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Obstetrics Gynecology Infertility Minimally Invasive Surgery

Pregnancy Frequently Asked Questions

How long should I wait for an accurate result from a home pregnancy test?

A home pregnancy test will detect pregnancy on or about the time of your next period. Wait and see if your period starts on time. If it does, then you are not pregnant. If it doesn't, repeat the pregnancy test.

How much weight should I gain during my pregnancy?

Appropriate weight gain during pregnancy depends on your pre-pregnancy weight. Women who are a normal weight before pregnancy should gain 25-35 pounds. Women who are overweight should gain 11-20 pounds. Women who are underweight may gain more 30-40 pounds and still have a healthy pregnancy. Being underweight can put a pregnancy at risk and these patients should discuss weight gain and nutrition with their physician. Caloric intake should increase by only 300 calories daily during pregnancy. This means adding half a sandwich and a glass of skim milk to your diet.

What are important nutrition restrictions and recommendations during pregnancy?

It is recommended to eat a well-rounded diet throughout your pregnancy. A pregnancy diet should include complex carbohydrates, protein, vitamins and fat. Most experts believe eating fresh foods are better overall for your health than eating pre-packaged foods that may contain preservatives, salt and high-fructose corn syrup. **Adequate hydration is very important during pregnancy. Pregnant moms should drink 60 - 80 ounces of water each day. Water is the best source of hydration.** You may want to make water infused with fruits or veggies.

Is it safe to have sex during pregnancy?

In general, intercourse is safe throughout pregnancy. Sometimes, a small amount of bleeding or spotting may occur after intercourse. It would not be safe to have intercourse if:

- you have abnormal bleeding at any point during pregnancy
- you have an abnormal placental location (placenta previa)
- you are at risk of preterm labor (short cervix)
- you have ruptured your amniotic membranes (broke your water)

What kind of prenatal vitamins are best for my pregnancy?

A good prenatal vitamin should include at least 400 mcg of folic acid. DHA supplementation is recommended for brain development and possibly the prevention of preterm birth. Be careful with additional supplements during your pregnancy, unless directed by your physician. Excess amounts of some vitamins can be toxic during fetal development. Prenatal vitamins may also include iron, B12, vitamin B6, calcium and magnesium.

Can I eat sushi when I am pregnant?

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There is concern about raw or undercooked fish or meat and risk of acquiring certain food-borne illnesses during pregnancy. For this reason, I would advise you to avoid rare meats and uncooked fish. Keeping this in mind, you may eat cooked fish, lobster, shrimp and crab at the sushi restaurant.

Can I take herbal supplements during pregnancy?

There is a lack of adequate studies to assess the risks and benefits of most herbs during pregnancy. You should not think that just because an herb is “natural” it is safe. Many herbs can be harmful during pregnancy. Ask about specific herbal therapies you are considering.

Can I drink alcohol during pregnancy?

Consuming alcoholic beverages is KNOWN to cause fetal-alcohol syndrome and adverse pregnancy outcomes. We do not know how much occasional alcohol intake is too much during pregnancy. For these reasons, it is advisable to avoid alcohol during your pregnancy.

How much coffee or caffeine can I drink during pregnancy?

The American College of ObGyn advises to restrict caffeine intake to at most one 8 ounce cup of regular coffee per day. With that being said there is an association between caffeine and miscarriage. Decaffeinated coffee would be a better choice.

Can I travel during my pregnancy?

Traveling is not considered harmful to your pregnancy. Long plane flights can put women at an increased risk of forming blood clots in their legs (DVT). For this reason, it is important to hydrate well, stand, stretch and flex your feet/calves during flights. I don't recommend much travel after 34-36 weeks of pregnancy for low-risk pregnancies. After 20 weeks gestation it is a good idea to travel with a copy of your prenatal records. All travel is at your own risk, sometimes complications of pregnancy occur without warning.

What do contractions feel like?

Contractions often feel like abdominal cramps or tightening. Often times they are accompanied by lower back pain. The most important feature of true contractions is that the feeling comes and goes in a rhythmic fashion.

When is the right time to go to the hospital for contractions?

This depends on how far along you are in the pregnancy. While preterm <37 weeks, contractions would be concerning if they are recurrent, even every 10 minutes and not painful, if they don't go away with rest and hydration. Later in pregnancy, after 37 weeks, you should go to the hospital when contractions are painful to the point of interrupting your activity, taking your breathe away, and/or regular (every 5 minutes for 2 hours).

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How do I know if I broke my water?

The best sign, or indication, that a woman has broken the amniotic sac (her water), is **continued** or **persistent** leakage of a runny, watery substance. This fluid may be clear, bloody, greenish or yellowish but it should be the consistency of water.

When during labor is the right time to get an epidural?

There is no absolutely right time for a woman to get her epidural in labor. Often times the best policy is to simply see how the labor progresses and get the epidural when the pains become unbearable. Keep in mind that it will take about 45 minutes from the time you ask for the epidural until you have relief from the epidural. Once a woman gets the epidural she is confined to the bed and a urinary catheter will be placed. The medicine in the epidural does not go to the baby.

If I get my epidural too early will it run out?

No. When a woman gets an epidural a small catheter is placed into the spinal column and medicine is continuously infused into this space. The amount of numbing medicine can be turned up or down so that a woman gets pain relief but is not entirely numb below the waist.

What are other options for pain relief during labor, aside from an epidural?

There are other options for pain relief during labor. These are pain medications that can be given through your IV. These medications work for about an hour and can be given up to 3 times. The down side of these medications go to both the mother and the fetus and make both sleepy. Thus, these medications are typically not given close to the time of delivery.

If I don't get an epidural will I feel the stitches?

If a woman who choose not to get an epidural, if she requires stitches Dr. Mahller will give a numbing injection to the area. After giving a few minutes for the medicine to work, he will be able to perform the stitches without pain.