

## **Obstetric patients:**

### **Congratulations and Welcome to the Women's Centre for Wellbeing!**

We are very excited about taking care of you and your pregnancy. We realize this is a very special time for you and your family and friends. We want you to be informed and get your questions answered during the pregnancy. Please purchase the book "What To Expect When You Are Expecting" and refer to it for your questions. If this source does not answer your questions, please write them down to discuss at your next visit. This decreases the number of phone calls to the office and after office hours calls which is for emergency use. Below are some guidelines for most common questions.

**Air travel:** Unless instructed by the office to avoid air travel, pregnant patients can travel in pressurized (commercial) aircraft up to 36 weeks.

**Alcohol:** Many studies have shown that alcohol intake, either daily or binge, will cause certain birth defects and fetal brain damage. This is at a certain amount of intake but since we know it is a toxin our recommendation is zero alcohol intake during pregnancy!

**Allergies:** Avoid over the counter medications. If severe allergies, talk to us during your visit about possible prescription medications we can give you.

**Breast feeding:** The breast's primary purpose is to feed your baby. Breast feeding is superior to formula to decrease infections, possibly allergies, ear infections, and future diabetes in your baby. We have an excellent lactation center at the Woodlands Memorial Hermann for further information and guidance.

**Cats:** Cats can carry toxoplasmosis, which can cause problems in pregnancy. This is mainly transmitted by cat feces. If you have cats

who are always indoors, there is minimal risk of problems. If your cats go outside (even occasionally) then you need to ask Dr. Eads or Joanne for a blood test for toxoplasmosis. Due to this risk, you should not change the kitty litter and avoid undercooked meats.

**Circumcision:** If your baby is a boy, you may want him circumcised. This is an ancient procedure with rare risks of bleeding or injury to the penis. It decreases the risk of some infections of the penis and is easier to keep clean. However, many pediatricians feel it is not medically necessary.

Let us know if you plan circumcision. Dr. Eads has extensive experience performing circumcisions and will talk with you about any questions.

**Colds:** Avoid over the counter medications. If absolutely necessary, after 12 weeks you can take Pseudofed and/or Robitussin DM for coughing.

**Dental care:** We recommend that pregnant women get regular dental exams and cleaning during pregnancy. There have been some studies suggesting that poor dental care can increase the risk of premature labor. If your dentist has questions about what you can take they should call us.

**Diet:** A normal balanced diet is very important for you and your baby. We want you to gain 25-30 pounds from your ideal weight. If you are over 15 pounds above your ideal weight, limit your weight gain to 15 pounds. Please avoid excess lunch meats and over two cans of tuna per week. Do not eat certain fish with high levels of mercury – shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tile fish. Do not eat over 12 oz (two average meals) per week of the variety of fish and shellfish that are low in mercury – shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock, and cat fish. Do not eat more than two 6 oz cans of tuna per week. Eat light tuna, not Albacore. Locally caught fish should be

limited to 6 oz per week. Caffeine beverages should be minimally consumed. Guarana is in some drinks and is a very high source of caffeine. This should be avoided.

**Exercise:** If you were exercising prior to pregnancy, you may continue but with the general guidelines of no straining, do not get your heart rate over 150 beats per minute, and no excessive sweating.

If you were not exercising prior to pregnancy, don't start any exercise regiment until after the first 12 weeks of pregnancy (with above guidelines).

Avoid lying on your back after 16 weeks of pregnancy (for sleep or exercise). You should sleep on your side, not on your back or stomach, after the first 12 weeks. You or your mate can push pillows behind your back to keep you from turning onto your back during sleep. You can also purchase a body pillow that is longer than the average pillow to lean onto. Do not scuba dive or snorkel below the surface of the water.

**Hair treatments:** There have not been good studies to evaluate the risks of hair chemicals during pregnancy. We recommend using common sense and minimizing these as much as possible. There have been some concerns about dark hair dyes so these should especially be minimized.

**Hot tubs:** No hot tubs, saunas, or Jacuzzis if their temperature is over body temperature (98.6 degrees). Hot showers or tub baths are fine as long as your abdomen is not covered by the water.

