

### **If I have a positive home pregnancy test, am I pregnant?**

Yes! At-home pregnancy tests yield accurate positive results, but inaccurate negative results if directions on pregnancy test are not followed correctly. If you think you've had a false negative test, the best way to confirm your results is through a blood test. If you find out you are pregnant, you should schedule your first appointment 6-12 weeks from the first day of your last period. If you have bleeding or other concerns, it's best to see your midwife sooner.

### **What if I have spotting during early pregnancy?**

Many women who spot during early pregnancy assume they have had a miscarriage, but that isn't always the case. In fact, approximately 30 percent of women will spot in the first trimester and go on to have a healthy pregnancy. If you do notice spotting, notify your midwife just in case.

### **Should I measure my pregnancy by weeks or months?**

Measuring your pregnancy by weeks is more accurate than months. Why? Nine months can often be about 39 weeks when midwives consider 40 weeks to be a full-term pregnancy. Your first trimester ends around 13 weeks and the second at 28 weeks.

### **When will I feel my baby move?**

Your baby's first movements (called "fetal quickening") will usually occur between 18 and 22 weeks, though some women feel movement prior. Most women describe these movements as "flutters" or "bubbles."

### **How much weight should I gain during pregnancy?**

Most midwives suggest gaining 20 to 30 pounds during a single-baby pregnancy, depending on your pre-pregnancy weight it may be more or less. Broken down, that's about 300 extra calories a day you should be adding to your diet (that is about the size of half a PB&J sandwich). While it may be tempting to load up on fast food and ice cream, it's important that these extra calories come from healthy foods.

## **What can I eat during pregnancy?**

We know that morning sickness makes eating and drinking challenging – but trust us, a good diet can help you feel so much better, from the inside out. It's important to stay hydrated, so try to boost the amount of water you drink each day. Try and eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day. They're a good source of vitamins, minerals and fiber, and you can eat them fresh, frozen, from a tin, dried or juiced - whichever way you like them.

Every day, try to include 3-4 portions of carbohydrates. Things like bread, cereal, noodles, pasta, rice and potatoes. Even better, go for wholegrain or whole wheat varieties.

Making sure you're getting enough dairy and Vitamin D means your wee baby's bones will harden as they develop. Dairy contains calcium and is found in foods like yogurt, milk and hard cheese. You'll find some great ideas and options for getting your daily dairy here.

You can't actually get enough Vitamin D from food alone, and a lot of it comes from sunshine. Since we don't have much sun year round, it's best to take supplements all year round while you're pregnant.

If you want to find out more about what you can and can't eat during pregnancy, your midwife will also be able to talk you through the best ways to fit healthy food into your diet.

## **How do I know if I can have a vaginal birth?**

Knowing whether you'll have a vaginal or C-section delivery with your first baby is very hard to predict. Oftentimes you and your midwife/doctor won't know until you go into labor. In the U.S. the C-section rate is about 30 percent, but it's also good to ask your midwife/doctor what his or her individual rate is.

## **What should I expect in my first appointment?**

When a pregnant woman comes to a check-up for the first time, she can expect to have a lengthy appointment. It's likely to include a medical history review, a blood and urine test, pap smear, and a general health check to make sure that the woman has no problems with her overall health.

## **Can I continue to work out?**

Of course, it is vital for a pregnant woman to stay active and fit. Exercising helps a woman relieve some of her discomforts and helps her get energized. Usually, it's safe to do yoga, walking, tai chi, aqua aerobics, and possibly any exercises you were doing previously after consulting with your midwife. Contact sports and activities with shaking or jumping movements aren't recommended.

### **How can I prevent or relieve heartburn?**

Heartburn is also common for pregnant women. Certain tricks can be used to prevent or relieve this unpleasant condition, and most work by reducing the acid flow. A woman can eat smaller and more frequent meals, drink ginger root tea once in a while, take short walks after meals, wear loose clothes, and keep her chest and head elevated while sleeping.

### **How can I relieve constipation?**

About half of pregnant women frequently suffer from constipation. To prevent this unpleasant problem, the woman should drink plenty of water and fruit juices every day, eat high-fiber foods (such as cereals, fruits, and veggies), and exercise regularly. It's better not to drink soda, tea, or coffee, because they contribute to dehydration.

### **Will I give my baby an allergy if I eat peanut butter?**

Some pregnant women avoid eating peanut butter because they don't want to cause an allergy in their future baby. However, this risk exists only if the future mother or father has any food allergies, eczema, hay fever, or asthma. If neither of the parents has these conditions, peanut butter, most likely, won't harm the child.

### **Can I swim in a pool?**

In fact, swimming and aqua-aerobics can be very useful activities for pregnant women, because they help relieve the tension on the back and other joints. For this reason, pregnant women aren't forbidden from swimming, but it's better to take caution and avoid swimming in a pool when chlorine has just been added to it.

**\*DO NOT GO IN WATER ABOVE YOUR BODY TEMPERATURE\***

### **Is it unsafe to sleep on my back?**

Sleeping on your back is not unsafe but can be very uncomfortable in the second or third trimester because the uterus and the baby are growing and their increasing weight can press on a major blood vessel causing shortness of breath. It's better for pregnant women to sleep on the side.

### **Is it safe to be intimate during pregnancy?**

It's an important question because most women don't want their intimate life to stop while they're pregnant. And, in fact, they don't have to stop it at all.

Despite common assumptions that intimate relations during pregnancy can cause miscarriage or hurt the baby in some way. In most cases, it's perfectly safe. There are very few (and particular) instances where a midwife may advise a woman from engaging in intimate contact with her partner until the pregnancy is over.

### **How much caffeine should I have during pregnancy?**

It's best to cut back, as caffeine can affect the birth weight of your baby. Generally, a cup of tea or coffee a day is fine. We know it's hard but cut out fizzy drinks because the caffeine and sugar levels can be really high.

### **Can I smoke during pregnancy?**

It's not advisable to smoke while you're pregnant. Do not let anyone else smoke around you, or in rooms where you and your baby will be. Smoking can cause pregnancy and labor complications, such as your baby being born too early or weighing less than normal. A baby with a low birth weight is more likely to pick up infections, have breathing difficulties and other health problems throughout their childhood. Giving up smoking is the best thing you, your partner and family can do for you and your baby. As soon as you stop, you reduce the risk of miscarriage or stillbirth, and risks to your baby such as cot death.

### **What can I do for sore back and hips?**

As your baby grows inside you it puts a little bit more strain on your body, and that can lead to a sore back and hips in the final months of pregnancy. Moving around as much as possible helps and, if you can, a bit of swimming and stretches (like yoga) can also help relieve aches and pains. But if you get really sore, speak with your midwife, as there might be extra support available to you.

### **When will I feel the baby kick?**

Most moms feel the first fidgets of their wee one - known as 'quickening' - between weeks 18 and 22 of their pregnancy, but it does vary. After about 24 weeks, you'll get to know your own baby's pattern of movements. Remember, you can talk to your midwife about how to count your baby's movements and if you are concerned your baby isn't moving like you come to expect, call your prenatal office. And you'll probably start to feel your bond with your baby growing as you get use to their movements.