

PREGNANCY INSTRUCTIONS

Welcome to Loudoun Community Midwives. We are pleased you have chosen to partner with us for your prenatal care experience. We hope that these pregnancy instructions will assist you in achieving a healthy pregnancy.

Medication in Pregnancy

A simple rule of thumb to follow concerning medication use in pregnancy----Don't use medications unless absolutely necessary. This handout will cover some common health conditions that may occur during pregnancy and will offer some suggestions for safe medications or alternative therapies that are available to you. If you do not see a medication on the list that you feel you must take, please call us in advance so that we may discuss it with you.

Nausea

Consume dry bland foods, such as toast, crackers, melba toast, Lorna Doone cookies, popsicles, Italian ices. Try to consume foods high in carbohydrate and protein and low in fat. Small frequent, meals tend to stay down better than 3 large ones. Take fluids separately from solids, and try to keep hydrated by taking small sips of fluids very frequently. Some suggestions include decaf or herbal teas, Gatorade, Kool-aid, lemonade, flat gingerale. If prenatal vitamins aggravate nausea, take them at night, or split them in half and take half in the morning and half at night. If they continue to aggravate nausea, let us know so we can discuss an alternative for you.

Avoid carbonated drinks, caffeine, milk, fatty foods, greasy or fried foods. Avoid acidic foods, such as apples, oranges, tomatoes, lemon juice, etc.

Herbal teas can have a soothing effect on an upset stomach, such as peppermint, spearmint, anise, and ginger. Ginger is particularly helpful for nausea and can be obtained in capsule form at the local health food store. Do not exceed the dosage recommended on the bottle. Another alternative therapy is acupuncture wrist bands (ie. Seabands), which may help decrease nausea.

Vitamin B6 may be taken to reduce nausea: 50-100mg per day

Medications: Doxylamine succinate (Unisom) can be taken at bedtime (25mg) and twice a day (12.5mg) for relief of nausea. However, this can be sedating. Doxylamine can also be taken in conjunction with Vitamin B6 in the above dosage and has been shown to be highly effective for decreasing nausea.

Heartburn

Avoid chocolate, fried foods, spicy and fatty foods, carbonated drinks, citrus juices, peppermint, alcohol, caffeine, and smoking, as all of these may exacerbate heartburn. Avoid tight fitting clothing. Avoid large meals. If your heartburn is worse at night, avoid eating just prior to going to bed and you can elevate the head of the bed on blocks 6 inches. Avoid aspirin containing medications, such as Pepto-Bismol. Papaya fruit is a known alternative treatment for heartburn.

Medications: There are a variety of over the counter medications you may take for heartburn. These include: Tums, Mylanta, Maalox, Riopan, or Rolaids.

Headaches

Headaches can be caused by a number of things from stress to certain food ingredients to sinus congestion to poor vision. Often identifying and eliminating or treating these conditions will relieve headaches without the use of medications. If your headaches are unrelieved by conservative measures, if they are severe, if they are associated with changes in vision, or if you have a history of high blood pressure, please call us.

Medications: Acetaminophen, Tylenol (regular or extra strength), and Anacin 3 are all safe. Avoid all aspirin containing products, as well as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (ie. Advil, Ibuprofen, Motrin, Aleve, etc.).

Constipation

Drink a minimum of 8-10 glasses of water per day. Increase fiber in diet, such as bran cereals, green leafy vegetables, spinach, prunes, raisins, raw fruits and vegetables. Please be aware that your prenatal vitamins containing iron or iron supplements may be contributing to your constipation. The hormones of pregnancy often contribute to constipation as well.

Medications: You may take Colace, Peri-colace, Metamucil, Fiber laxatives, Fibercon, Perdiem, Citrucel, and Sennekot for occasional constipation.

Sinus Congestion/Cold/Respiratory Allergies

Increase fluid intake (minimum 8-10 glasses of water per day) and rest. Try a humidifier or a cool mist vaporizer. Breathe Right Strips may help relieve nasal congestion associated with pregnancy. If cold/symptoms persist for greater than one week, if you have a fever greater than 101 degrees, or if you have a severe sore throat, please call us or your primary care provider.

Homeopathic remedies which are available in over-the-counter potencies (6x-30C) from health food stores are considered safe in pregnancy and breastfeeding. These are pharmaceutically prepared microdoses of natural substances which treat specific sets of symptoms with minimal side effects.

The homeopathic remedy Oscillococcinum may be taken **AT THE FIRST SIGN** of any cold or flu symptoms. 3 doses in the first 24 hours. It will generally make all the symptoms less intense and shorten the duration of the cold. There have been three double blind, placebo controlled trials done by independent researchers using Oscillo to treat people with the flu. They found that the best results happened if it was taken within 48 hours of onset of the flu. 10-15 granules is a dose --you do not have to take the whole vial as a dose.

Medications: If sinus congestion is associated with respiratory allergies, and you have taken Zyrtec or plain Claritin in the past, you may continue to take them safely in pregnancy.

Nasal congestion may be treated with Sudafed or Chlortrimeton.

Sore throat may be treated with Sucrets, Cepacol lozenges, Chloraseptic Spray or lozenges.

Cough may be treated with plain Robitussin or Robitussin DM. Ricola cough drops or other menthol cough drops are safe to use.

Hemorrhoids

If heavy bleeding occurs, please call us. Comfort measures include warm, shallow baths.

Medications: Preparation H, Tucks, Anusol

Diarrhea

Avoid spicy or fried foods, avoid fruit and vegetables, avoid fruit juices or carbonated drinks, and avoid milk and all milk products. Fluid intake should be increased. Gatorade or decaf tea are good choices. A bland diet, such as fish, turkey, or chicken, should be eaten. If diarrhea persists, the BRAT diet consisting of Bananas, rice, apples, and toast should be followed. Call us if your diarrhea lasts longer than two days.

Medications: Kaopectate

Edema/Fluid Retention

Avoid fast foods and decrease salt and sodium intake. Avoid Chinese, Mexican, Italian foods, as well as seafood, cheese, deli processed foods. Cranberry juice and all melons are natural diuretics. Increasing your fluid intake of water and noncaffeinated beverages also acts as a natural diuretic. If you have access to a swimming pool, submersion under water for 45 minutes to one hour will have a diuretic effect.

For foot edema, elevate your legs above your waist for 20 minutes at a time, several times a day. Support pantyhose made especially for pregnancy may also help (You will need a prescription for these).

Other important reminders:

- Nose bleeds and gum bleeds are common during pregnancy due to hormone changes.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages
- Quit smoking
- No saccharin
- Limit caffeine and Nutrasweet to only once per day
- If painting, use latex paints only.
- Pregnant women are more susceptible to Listeriosis due to a weakened immune system caused by hormonal changes of pregnancy. This infection can lead to premature delivery, miscarriage, and severe illness in your newborn. Please avoid eating soft cheeses like feta, Camembert, Brie, blue-veined cheeses, and Mexican style cheeses. Do not eat refrigerated pate or meat spreads. Do not eat refrigerated smoked seafood unless it is in a cooked dish.
- Avoid raw eggs, raw meats, sushi, and raw dairy products
- Pregnant women should not eat shark, swordfish, tilefish, king mackerel, or fresh tuna due to risk of high mercury levels, which may damage the unborn child's developing nervous system.

Fish that contain the lowest levels of mercury and are safe to consume in pregnancy include: canned tuna, shrimp, Pollock, salmon, cod, catfish, clams, flatfish, crabs, and scallops. Please limit servings to 12 ounces per week, with typical servings being 3-6 ounces apiece.