

Tips for a healthy pregnancy



Follow a few simple, healthy steps to take care of your health during pregnancy.

All expectant moms want the best for their baby – including giving their little bundle a healthy start. As soon as you find out you're pregnant, you should consult a doctor, who will help you to compile a healthy plan for your pregnancy. Ensure that you keep the appointments as prescribed by your doctor, as this will help you track your baby's growth and enable the doctor to identify any risks at an early stage.

Prenatal supplements

Following a healthy diet should be one of your priorities, as your baby is entirely dependent on you for its nutrition. Ask your doctor or a registered dietician to help you compile a healthy diet for your specific needs.

When you consider prenatal supplements, always ask your doctor for advice before adding it to your diet.

Ask your doctor about:

Folic acid

This vitamin is an essential building block of red blood cells and the neural tube, which develops into the baby's spinal cord and brain. Doctors recommend that you take a folic acid supplement during pregnancy to assist with these vital developments. The best food sources of folic acid are fortified cereals, dark green vegetables and citrus fruits.

Calcium

Calcium is essential for optimal bone density. During pregnancy, the foetus uses calcium from your body for its own bone growth. You will therefore need a calcium supplement to replenish your own supply.

Vitamin D and iron

Additionally, take a good prenatal vitamin to promote your own and your baby's health, and prevent potential complications. Prenatal vitamins will help you meet the

daily recommended amounts of vitamins A, B and C, including 600 international units of vitamin D (essential for absorbing calcium, and for your baby's brain and bone development and movement skills) and at least 27 mg of iron (required for the production of additional blood to move oxygen to vital organs), according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Dental health

As your baby uses some of your calcium supply for his/her development, you should take special care of your teeth during pregnancy. Increased hormone production can also influence your body's response to plaque. Visit your dentist for advice on how to take care of your teeth and gums while you are pregnant.

Healthy weight gain

Yes, you are eating for two, but the saying refers to nutritional value and not quantity. You should therefore eat healthier and not necessarily more.

An unhealthy weight during pregnancy increases the risk of various pregnancy complications, including gestational diabetes (diabetes that develops during pregnancy), preeclampsia and even miscarriage and stillbirth.

It can also cause various health problems for a baby, including foetal macrosomia (being significantly larger than average) and

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having more body fat than normal. This increases the risk of metabolic syndrome and childhood obesity.

You will get the best advice from your healthcare provider to help you avoid excessive weight gain, manage any medical conditions, and monitor your baby's development.

Stay active

Staying fit during pregnancy will help you build stamina for the delivery process and help your body recover and lose any extra weight faster afterwards. Always discuss your fitness programme with your doctor before starting out. Even if you've always been active, you might need some tweaks in your programme to keep it healthy and safe for you and your growing baby.

Maintaining a regular and safe exercise routine throughout your pregnancy can help you stay healthy and feel your best. Regular exercise during pregnancy can improve your posture and decrease some common discomforts such as backaches, fatigue and constipation. It can also assist with managing depression and anxiety disorders.

Cigarettes and e-cigarettes

Quitting all forms of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, is not only best for you and your baby, but also your family and friends. Although the aerosol of e-cigarettes generally has fewer harmful

substances and less nicotine than cigarette smoke, e-cigarettes are also not safe to use during pregnancy, and some of the flavourings used in e-cigarettes may be especially harmful to a developing baby. **é**

Sources:

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