**Medications over the counter:** Avoid all over the counter medications except Tylenol. NO Motrin (or any other ibuprofen-containing pill, such as Advil) or aspirin unless instructed to do so.

**Nausea/vomiting:** Mild to moderate nausea/vomiting is not unusual. Try small meals, especially crackers and keep hydrated with Gatorade or Powerade. If it so severe you cannot keep even water down and you do not produce urine, please call us. You can try ginger root (such as Ginger Ale) and 50 mg. of vitamin B6 every 8 hours.

**Prenatal Labs:** At your first or second prenatal visit, a prenatal profile will be drawn at the lab. This includes routine prenatal labs (blood type and Rh, antibody screen, blood count, syphilis test, hepatitis B test, AIDS test, urine culture and German measles). An elective test for a carrier state of cystic fibrosis (a severe lung condition in the newborn) is available. Dr. Eads or Joanne will discuss this with you.

At 14-21 weeks, a blood test (quad AFP) will be offered to test for the possibility of neural tube defects (including spina bifida or open spine). These conditions can cause nerve damage in your baby. This test can also show an increased risk of chromosomal abnormalities such as Down syndrome with a >80% detection rate. These are only screening tests and have a false positive rate of approx. 5%. If positive then further testing will be offered for confirmation.

At approx. 28 weeks, a 2hr. blood sugar test for gestational diabetes will be done with a repeat test for anemia and antibody screen.

Blood tests for chromosomal abnormalities (ex. Down syndrome) are also available. A blood test (PAPP-A & free beta-HCG) plus ultrasound for “nuchal translucency” can be done at 10 3/7 – 13 6/7 weeks and detects 84% of Down syndrome with a 20% false positive rate. If these tests are combined with a 15-18 week quad AFP test, the detection rate for Down syndrome is 95% with a false positive rate of 2%.

Amniocentesis ( a needle is placed into the baby's sac after local anesthesia and a sample of fluid is removed) is the ultimate test for

chromosomal abnormalities and neural tube defects but does carry an approx. 1 in 250 risk of injury to the baby or miscarriage. This is usually performed at approx. 16 weeks.

CVS (chorionic villus sampling) involves taking a sample of the placenta for chromosomal analysis. It has the advantage of being performed earlier (>9 weeks) than amniocentesis but may have a higher rate of complications.

**Sex:** There should be no problem with intercourse unless you cramp or bleed afterwards. If so, you should avoid intercourse for at least 2 weeks after the bleeding and/or cramping. If you have a history of premature labor, discuss this with Dr. Eads or Joanne at your appointment.

**Smoking:** Smoking is one of the worst things you can do during your pregnancy. It increases nearly every risk, especially bleeding, fetal growth problems and fetal death. Stop smoking, or at least cut down as much as possible.

**Tanning beds:** There have not been studies that show harm to the baby from you using tanning beds during pregnancy. However you will burn easier (natural sun or bed) when pregnant.

**Ultrasounds:** These are also called sonograms. Early ultrasounds may be done in the office for dating of your pregnancy or for complications. There will be a more involved and thorough ultrasound performed at approx. 16 weeks. You will be told the sex of your baby if you desire and if baby's positioning allows it to be seen.

If you want a 3D or 4D sonogram we will send you to a facility that does these. These are not usually covered by your insurance and are not recommended by the FDA and ACOG due to the remote risk of ultrasonic waves from these types of exams.

**Vaccines:** We do recommend the flu vaccine during pregnancy and at any gestational period unless you have a history of a reaction to vaccines.

**Vitamins:** You only need one prenatal vitamin per day, unless directed by the office. Please do not take other extra vitamins or herbs since some of these could be harmful to your baby. Over the counter prenatal vitamins (the ones you can buy in the grocery store or drug store) are felt to be as good as prescription vitamins or we can give you prescription prenatal vitamins.

**Work:** Try to avoid excessive lifting (straining) and any toxic chemicals (or pesticides). Discuss this with Dr. Eads or Joanne at your appointment.