

COMMON QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:

Pregnancy is a perfectly natural state and should be a happy, healthy and exciting period of your life.

It is also a time of tremendous change. The emotional and physical changes you experience in pregnancy can leave you with many questions. We hope the following list of “do’s and dont’s” will be helpful.

Activities/Exercise: Exercise is important to you and your baby. Avoid tiring exercise or heavy lifting (including lifting your older children). If you are normally active in sports, continue to enjoy them. If you are thinking of beginning a new sport or activity, we advise you to call your midwife first. Impact sports or impact aerobics are not recommended due to increase risk of joint injury. Your pulse should not exceed 120 beats per minute for more than 5 minutes at a time.

Alcohol: Women should not drink alcoholic beverages when they are pregnant or considering pregnancy.

Clothing: The most important thing is to be comfortable. A bra that fit well is most important, your size or cup may change several times during pregnancy. Your bra should fit well without pressing, binding or rubbing against your nipples. Flat or low-heeled shoes usually help your posture and are more comfortable than high-heel shoes.

Constipation: If you become constipated, drink more liquids, especially water and juice. Eat fresh raw vegetables and fruits. You should also eat more whole grain breads and cereals. Metamucil, Citrucel or Fibercon may be useful. If you have painful hemorrhoids, try witch hazel compresses or Tuck’s medicate pads. **DO NOT** take any laxatives without first checking with your midwife.

Employment: We encourage you to continue working throughout your pregnancy. You should not work more than 40 hours a week. Do not lift anything heavier than 25 lbs. Discuss occupational hazards with your midwife.

Headaches: Headaches can be caused by many factors and are particularly common in the second trimester of pregnancy. It is important to get adequate sleep. Comfort measures such as massage, cool compresses and relaxation techniques may be helpful. You may also take Tylenol to relieve headaches. If you experience persistent or severe headaches, notify your midwife. (Do not take aspirin or Ibuprophen).

Heartburn: Avoid fried or acid foods, sometimes decreasing the amount of caffeine, chocolates, coffee, tea and soda may help. Tums or Rolaids chewable tables may be helpful.

Morning sickness: Nausea is common in early pregnancy and often disappears by the second trimester. Vitamin B complex can help prevent nausea. Small, frequent non-greasy meals may relieve nausea and vomiting. Keep dry cereal or dry crackers at your bedside and try nibbling on them before you get out of bed. If you cannot keep even plain water down, you may be dehydrated. Call your midwife.

Nutrition: Proper nutrition is essential for development of your baby. The clinical staff will assist you with meal planning if needed. Please sign up for the WIC program if you are eligible.

Personal Hygiene: During pregnancy you will probably perspire more. Your usual daily bathing or shower will not only refresh and relax you, but also help to prevent infection. Remember to get assistance getting out of the bathtub in the last months of pregnancy.

Sexual Relations: For healthy woman, there are few restrictions on sexual intercourse during pregnancy. Your doctor or midwife may advise against sex at certain times, because of bleeding, a history of miscarriage or premature labor. Check with your midwife if intercourse is painful. Discontinue intercourse and notify your provider if you have bleeding, feel you have an infection or your water breaks.

Smoking: Women who do not smoke are more likely to deliver a healthy baby of normal weight. Smoking during pregnancy is directly associated with low birth weight, premature babies, miscarriages and other complications. Smoking during breastfeeding is also not advisable since the nicotine will be passed on to the baby through your breast milk. Smoking

cessation programs are available. For more information talk to your midwife.

Teeth: Early in your pregnancy, you should visit your dentist to have a dental examination, followed by any necessary treatment. Novocain may be used if you are more than 12 weeks pregnant. We would be happy to discuss your care with your dentist if he or she wishes to call us.

Vaginal Discharge: Increased vaginal discharge is normal with pregnancy. Vaginal discharge which itches, burns or has a foul odor may be a sign of infection. Check with your midwife for a treatment plan.

Varicose Veins: Varicose veins are common during pregnancy. Support hose really help if you put the stocking on before you get out of bed in the morning and wear them daily. Elevate your legs as often as you have a chance. Circular garters or rolled stocking make varicose veins worse. It is also helpful to avoid constipation and crossing your legs. Vitamin E, 400 IU daily will help strengthen the vein walls, but is not recommended if your blood pressure is elevated.