book you received" Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond".**

**In the event of labor, or an after-hours emergency, we try to answer calls within 20 minutes of receipt. If you don't hear from the doctor on call, please call again.**