



healthy PREGNANCY

by Vicki L. Dihle, PA-C



you're pregnant NOW WHAT?

- The single most important thing 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.
- Begin taking prenatal* vitamins and minerals. Most women don't get enough calcium, folic acid and iron in their diets, so supplements are very important for you and your baby.
- Eat a healthy diet, drink a minimum of eight glasses 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 because she 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 or teary than normal

WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR PRENATAL APPOINTMENTS:

You will be asked a lot of questions about your health and habits, including eating, exercise, and sleep habits. You will also be asked about your health history. Certain health problems, or inherited conditions that run in your family, may require special observations during pregnancy. It is very important that you be completely honest, especially about previous pregnancies, miscarriages, abortions, or any surgery on your cervix or uterus. This will help the medical staff give you and your baby the best care.

.....

Write your questions in a notebook and take it to every appointment so you don't forget what to ask your doctor.

.....

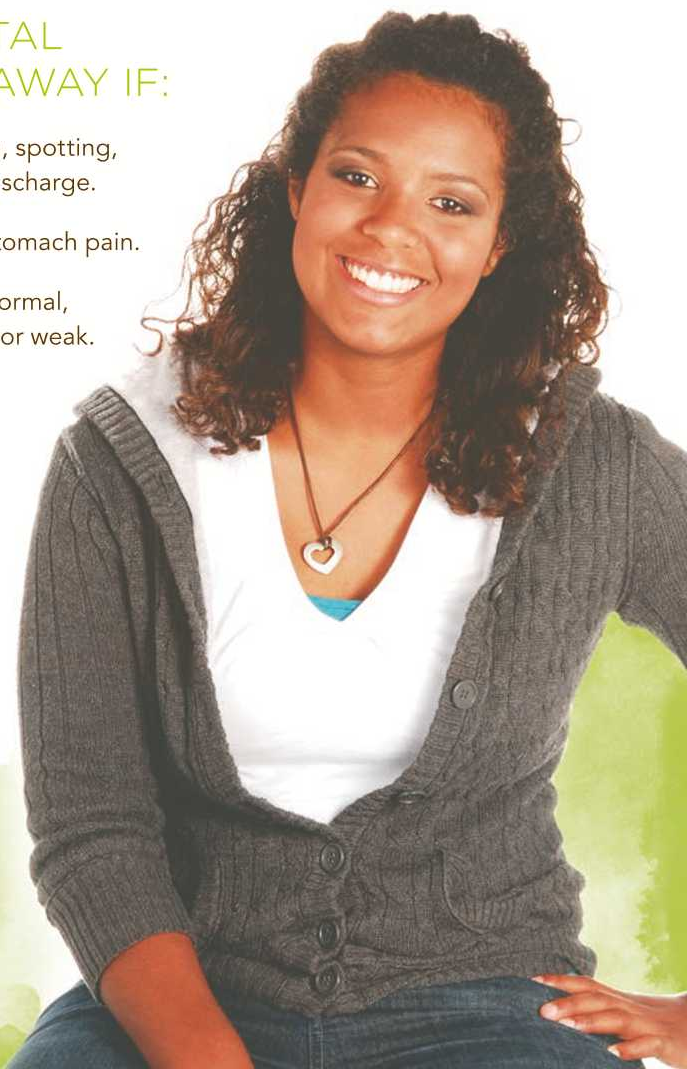
- Your height, weight and blood pressure will be measured. If possible, your health care professional will also listen to your baby's heartbeat and measure how much he or she is growing.
- At one of the first appointments you may have a pelvic exam, a PAP test and screening for sexually transmitted infections 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 improve your chances of having a healthy 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*
- *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*

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:

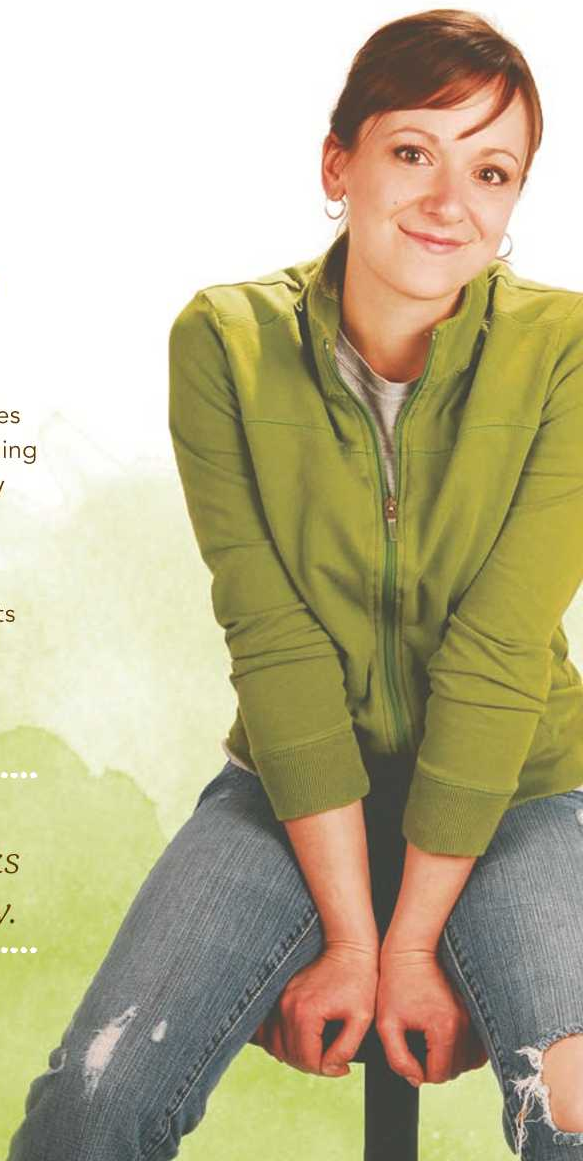
IF YOU ARE:	YOU SHOULD GAIN:
normal weight	25-35 lbs.
underweight	28-40 lbs.
overweight	15-25 lbs.



SHOULD I EXERCISE?

- Absolutely—and every day if possible. Moderate exercise during pregnancy will not cause a miscarriage.
- 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.

Bond with your baby by playing soft music, singing, reading books out loud and talking to your baby.



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](tel: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

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

Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) has a variety of support programs: 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

- If you are considering the idea of adoption, ask your pregnancy counselor 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, taking good care of yourself will give your baby the best possible start in life, and you will enjoy a healthier pregnancy. It's never too late to start taking care of yourself—and your baby.



Sources:

- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, "Especially for Teens: Having a Baby," acog.org/-/media/For-Patients/faq103.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20150112T1953243786
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Prenatal Care," womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/prenatal-care.html?from=AtoZ
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "You're Pregnant: Now What?" womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/you-are-pregnant/index.html
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, "MyPyramid for Pregnancy & Breastfeeding," choosemyplate.gov/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html
- KidsHealth by Nemours, "Exercising During Pregnancy," kidshealth.org/en/parents/exercising-pregnancy.html
- FamilyDoctor.org, "Exercise During Pregnancy: What You Can Do for a Healthy Pregnancy," familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/pregnancy-newborns/your-body/exercise-during-pregnancy-what-you-can-do-for-a-healthy-pregnancy.html
- Complete Guide to Baby & Child Care (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), copyright © 1997, 2007 by Focus on the Family
- Stephen J. McPhee, Maxine A. Papadakis, 2008 Current Medical Diagnosis & Treatment (McGraw-Hill, 2008), 665-668

(all Web addresses as of 1/19)



Benevolent Resources

PROGRAM

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY®



APPROVED BY THE
Physicians Resource Council

© 2009, 2015, 2017, 2019 Focus on the Family. All rights reserved.
All models were used for illustrative purposes only.