



### **Drugs and Pregnancy**

As a general rule, no drugs should be taken during pregnancy unless the benefit of that medication is significant. This includes over the counter as well as prescription medications. There is no drug which we can guarantee to be safe.

During your pregnancy, the most commonly used substances that are known to be harmful are alcohol and cigarettes. There is good evidence that greater than one ounce of alcohol per day is detrimental to fetal development, but there is no knowledge of how much alcohol one could drink and have no effect on fetal development. It appears that alcohol must be taken over a prolonged period of time to have a measurable effect. There is well known definite association between cigarettes and babies that do not grow to their full potential and are born small for their gestational age. There is also evidence that suggests an increased risk of miscarriage and premature delivery with cigarette smoking. Please do not smoke while you are pregnant.

We have included a medication list for over the counter preparations that you may use for common medical problems during pregnancy. These, like other drugs, should not be taken for "minimal" symptoms. Before taking any medication not listed, please call our office and please call us if your symptoms or problem is ongoing.

### **Morning Sickness**

Nausea and vomiting many times occurs during the early months of a pregnancy. Although it is frequently called morning sickness, it can occur at any time of the day or night. Usually, symptoms improve after the third or fourth month of pregnancy.

Morning sickness is actually the result of the influence of increased amounts of estrogen and progesterone that are produced by the ovaries early in pregnancy. Due to the increasing levels of these hormones, the secretory cells in the stomach increase their production of gastric juices. At the same time, the bowel slows down in its ability to empty the contents of the stomach. This causes a feeling of nausea that may lead to vomiting.

To prevent morning sickness, try the following suggestions until you find one that works for you:

- 1) Eat a piece of bread or a few crackers before you get out of bed in the morning (put them close to your bed the night before), or when you feel nauseated.
- 2) Get out of bed slowly and avoid sudden movements.
- 3) Eat several small meals during the day so your stomach doesn't remain empty.
- 4) Eat high protein foods, eggs, cheese, nuts, meats, etc., as well as fruits and fruit juices. These foods help prevent low blood sugar which can cause nausea.
- 5) Drink soups and other liquids between meals instead of with meals
- 6) Avoid greasy or fried foods. They are hard to digest.
- 7) Avoid spicy, heavily seasoned foods.

To remedy morning sickness, try these suggestions:

- 1) Sip soda water (carbonated water) when you begin to feel nauseated.
- 2) Get fresh air: take a walk, sleep with your window open, use an exhaust fan or open a window when you cook.
- 3) Take deep breaths.
- 4) Other options are listed on the medication list.

If vomiting persists, or it becomes difficult to retain food or liquids, you should call the office for evaluation.

### **Constipation**

Begin a stool softener like Colace, Metamucil, Konsyl, Fibercon, Surfact, Fiber-all. If you are eating a lot of cheese, drinking a lot of milk or ingesting extra calcium, aluminum or iron through antacids or prenatal vitamins you may be contributing to the problem. *Milk of Magnesia is a safe laxative to try. Try to be active especially after meals and drink lots of water.*

### **Common Cold**

**REST, REST and more REST.** We all get colds so here are some safe things to try and get over it faster: Lots of fluids and rest will help. Safe medicines would be Tylenol for aches and fevers. *Nasal breathe-rite* strips for congestion. *Sudafed* for congestion. Plain *Robitussin* for cough. If the cold becomes prolonged (greater than 1 week) or if it becomes centered in the lungs - please call us so we can help.

### **Headache**

Sometimes a prolonged headache or severe headache may be a sign of serious disease, so if your headache is a new thing or is unusually severe or long lasting call us. Otherwise plain *Tylenol* should help.

### **Diarrhea**

Most is self-limiting and will stop after 15-18 hours. Try and stay hydrated with water, *Gatorade*, or *10-k*. Try some *Kaopectate*. If it continues please give us a call.

### **Heartburn**

Drink lots of cold water, avoiding milk or anything with citric acid (tomato, orange, and grapefruit). Foods with lots of fat like cheese and fried spicy dishes make it a lot worse. Coffee and smoking makes it a lot worse. You can safely use almost any antacid, but those that contain aluminum or calcium may make constipation worse. Magnesium-based antacids will help both heartburn and constipation. *Zantac 75* once or twice a day or over the counter *Prevacid* are usually helpful. If the problem continues give us a call.

### **Hemorrhoids**

Hemorrhoids are extremely common in pregnancy due to the pressure of the growing uterus on the hemorrhoidal vessels. Try and avoid straining with bowel movements, lifting heavy items or standing for extended periods. Begin a stool softener such as any listed in the constipation section above. You may use any of the medicated pads, creams or suppositories. If your hemorrhoids become purple or start bleeding please let us evaluate them.

### **Yeast Infection**

These are common during pregnancy, especially after antibiotic use or if you are a gestational diabetic. If it does not act like a usual yeast infection for you, please come in and let us evaluate it. You may use *Monistat*, *Mycelex*, *Gyn-Lotrimin* or *Femstat*.

### **Backache and muscle cramps**

Again these are very common and frustrating problem. Using proper posture and body mechanics will reduce strain. Try to bend at the knees and lift with the legs.

