



Pregnancy Do's and Don'ts

Prenatal Vitamins: Prenatal vitamins are unlikely to be harmful. Therefore, they may be used to ensure adequate consumption of several vitamins and minerals during your pregnancy. However, their necessity for all pregnant women is uncertain especially for women with a well-balanced diet. Pregnant women should consume the following each day through diet or supplements:

- Folic Acid: 400-800 mcg until the end of the first trimester
- Iron: 30 mg (may be more if you have been diagnosed with anemia)
- Vitamin D: 600-1000 international units
- Calcium: 100 mg

Nutrition and Weight Gain: Pregnant women should be advised to eat a healthy well-balanced diet and typically increase their caloric intake by a small amount (350-450 calories). Women with a higher pre-pregnancy BMI do not need to gain the same amount of weight as those with normal or low BMI. Weight gain for a woman with normal weight is 25 lbs. Overweight is 20 lbs. Underweight is 30 lbs.

Alcohol: Although current data suggest that the consumption of very small amounts of alcohol during pregnancy does not appear to be harmful to the fetus, the exact amount threshold of safe and unsafe, if it exists, is unknown. Therefore, alcohol should be avoided during pregnancy.

Artificial Sweeteners: Artificial sweeteners can be used during pregnancy. Data regarding saccharin are conflicting. Low consumption is likely safe.

Caffeine: Low to moderate caffeine intake in pregnancy does not appear to be associated with any adverse outcomes. Pregnant women may have caffeine, but should probably limit it to less than 300 mg/day. An 8 oz. cup of coffee has approximately 130 mg of caffeine. An 8 oz. cup of tea or a 12 oz. soda has approximately 50 mg. of caffeine. Exact amounts will vary based on the specific beverage or food.

Fish Consumption: Pregnant women should try to consume two or three servings per week of fish with high DHA and low mercury content. For women who do not achieve this, it is unknown whether DHA and n-3 PUFA supplementation are beneficial, but they are unlikely to be harmful.

Raw and Undercooked Fish: In line with current recommendations, pregnant women should generally avoid undercooked fish, raw or other seafood.

Other Foods to Avoid: Raw and undercooked meat, unpasteurized dairy products, deli meats (could cause an increased risk to Listeria) unless handled and correctly stored by you, foods that have been recalled for possible Listeria contamination.

Smoking, Nicotine, and Vaping: Women should not smoke cigarettes during pregnancy. If they are unable to quit entirely, they should reduce it as much as possible. Nicotine replacement (with patches or gum) is an appropriate part of a smoking cessation strategy.

Marijuana: Marijuana use is not recommended during pregnancy.

Exercise and Bedrest: Pregnant women should be encouraged to exercise regularly. Bedrest may be recommended by your physician as seen necessary in certain medical situations.

Avoiding Injury: Pregnant women should always wear their seatbelts while in a motor vehicle and should not disable their airbags.

Oral Health: Oral health and dental procedures can continue as scheduled during pregnancy. Most procedures should be done in the second trimester. Please ask your provider if you or your dentist have any questions about specific procedures.

Hot Tubs and Swimming: Pregnant women should avoid hot tub and sauna use particularly during the first trimester. Swimming pool use is fine during pregnancy.

Insect Repellants: Topical insect repellants (including DEET) can be used in pregnancy and should be used in areas that are high risk for insect borne illnesses.

Hair Dye: There is limited data on the risk of the systematic absorption of hair dyes, it is presumed to be safe in pregnancy, but best used after the first trimester.

Travel: Airline travel is safe in pregnancy until 36 weeks (unless restricted by your provider). Pregnant women should be familiar with the exposure to disease and available medical care in the specific destination. Please balance the benefit of the trip with the potential complication of the destination. Avoid scanners; ask for a “pat down”. If your trip is greater than two hours, plan to stretch your legs and walk around during the flight.

Sexual Intercourse: Pregnant women without bleeding, placenta previa at greater than 20 weeks of gestation, or ruptured membranes should not have any restriction regarding sexual intercourse (unless restricted by your provider).

Sleeping Position: There is no specific gestational age for sleeping on your side. In the third trimester, try to avoid sleeping on your back.