

Protecting Yourself and Baby During Pregnancy

Chemical Exposure

- Avoid exposure to all pesticides while pregnant.
- Try to avoid exposure to furniture polish, spray paints, glues, varnishes and paint thinners.
- Make sure to open windows or turn on a fan if you are using nail polish remover.
- Most cleaning products are safe to use in pregnancy. However, it is a good idea to wear gloves and open windows while you are cleaning. Cleaners with very strong fumes (like tile cleaner and oven cleaners) should generally be avoided. Consider using natural cleaning products instead.

Body Temperature

- It is recommended that you do not do anything that raises your core body temperature while pregnant.
- Please avoid Jacuzzis, hot tubs or saunas.
- Warm bath or hot showers are fine.
- If you have a fever (temperature over 100.4) please call the clinic and take Tylenol as directed on the bottle (up to 3000mg/24hours).

Toxoplasmosis

Toxoplasmosis is the result of a parasite “*Toxoplasma Gondi.*” Contracting this while pregnant can cause fever and impact the health and growth of the fetus.

A *Toxoplasma* infection occurs by:

- Eating undercooked, contaminated meat (especially pork, lamb, and venison)
- Accidental ingestion of undercooked, contaminated meat after handling it and not washing hands thoroughly (*Toxoplasma* cannot be absorbed through intact skin)
- Eating food that was contaminated by knives, utensils, cutting boards and other foods that have had contact with raw, contaminated meat.
- Drinking water contaminated with *Toxoplasma gondii.*
- Accidentally swallowing the parasite through contact with cat feces that contain *Toxoplasma.*

This might happen by:

1. Cleaning a cat’s litter box when the cat has shed *Toxoplasma* in its feces.
2. Touching or ingesting anything that has come into contact with cat feces that contain *Toxoplasma*
3. Accidentally ingesting contaminated soil (e.g., not washing hands after gardening or eating unwashed fruits or vegetables from a garden)

Listeriosis and Other Foodborne Illness

Listeriosis and other foodborne illnesses can greatly impact you and your infant. It is best to practice general food safety in terms of cooking, refrigeration and food storage. Most importantly the following guidelines should be followed:

- Raw or undercooked egg and meats (chicken, fish, beef, wild game, lamb) should not be eaten during pregnancy due to increase in risk of harmful bacteria.
- Unpasteurized milk and cheese should be avoided. Check labels to insure pasteurization.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables before eating, even if from your home garden or labeled organic.

Douching

- Vaginal douching (rinsing out the inside of your vagina with water or chemicals) is not recommended in pregnancy as it can lead to infection.

Hair Dyes

- Animal studies have shown that very large amounts of hair dyes and perms may be toxic to fetuses. Usually women are not exposed to such high doses during hair treatments.
- Avoid hair dyes and perms during the first trimester (up to 14 weeks.)
- Semi-permanent dyes and highlights contain fewer chemicals and may be less toxic.

Safe Sex in Pregnancy

- If you are not in a monogamous or exclusive sexual relationship, it is very important that you use a condom every time that you have sex while you are pregnant to protect yourself and your baby from sexually transmitted infections. Sexually transmitted infections can be very dangerous to your baby while it is inside the womb and can cause miscarriage.

Dental Work

- It is recommended that all pregnant women have their teeth cleaned by a dentist during the second trimester (between 14-27 weeks.)
- If you need a dental X-ray while you are pregnant, it should be safe. Make sure that the dentist knows you are pregnant so that they can be sure to use extra protective coverings.
- Numbing agents used by dentists (such as Lidocaine) are safe while you are pregnant.

Travel During Pregnancy

- It is important to always wear a seat belt (both the lap and shoulder belts) while you are pregnant. Do not turn off air bags. Lap belt should be worn below your belly.
- For healthy pregnant women, airplane travel is almost always safe. Be sure to drink extra fluids while flying and try to get an aisle seat so that you can easily get up to stretch your legs. Contact the clinic if you develop any tenderness or hard red areas in your lower legs after flying.

Vitamins & Supplements

- It is important to take a prenatal vitamin throughout your pregnancy. You can choose any brand you like, or the clinic can prescribe it to you. If you are unable to take a vitamin or pill, an appointment can be made with our nutritional counselor.

Exercise

- Getting regular exercise is a very important part of having a healthy pregnancy and birth. Walking, swimming and yoga are great choice while you are pregnant.
- You will probably need to drink extra water while exercising and eat a high protein snack or meal before and after.
- Avoid heaving lifting, abdominal exercises, contact sports, or activities with a higher risk of falling.

Caffeine

- Studies have shown that an 8 oz. cup of caffeine is safe throughout pregnancy. 3-5 cups a day have been associated with an increased risk for miscarriage.

Nicotine, Alcohol, Marijuana and other substance use should be discussed with your provider.