



Recommendations for a Healthy Pregnancy

Congratulations on your new pregnancy! At OFC, we appreciate that this is exciting news for you. Below, we have listed some evidence-based recommendations to keep you and your pregnancy as safe as possible.

Exercise: Healthy living is important for a healthy pregnancy. Unless you have a history of recurrent miscarriages or have been otherwise instructed by your doctor, continuing moderate exercise is recommended. In early pregnancy, you may find that you tire faster than usual and are more easily short of breath when exercising. As your pregnancy grows, you may find your center of gravity changes and affects your balance. When this happens, it is best to avoid sports like skiing, gymnastics, and horseback riding. After 12 weeks of pregnancy your uterus has grown big enough to be felt above your hip bones, so you should avoid sports where you could be accidentally hit in abdomen like kick boxing, soccer or martial arts.

Intercourse: Unless you have a history of recurrent miscarriages or are instructed otherwise by your doctor, avoiding intercourse is not necessary and has not been associated with increased risk of miscarriage. The cervix naturally is more sensitive to touch during pregnancy so you may experience some spotting after intercourse. You may also experience some cramping after orgasm. This is not dangerous. If you are experiencing heavy bleeding similar to a menstrual period, please call your health care provider.

Diet: Pregnancy increases your sensitivity to infections from certain foods.

Meat, fish, and eggs: In general, you should avoid eating any meat, eggs, or fish that are not fully cooked. No more medium rare steaks or raw fish sushi. Deli meat such as pre-sliced ham and turkey should also be avoided due to increased risk of listeria. Even cooked, certain types of fish, such as swordfish or fresh tuna, contain high levels of mercury that may be harmful to the developing fetus. Smaller fish, like salmon, cod, or haddock have lower levels of mercury and are safe to eat. For more information visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/food-nutrition/prenatal-nutrition-guidelines-health-professionals-fish-omega-3-fatty-acids-2009.html>

Dairy: Unpasteurized dairy products such as raw cheese or raw milk should be avoided in pregnancy because of an increased risk of a bacterial infection called listeria. Soft cheeses can also be of risk such as blue cheese, Brie, and Camembert. Read the label to check if the cheese is made from pasteurized milk. Cottage cheese, cream cheese, ricotta, and hard cheeses such as cheddar are safe to consume.

Fruit and vegetables: Listeria, salmonella, and other bacterial infections can spread through raw vegetables and fruit. If possible, cooking your vegetables is advised. If consuming raw vegetables, it is recommended to thoroughly wash them beforehand.



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Juices: Unpasteurized juices should be avoided. Most juice sold in the store is pasteurized, however it is best practice to check drink labels to make sure they are labelled as pasteurized.

For more information visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-safety-vulnerable-populations/food-safety-pregnant-women.html>

Caffeine: High caffeine intake in pregnancy can adversely affect your baby. However, intake of up to 300mg per day is safe in pregnancy. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, chocolate, and many sodas. We recommend limiting your caffeine intake to less than 300mg per day. Overall, 1-2 small cups of coffee will not exceed 300mg daily.

Nausea/Vomiting: Morning sickness is common in early pregnancy and, despite the name, can happen any time during the day. Certain dietary changes can help avoid morning sickness. Eating small frequent meals and having snacks on hand can help. Consider easy to digest foods such as saltine crackers or a piece of fruit. If you are finding it hard to tolerate any food or drink throughout the day, you can ask your provider at OFC, your family doctor, or your obstetrician for a prescription for pregnancy safe medications such as Diclectin. If you are unable to keep any food or drink down for a day or more and are feeling like you may pass out, you may need to be evaluated in your nearest hospital for rehydration. Most often, morning sickness will improve after the first trimester.

Constipation: During the first trimester, your body is increasing its blood supply by absorbing as much water as it can from your food. As a result, you may experience constipation. Drinking lots of water is the first step to try to minimize constipation. Prune juice or dried fruit can also help some people with constipation. If you are still struggling with constipation, certain over the counter medications are safe to take intermittently such as polyethylene glycol and docusate sodium.

Medications: You should continue your prenatal vitamin throughout the pregnancy and post-partum if you are breastfeeding. You should avoid medications such as Ibuprofen or Naproxen. If you have pain or fever, acetaminophen (Tylenol) is safe in pregnancy although you should limit your intake to less than 4000 mg per day. Aspirin is sometimes prescribed in pregnancy for certain conditions. Low doses of aspirin, 81-162mg per day, are safe, however higher doses should be avoided. If you are on other medications for your health, ask your obstetrician, provider at OFC, or family doctor about the safety of this medication in pregnancy.

Alcohol, smoking, marijuana: Consumption of alcohol has been linked to the development of fetal alcohol syndrome - a condition associated with behavioural difficulties and learning disabilities. To date, no amount of alcohol consumption has been found to be safe in pregnancy. Smoking has been linked to fetal growth restriction and negative pregnancy outcomes. Now is a great time to quit! There is limited evidence evaluating the effect of marijuana on pregnancy, but it may be linked to behavioural difficulties in children. At this time, abstinence from marijuana is advised.

Activities: High temperatures can increase the risk of having a baby with a neural tube defect such as Spina Bifida. It is advised that you avoid hot tubs, saunas, and hot baths in your early pregnancy.



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For more information please look at the following resources:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/healthy-pregnancy/healthy-pregnancy-guide.html>

<http://www.omama.com/en/index.asp>

<https://www.parentinginottawa.ca/en/becoming-a-parent-and-pregnancy/Safe-Pregnancy.aspx>

https://journals.lww.com/greenjournal/Fulltext/2018/04000/Dos_and_Don_ts_in_Pregnancy_Truths_and_Myths.16.aspx