

# HealthyActions

Achieving Your Goals for Healthy Living



## Helpful Tips for the Mother-to-be

As a mother-to-be, do all you can to keep you and your baby healthy and safe.

Studies show that pregnant women who get good prenatal care are more likely to<sup>1</sup>:

- Have healthy babies
- Have fewer problems during and after labor

It's best to see your doctor *before* you get pregnant.<sup>1</sup> If not, be sure to see your doctor as soon as you think you might be pregnant.<sup>2</sup> This way you can work with your doctor to have a healthier pregnancy. There are steps she can take to reduce the risk of certain problems.

Visits to the doctor while you are pregnant are called “prenatal (pree-NAY-tul) care.” Prenatal care may catch problems early on so they can be watched and treated. **Keeping these visits are one of the most important things you can do for your baby.**<sup>1</sup>

Prenatal care includes teaching and talking about your pregnancy. You will learn about foods to eat, exercise, medicines to take, and how to care for yourself and your baby. They also give you and your family a chance to talk to your doctor or nurse about questions or concerns you have.

### Medicine to take and not to take

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you are taking. Talk with your doctor before you take any new medicines or drugs including over-the-counter medicines.<sup>1</sup> Many medicines are not safe to take when pregnant.

### Eat healthy

You'll need to eat enough for both you and your baby. You need 300 extra calories a day.<sup>3</sup> Ask your doctor how you should change your diet. Ask your doctor about calcium, iron, and folic acid supplements.<sup>1</sup>

### Do not drink alcohol

Do not drink alcohol while pregnant<sup>1</sup> or while trying to get pregnant.<sup>4</sup> Your drinking may cause your child to have serious health problems.<sup>1</sup> Ask your doctor for help if you don't think you can quit on your own.

### Exercise

Studies show that exercising while you are pregnant is healthy.<sup>1</sup> Check with your doctor before you start working out. Good exercises for pregnant women are walking, swimming, and prenatal aerobics classes.<sup>1</sup>



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## Don't smoke

If you smoke while you are pregnant, you are more likely to have<sup>1</sup>:

- A baby who dies of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- An early (premature) birth
- A baby with low birth weight
- A stillbirth
- A baby with serious lung problems

For help to quit smoking, talk to your doctor.

## Preparing for Baby

The next nine months will be full of changes. You'll be busy fixing up your baby's room and thinking of names. You may also want to prepare in these ways:

- **Learn infant first aid and CPR.** This will help in an emergency.<sup>4</sup>
- **Buy a car safety seat.**<sup>4</sup> Learn how to install and use it the right way. If you need help, find a child safety and inspection station. Call 1-866-SEATCHECK or visit [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org).<sup>5</sup>
- **Start to child-proof your house.** Look around for anything that isn't safe for a baby. Move medicines and cleaning products to high shelves. Set your water heater to 120°F. Install locks on all toilets and cabinets in your home.<sup>4</sup>

## Time-out for You

Being pregnant is a joyful time. It can also bring aches and pains. Here are some ways to feel better<sup>6</sup>:

For:	Try:
Trouble sleeping	A body pillow. It gives support under your stomach and behind your back.
Nausea	Eat small frequent meals or dry toast/soda crackers and avoid spicy foods.
Stiff muscles	A heating pad.
Breasts that are tender	Maternity bra or larger size athletic bra. Try sleeping in your bra.
Skin that itches from stretching	Cocoa butter.

### Sources

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