

Common Prenatal Information

- Each **pregnancy** is unique, certain changes are common to all normal pregnancies. A basic understanding of physical and emotional changes of pregnancy helps a woman to understand pregnancy and have a positive experience.
- **Preconceptual Counseling.** If you are able to become pregnant or planning a pregnancy within the next 2 years you should be taking 0.4 mg (400 mcg =100% label description) of folic acid each day. Folic acid is a B vitamin and is usually contained in most over-the-counter vitamins. This vitamin supplement has proven to reduce the incidence of Trisomy 13 and Neurotube Defects.
- **Travel During Pregnancy.** Typically during the first two trimesters and into the third, it is perfectly safe to travel as long as you are not experiencing any complications and your doctor has not indicated any reasons for prohibiting travel. It is important to have frequent opportunities to walk briefly and drink plenty of fluids during your travels.
- **Weight Gain.** The average recommended weight gain during pregnancy is 25 to 35 pounds. A woman that is considered underweight a 30 – 40 weight gain is appropriate. A women that is considered overweight an approximate 10 – 15 pound weight gain is appropriate.
- **Exercise.** If you have had an exercise regimen discuss the details with your doctor for his/her recommendation on how to proceed through your pregnancy. However, daily walking is encouraged.

Birth Defects

- **Occurrences.** About 3% to 5% of babies are born with birth defects. A healthy lifestyle can prevent some of these.
- **Chorionic Villus Sampling.** Chorionic villus sampling (CVS) is a procedure used to diagnose certain birth defects in the first trimester of pregnancy. The test is performed by a perinatologist.
- **Amniocentesis.** Amniocentesis is a procedure performed on pregnant women in their second trimester to diagnose or rule out genetic birth defects.
- **Down Syndrome.** Down syndrome is a birth defect that occurs in approximately 1 in 900 births. It is the most common birth defect and its affects on the fetus vary from mild to severe.
- **Cystic Fibrosis.** Cystic fibrosis is a genetic disorder. It's caused by a change, or mutation, in a gene. The changed gene is passed down in families. To pass on this disease, both parents must be carriers of

the changed gene.

Available Prenatal Testing

- **Alpha-Fetoprotein Test.** The AFP test identifies pregnancies at higher-than-average risk of certain serious birth defects, such as spina bifida (open spine) and Down syndrome.
- **Fetal Well-Being Tests.** Fetal Kick Counts, Non-Stress Test and Biophysical Profile. These tests are designed to evaluate the status of the placenta and whether or not oxygen and nutrition transferred to the fetus are being affected.
- **Quad Screen Test.** This is a prenatal blood test that measures maternal blood (mother blood) between the 15th and 20th week of pregnancy to provide you and your doctor valuable information about you and your growing fetus.
- **Ultrasound.** Pregnancy ultrasound is a very common method of surveying the fetus and the female pelvic organs during pregnancy. The ultrasound machine sends out high-frequency sound waves, which reflect off body structures to create a picture.
- **First trimester screening.** This screening is typically performed between the 12th to 14th week of gestation and is composed of an ultrasound and blood tests can give expected parents up to 95% detection the risk of Down's syndrome and trisomy 18.

Nutrition

- **Planning Ahead.** Nutrition is a primary factor in the health of mother and baby. A well-balanced diet before conception contributes to a healthy pregnancy and will probably need few changes.
- **Well-Balanced Diet.** One of the most important things a woman can do to ensure a healthy pregnancy for herself and her baby is to eat a well-balanced diet. Good nutrition during pregnancy is essential to creating an environment that allows the baby to grow and flourish. Everything you eat and drink while you are pregnant can affect your baby.

Avoid.

- The consumption of vitamin A above 10,000 IU daily (200% of the Daily Value (DV))
- Consuming large or raw fish (Tuna, Shark, Mackerel, etc.) more than once a week due to the risks associated with high level of mercury in these fish that may adversely affect a developing fetus.
- Daily consumption of Caffeine.

Complications

- Since 1984, all OTC drug products have carried the following warning:
'As with any other drug, if you are pregnant or nursing, seek the advice of a health professional before using this product.'
- Most women are immunized against certain diseases at a young age. When this doesn't occur, immunizations become an important part of prenatal care.
- **Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS).** FAS, a disorder characterized by growth retardation, facial abnormalities, and central nervous system dysfunction (CNS), is caused by a woman's use of alcohol during pregnancy. Avoid any alcohol consumption during pregnancy
- **Intrauterine Growth Retardation.** Intrauterine growth retardation is used to describe an infant whose weight is significantly less than expected for its gestational age, not future mental or intellectual abilities
- **Macrosomia.** Macrosomia is a term used to describe large fetuses/infants - approximately 9 pounds.
- **Tay-Sachs Disease.** Tay-Sachs Disease is an inherited, severe neurodegenerative disorder, commonly found in eastern European Jewish families and some French-Canadian families. It is characterized by progressive mental and physical retardation and early death.
- **Preterm and Low Birth Weight.** Evidence as linked severe smoking, methamphetamines, periodontal disease, untreated bacterial vaginal infections in pregnant women to a significant increase in the risk of delivering preterm and low birth weight babies.
- **Signs of Preterm Labor.** Leaking of fluid, lower abdominal/lower back rhythmic cramping, vaginal bleeding.
- **Stillbirth.** Stillbirth is defined as the death of a fetus between the 20th week (5th month) of pregnancy and birth. This is a particularly devastating event for the parents, family and physician.