



PREGNANCY FACT SHEET

Once you know you are pregnant, it is more important than ever to take care of yourself both physically and emotionally. You can boost your chances of having a problem-free or "healthy" pregnancy and a healthy baby by following a few simple guidelines.

Early pregnancy symptoms

- Missing a period
- Tender, swollen breasts (early in pregnancy hormonal changes might make your breasts tender, sensitive or sore)
- Nausea with or without vomiting
- Food aversions or cravings
- Increased urination
- Fatigue



What is meant by "healthy pregnancy"?

- A pregnancy that lasts the full nine months
- A pregnancy that results in a healthy baby (or babies) weighing at least 2.5kgs who has no birth defects
- A pregnancy in which the mother feels well the whole nine months other than the normal discomforts such as morning sickness.

What outcomes do we worry about for the baby?

- Low birth weight (a baby born weighing less than 2.5kgs)

- Is the most common problem and can be caused by the baby being born too early, poor nutrition, birth defects, genetic conditions, mother's health problems (high blood pressure, hazards in the environment including lead or tobacco smoke, and multiple births (twins, triplets, etc.)
- Baby growing too slowly
- Generally caused by the mother smoking during pregnancy (smoke cuts down on the baby's supply of oxygen and food).

How can a woman strive for / ensure a healthy pregnancy

Get early prenatal care

Choose a care-giver (whether you are looking for a gynaecologist or a mid-wife). Once you have decided it is important to schedule your first prenatal visit where you will be screened for certain conditions. Let your care-giver know if you are taking medication or have any medical concerns and ensure you attend all your sessions.

Take prenatal vitamins

- Most prenatal supplements contain more folic acid and iron than you will find in a standard multivitamin
- Get enough folic acid before conception and during early pregnancy
 - Ensure you are getting enough iron

- Avoid taking too much of certain vitamins which can actually be harmful

Stop smoking Stop drinking alcohol and/ or using illegal drugs

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is one of the most common birth defects.



Talk to your health care provider about the possible risk of lead poisoning. If lead gets into your body, it could harm you and your unborn baby.

Get help with causes of stress.

Take a childbirth class to learn more about having a healthy birth and a healthy baby.



Always wash your hands before making meals or eating.

Exercise during pregnancy

Pregnancy does not mean giving up your active lifestyle, consult with your care-giver as maintaining a regular exercise



routine throughout your pregnancy can help you stay healthy and feel your best. If you were physically active before your pregnancy, you should be able to continue your activity in moderation.

If you have a medical problem, such as; asthma, heart disease, or diabetes, exercise may not be advisable. Exercise may also be harmful if you have a pregnancy-related condition such as: bleeding or spotting, low placenta, threatened or recurrent miscarriage, previous premature births or history of early labour and weak cervix.

Pay attention to pregnancy weight gain

It is healthy to gain some weight during pregnancy however, remember that the average pregnant woman only needs about 300 healthy calories more per day.



Eat healthily during pregnancy
Good nutrition during pregnancy,

and enough of it, is very important for your baby to grow and develop.

Foods recommended to keep you and your baby healthy

- Eat a variety of foods to get all the nutrients you need (use fats and sweets sparingly)
- Choose foods which are high in fibre (whole-grain breads, cereals, pasta and rice, as well as fruits and vegetables)
- Consume enough vitamins and minerals in your daily diet
- Eat and drink at least four servings of dairy products and calcium-rich foods a day
- Eat at least three servings of iron-rich foods (lean meats, spinach, beans, and breakfast cereals)
- Choose at least one source of Vitamin A (carrots, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, spinach etc.)
- Consume at least one good source of Vitamin C every day (oranges, grapefruit etc.)
- Consume at least one good source of folic acid every day (green leafy

vegetables, legumes etc.)

- Take in plenty of protein

Foods to avoid while pregnant

- Avoid undercooked eggs and meat, unpasteurised dairy products, juices, raw foods, sea foods and cold deli meats which may cause ingesting bacteria that could harm your baby
- Avoid certain fish that may contain high levels of mercury or other contaminants



References

Pregnancy and Birth - Conclusion - Family, Childbirth, and Journal - JRank Articles <http://family.jrank.org/pages/1323/Pregnancy-Birth-Conclusion.html#ixzz3D0Zgf9cG>

<http://www.webmd.com/baby/guide/healthy-weight-gain>