

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) in Pregnancy

### **How much weight should I gain during my pregnancy?**

Appropriate weight gain during pregnancy depends on your pre-pregnancy weight, or body mass index (BMI). Women who are a normal weight prior to pregnancy (BMI 20-25) should gain between 25 and 35 pounds. Women who are overweight (BMI >30) should gain between 11 and 20 pounds throughout their pregnancy. Being underweight (BMI <20) can also put a pregnancy at risk and these patients should discuss weight gain and nutrition with their doctor.

Women who are carrying *twins* should gain about 40-50 pounds during their pregnancy.

**\*\*Generally, caloric intake should increase by only 300 calories daily during pregnancy—this is comparable to adding half a sandwich and a glass of skim milk to your diet.**

### **What are important nutrition restrictions and recommendations during pregnancy?**

In general, it is recommended to eat a *well-rounded diet* throughout your pregnancy. A pregnancy diet should include complex carbohydrates, protein, vitamins, and fat. Most experts believe eating *organic*, fresh food is better overall for your health than eating strictly pre-packaged foods that may contain high levels of preservatives, MSG, and high-fructose corn syrup.

Your protein intake may need to increase during pregnancy to reach the 100-120mg of protein/day recommendation (170mg/day for twins). Don't worry if during the first trimester you don't feel like eating so much protein; this usually resolves around 12 weeks.

Adequate hydration is very important during pregnancy. Moms should drink 60-80 ounces of fluid each day—we recommend plain water as the best source of hydration.

### **What kind of prenatal vitamins are best for my pregnancy?**

A prenatal vitamin should include at least 400 mcg of folic acid (more for twin pregnancies or for women with certain enzyme deficiencies). Fish oil supplementation is also recommended for brain development and possibly the prevention of preterm birth. These supplements should either be plant-based or from de-mercurized fish. Be careful not to take additional supplements during your pregnancy, unless directed by your doctor. Excess amounts of some vitamins can be toxic during fetal development. Some specific prenatal vitamins can help with iron-deficiency anemia, constipation, and/or nausea.

### **Can I eat sushi when I am pregnant?**

There is concern about raw/undercooked meats and the risk of acquiring certain food-borne illnesses during pregnancy. For this reason, you may be advised by your doctor to avoid rare meats and uncooked sushi.

### **Can I take herbal supplements safe during pregnancy?**

In general, there is a lack of adequate studies that assess the risk and/or benefits of most herbs during pregnancy. You should not think that just because an herb is “natural” that it is safe—many herbs can be harmful during pregnancy. Ask your doctor about specific herbal therapies you are considering.

### **Can I drink alcohol during pregnancy?**

Consuming alcoholic beverages is KNOWN to cause fetal-alcohol syndrome and adverse pregnancy outcomes. We do not know how much occasional alcohol intake is too much during pregnancy. For these reasons, it is advisable to avoid alcohol during your pregnancy...except maybe a half glass of wine on your birthday.

### **How much coffee/caffeine can I drink during pregnancy?**

Most women should cut back on the amount of caffeine they regularly consume. We recommend restricting caffeine intake to one or two 8 ounce coffee(s) per day.

### **Is it safe to have sex during pregnancy?**

In general, intercourse is safe throughout pregnancy. Sometimes, a small amount of spotting or staining may occur after intercourse. Your doctor may advise you not to have intercourse if:

- you have abnormal bleeding at any point during pregnancy
- you have an abnormal placental location (placenta previa)
- you are at risk of preterm labor
- you have rupture of amniotic membranes.

### **Can I travel during my pregnancy?**

Traveling is not considered to be harmful to you or your pregnancy. Long plane flights can put women at an increased risk of forming blood clots in their legs. For this reason, it is important to hydrate well, stand and stretch occasionally, and flex your feet/calves in-flight. We don't recommend most travel after 30-32 weeks of pregnancy for low-risk pregnancies. After 20 weeks gestation, we recommend you be evaluated by your doctor 1-2 days prior to long-distance travel and it is a good idea to travel with a copy of your prenatal records. All travel is at your own risk, as many complications of pregnancy can occur without warning.