

Healthy Habits During Pregnancy

Exercise

Exercise during pregnancy is safe and can help reduce stress and promote overall health for both you and baby. Avoid any exercises that may lead to injuries in your belly area.

Dental Care

Good dental care is important during pregnancy, as hormonal changes can increase the risk of gum disease and cavities. Brush regularly, floss, and visit the dentist for checkups to maintain oral health.

Nutrition

It's important to eat a balanced diet rich in essential nutrients, which should include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.

Prenatal Vitamins

Taking a daily prenatal vitamin with at least 400 mg of folic acid can prevent birth defects. If using gummy vitamins, these typically don't contain iron, so try eating more iron-rich foods like spinach, beans, or fortified cereals, or consider taking an iron supplement if advised by your doctor/midwife.

Food & Drink Concerns

- **Food safety:** Practicing good food safety can help prevent foodborne illness. If food has been left out for a while or may be expired--when in doubt, throw it out! Also, rinsing fruits and vegetables well can help avoid harmful pesticides.
- **Fish:** Avoid fish that can contain high levels of mercury such as swordfish, marlin, and grouper. Other forms of seafood that have low mercury levels are fine, such as salmon, catfish, scallops, shrimp, and tilapia. Also avoid raw fish and sushi.
- **Caffeine:** It's recommended to limit caffeine to less than 200 mg per day. Here's the amount of caffeine in common beverages: coffee (95-200mg), black tea (15-61mg), soda (25-55mg).
- **Listeria infection:** This is a serious foodborne illness that can cause risks for your baby, and is caused by a bacteria which may be found in unpasteurized dairy products, soft cheeses, lunch meats, rare or undercooked meat, and raw seafood such as sushi or oysters.

Other Hazards

- **Cat litter:** Avoid cleaning litter boxes to prevent exposure to harmful parasites, or wear gloves and wash hands thoroughly.
- **Gardening:** Wear gloves and avoid soil that may contain harmful bacteria or pesticides.
- **Cleaning products:** Ensure good ventilation and wear protective equipment like gloves when using bleach or other cleaning products with potentially harmful chemicals.
- **Lead exposure:** Lead is toxic to developing babies and can be found in old paint, pipes, and soil. Avoid exposure by testing your home for lead and cleaning areas with potential lead contamination.
- **Marijuana:** Increasing research shows that marijuana use can lead to low birth weight, behavioral issues, and problems with your baby's development. If you need help with stress, pain, or nausea relief, consult with your provider for safer options to manage these symptoms.
- **Smoking or vaping:** Smoking and secondhand smoke exposure increases risk of preterm birth, low birth weight, and SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).
- **Alcohol:** Drinking alcohol can cause Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, brain damage, and developmental problems.
- **Substance abuse:** Using illegal or non-prescribed substances during pregnancy can lead to risk of overdose or harm to your baby's health.



If you need support with alcohol, smoking, or substance use, reach out to your doctor, midwife or resources in the community.