For mild backache try *Tylenol*, rest, warm moist heat with towels, heating pad on just on the back only massage, acupressure, acupuncture, and physical therapy. Being physically active will help prevent problems as will daily stretching.

Wear low heeled shoes with good arch support. Avoid fatigue or repetitive motion chores. If your backache is severe, if it involves radiation down the leg, or if you have fever, chills, rash, or urinary tract symptoms associated with a headache, please let us know. Sometimes, we prescribe narcotics to help with severe back pain. Leg cramps usually will respond to stretching, moist heat, massage, calcium and / or potassium supplementation with a banana.

## **Fetal Movement**

Fetal movement is commonly felt at about 20-22 weeks. You may not feel fetal movement consistently, or every day until after the 25th week and sometimes later. Decreased or altered fetal movement that occurs after the 30th week may concern you. Fetal movement is always healthy in pregnancy. After the 30th week you can do a test at home to check fetal movement. "Kick counts" should be done at the time of day when you feel your baby move the most. Eat a meal, or drink a cold beverage, then lie down on your side and count movements. You should feel 5 movements in 1 hour. If you don't feel 5 movements in 1 hour after eating or drinking, repeat for one more hour. If you still do not feel at least 5 movements, please call the office.

## **Guidelines for Exercise in Pregnancy**

The general rule is that you can continue doing exercise at the level you already exercised at when you became pregnant, that is as long as you do not encounter any problems. If you have any problems with your pregnancy, you may wish to discuss how it may be affected by physical activity.

Pregnant women may be more susceptible to sports injury, so careful warm-up and cool-downs are even more important to avoid musculo-skeletal injury. More gentle sports may be safer; we suggest them over high impact, fast paced sports or exercise activity. Many exercise facilities offer classes specific to pregnant women.

Most exercise physiologists suggest not exceeding a maximum heart rate of 140. For most healthy in-shape women 65 -120 green light= go, 120-140 yellow light:= caution, greater than 140 red light = stop that! Go back to 120. Keep your body temperature less than 100.4 degrees F. Try to avoid sustained temperature elevation.

Stay hydrated. You should drink enough water so that your urine should only be very pale yellow. Your body is mostly made of water and exercise will deplete your stores of water faster.

At about twenty weeks the uterus can compress the inferior vena cava. This can create both real and theoretical problems. Avoid lying flat on your back or doing crunches.

Water sports or water play is ideal for pregnancy. Scuba diving, parachuting, parasailing, bungee-diving and contact sports are best avoided. Riding in a boat is all right except in choppy water if at a high rate of speed. There are some sports that are safe if you are skilled at them, such as snow skiing and biking, however, keep in mind, your concern must also focus on those around you that may be less skilled. Those less skilled should avoid these as well.

Stop exercise for any of the following: pain of any kind, vaginal bleeding, leakage of fluid, dizziness, faintness, shortness of breath, uterine contractions, heart palpitations, nausea or vomiting, difficulty walking, generalized edema (swelling), decreased fetal activity.

## **Traveling During Pregnancy**

First of all we cannot tell the future. So please remember that, although your chance of having a problem while traveling may be slight, it could still happen. Second, you have a life to live. If your best friend from college is getting married, don't miss it because of the pregnancy. When traveling, stay hydrated, dress appropriately, use plenty of paba-free sunblock if outdoors and every two hours, move about.

If you are planning a big trip before 34 weeks, ask what we think about it for your circumstances. Often we can give you helpful suggestions. If it's a big trip, let us copy your prenatal record for you just in case you do have a problem. After about 32-34 weeks, you will probably be very uncomfortable flying in a commercial aircraft and after 36 weeks we suggest you do not fly.

### **Sex**

Sexual intercourse can continue throughout pregnancy unless you have been advised to avoid intercourse by your physician. This recommendation might be made if you are bleeding, having pre-term contractions or if your placenta is close to or covering the cervix (placenta previa).

### **Bleeding**

Small amounts of bleeding can occur in early pregnancy. This is termed a threatened miscarriage. If this occurs, you will be advised to go home and rest until the bleeding has stopped. If you begin actively bleeding (soaking a pad an hour for more than two hours), begin to pass tissue or clots, or have severe cramping, call the office immediately. If tissue is passed, save it in a jar with water added and bring it with you to the office.

### **Fish**

It is advisable to avoid raw or undercooked meat and limit intake of fish that are known to have high levels of mercury. Do not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish. You can safely eat an average of 12 ounces per week (cooked weight) of other types of fish. Choose a variety from shellfish, canned fish, smaller ocean fish, and farm raised fish. Fish purchased in stores and restaurants usually have less mercury than freshwater fish caught by friends or family, so you can safely eat more.

### **Cats**

Avoid contact with cat feces and cat litter as this is a potential source for toxoplasmosis, a viral illness that can affect your baby.

### **Perms and Dyes:**

We advise that you avoid hair perms throughout the pregnancy. We would advise that you avoid hair dye in the first trimester and that if you do dye your hair, you use a low ammonia, low peroxide dye preparation such as Natural Instincts.

### **Additional information:**

The effect of many substances on fetal development is not known, thus contact should be avoided or minimized with the following substances: fumes from oil based paints, chemicals, insecticides, large doses of vitamins and unusual herbs.

**Please read through this information carefully and make notations for questions regarding this information at your next visit!**