

Pregnancy Dos & Don'ts

Good Nutrition

DO...eat a variety of healthy foods. Choose fruits, vegetables, whole grains, calcium rich foods, and food in low saturated fat. Drink plenty of fluids, especially water. Get all the nutrients you need each day, including iron. Getting enough iron prevents you from getting anemia which is linked to preterm birth and low birth weight. Eating a variety of healthy foods will help you get the nutrients your baby needs. Wash your fruits and vegetables before eating. It is also important to take prenatal vitamins, which are covered by CMDP.

Don't eat uncooked or undercooked meats and fish. Always handle, clean, cook, eat and store foods properly

Early Delivery

New mothers cannot wait to see their baby. Even though it is exciting, a full term birth is very important so that both you and your baby are delivered healthy. Full term is 39 to 40 weeks, from the time you first became pregnant. The baby's lungs and brain are still developing during weeks 37 and 38. The baby's body also gains fat during this time. This helps the baby keep a healthy body temperature.

If babies are born before 39 weeks they are more likely to have problems breathing and feeding, and have trouble hearing, seeing, thinking and learning. They also may be very sick right after birth. They might have to stay in the hospital a lot longer. Women who carry their baby at least 39 weeks also have less postpartum depression. You and your baby will be healthier and able to enjoy each other.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

DON'T...get a sexually transmitted infection (STI) while you are pregnant. STIs are infections you can get by having sexual contact with someone who already has an infection. You can't tell if a person is infected because many STIs have no symptoms. But STIs can still be passed from person to person even if there are no signs of infections. One of the most common STI is chlamydia. Screening tests can help find STIs, so they can be treated. STIs are dangerous to women, who often have more severe health problems from STIs than men. Untreated STIs can cause health problems such as cancer, pelvic inflammatory disease, and infertility. If you are pregnant and have a STI, it can cause health problems for the baby. Having an STI also can put you at greater risk of getting HIV infection. You can take steps to lower your risk of getting an STI. Talk to your doctor about abstinence and safe sex.

DO this! DON'T do that! Pregnant women are bombarded with DOs and DON'Ts. It's tough to keep it all straight. Here are some simple DOs and DON'Ts to help you stay healthy during your pregnancy.

DO...get early and regular prenatal care. Your doctor will check to make sure you and your baby are healthy at each visit. If there are any problems, early action will help you and your baby.

DO...STAY away from chemicals like insecticides, solvents, LEAD, mercury, and paint. Many of these items can be found in household cleaners and paint and not all have warnings on their labels. Additionally, DON'T clean the litter box. You could put yourself at risk for toxoplasmosis, an infection that is very harmful to the fetus.

Comprehensive Medical & Dental Program (CMDP) pays for all tests

HIV Testing

All pregnant teens should be tested for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) by their doctor as early as possible. A blood test is done to check for HIV. It can take a few days to get the results of the HIV test. You do not need permission from an adult for HIV testing if you are 13 and above. Permission from your legal guardian is required if you are 12 and under. Pregnant teens must be offered HIV testing at their prenatal visits with their OB/GYN doctor. Talk to your doctor about getting tested for HIV. A mother who knows early that she is HIV infected has more time to make important decisions. This includes deciding on ways to protect her health and avoid mother-to-child passing of HIV. She can also take steps to prevent passing HIV to her partner. Counseling is available for all members that test HIV positive.

Substance Abuse

DON'T...smoke tobacco. Quitting is hard, but you can do it! Smoking during pregnancy passes nicotine and cancer-causing drugs to your baby. Smoking also keeps your baby from getting needed nourishment and raises the risk of miscarriage, preterm birth and infant death.

DON'T...drink alcohol. There is no known safe amount of alcohol a woman can drink while pregnant. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can harm the baby.

DON'T...use street drugs. Tell your doctor if you are using drugs. Marijuana, cocaine, heroin, speed, barbiturates, LSD, and Meth are very dangerous for you and your baby.

Postpartum Depression

Many women have the “baby blues” for a few days to a week after childbirth. The symptoms are not as severe and do not need treatment.

However, if the symptoms last longer and more severe, it is called postpartum depression. It can begin anytime the first year after childbirth. If you have postpartum depression, some of the symptoms may include thoughts of hurting the baby, hurting yourself, and not having any interest in the baby.

Postpartum depression needs to be treated by a doctor. Call your doctor if the “baby blues” don’t go away after two weeks or if the symptoms get more intense. Your doctor will ask you questions to test for depression. Your doctor can also refer you to a mental health professional who specializes in treating depression.

It is important to go to all of your appointments.

References:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women’s Health. (2012). Prenatal care. Washington, DC: Retrieved from www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/prenatal-care.pdf

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women’s Health. (2012). Pregnancy do’s and don’ts. Washington, DC: Retrieved from www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/pregnancy-dos-donts.pdf

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women’s Health. (2012). Depression during and after pregnancy. Washington, DC. Retrieved from www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/depression-pregnancy.pdf

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program • Under Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI & VII), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) of 2008; the Department prohibits discrimination in admissions, programs, services, activities, or employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetics and retaliation. The Department must make a reasonable accommodation to allow a person with a disability to take part in a program, service or activity. For example, this means if necessary, the Department must provide sign language interpreters for people who are deaf, a wheelchair accessible location, or enlarged print materials. It also means that the Department will take any other reasonable action that allows you to take part in and understand a program or activity, including making reasonable changes to an activity. If you believe that you will not be able to understand or take part in a program or activity because of your disability, please let us know of your disability needs in advance if at all possible. To request this document in alternative format or for further information about this policy, contact your local office; TTY/TDD Services: 7-1-1. • Free language assistance for department services is available upon request.