

Healthy YOU, Healthy BABY

Implementing simple lifestyle changes during preconception & pregnancy will help promote your baby's lifelong health & wellbeing. Since we can't know for sure when conception will occur, the time to start these habits is now!



MOVEMENT

Q. Why is exercise important for my health & my baby's health?

Exercise before conception decreases risk of some chronic diseases in the offspring, and helps parents' health. Exercise during pregnancy increases oxygen and nutrients to baby, helps neuro-development, and improves your mood & mental wellness. Children are more likely to be intelligent and more physically advanced.

Q. What type of exercise should I do?

PRECONCEPTION

Ideally, at least 90 days before conception, continue or begin doing exercise you enjoy- like brisk walking, dancing, sports, weight training- 30min/day at moderate intensity (be able to talk while exercising). If you are physically active, stick to 60% intensity. Men should moderately exercise (60% exertion) at least 90 days prior to conception as well.

PREGNANCY

Keep moving by doing any exercise you enjoy 30min/day. Fast walking is great. Research has shown that moderate exercise (60-80% of age-predicted maximum maternal heart rate) has beneficial effects unless your healthcare professional advises otherwise.

POSTPARTUM

It is natural that your body will need rest in the time period following delivery (>3wks). However, light to moderate exercise can be started as soon as you feel good, and are cleared by your doctor, regardless of breastfeeding.

Q. When should I stop or modify exercising?

If you have any pain, contractions, anemia, placenta previa, cardiovascular disease, multiple gestation, altitudes above 6000 ft, extreme weather, bleeding, or concerns please stop exercising and consult with your OBGYN or Primary Care Physician. If you suspect that you may have a diastasis (stretching of the central abdominal seam) or leak urine, consult with a Perinatal Specialist like a Women's Health Physical Therapist to guide your exercise program and help improve your core support safely.



ENVIRONMENT

Q. Why is it important to minimize exposure to certain chemicals and a toxic environment for our health and baby's health?

We can't change the regions/environments we live in, but minimizing exposure to toxic chemicals and a stressful environment can help support the lifespan of the parents and fetus/baby.

Q. What are ways to reduce harmful exposures at home?

- Choose loving, supportive environments, sounds and places that make you feel safe, and good
- Sleep 7-8hrs/night w/ access to fresh air
- Filter your drinking water and air (with HEPA devices) if possible
- Use airplane mode, avoid wireless headsets & do NOT keep devices on your body to reduce EMF exposure
- Choose organic & natural food, beauty, and household products & finishes
- Avoid exposure to cigarette, vaping or cigar smoke



NUTRITION

Q. Why is eating healthy foods important for your health and baby's health?

Eating a balanced, colorful, seasonal diet rich in proteins (80-100g when pregnant), fats, and complex carbohydrates from whole foods like vegetables (organic, when possible) nourishes mom, dad, and baby to optimize cellular function and development. Vegetables, cooked organic/grass-fed/free range meats (when possible), healthy fats (omega-3's/DHA), fruits, and filtered water are important and can reduce inflammation.

Q. Are supplements important and when are they needed?

Mothers should supplement with Methylated Folate. Mothers may also want to consider supplementing with Omega 3/DHA and Vitamin D3. Vegetarians & vegans should supplement with B12 also.

Q. What foods should be avoided?

Alcohol, raw fish/meat, soft cheeses, refined sugars, and highly-processed, pre-packaged foods. You may consider avoiding gluten and dairy to reduce inflammation as well.



SUPPORT

Q. Why are supportive relationships important for our health and baby's health?

This period of changes in your life can be less overwhelming if you seek out supportive relationships that help keep you positive and vibrant.

Q. How can I improve my social support if loved ones are far away?

Seek community by joining groups: women's groups, pregnancy groups, support groups, and seek out relationships with supportive neighbors. Minimize social isolation.

Q. When does support matter most?

WOMAN: It is important to have support by loved ones during pregnancy and especially in the first 40 days post-partum. Start thinking of who can help you with household chores & cooking so that you can focus on rest, healing and your baby. Consider hiring medical professionals/midwife or doula for extra support around the time of birth.

PARTNER: You are one of the most important parts of the baby and mom's journey. Support and stay close to your partner and baby. Utilize resources or groups to support you through this transition. Regardless of what your relationship is like, you can make it better during this period, and that will have positive effects.



MENTAL WELLNESS

Q. Why is Mental Wellness important for your health and baby's health?

Your experiences are your baby's experiences, to some extent. This is a critical time to promote your wellbeing and reduce your stress. Certain lifestyle choices can counteract the negative effects of stress, which can be passed down to your baby.

Q. How can I improve my Mental Wellness?

Mental Wellness includes positive social connections, a mind-body practice (Meditation, Tai Chi, Yoga, Dance, Prayer, etc.), improving indoor air quality (healthy plants, air filter), physical activity (like brisk walking), being in nature & getting 7-8hrs of sleep.

Q. Why is good sleep hygiene so important to Mental Wellness?

Going to sleep at a regular time, in darkness, without electronic devices (at least 5ft away), for an uninterrupted 7-8hrs of sleep is especially important throughout the perinatal period. It is anti-inflammatory and calms the nervous system/mind. Keeping a regular early bedtime and wake up time, exposing yourself to natural light in the morning keeps your natural daily rhythms strong, and is greatly beneficial for balanced mind and vitality.



JOY

Q. Why is having fun important for our health and baby's health?

Having fun helps you feel good, reduces stress and positively impacts the future health of your baby, especially brain development. Seek out times you can feel light, free, and full of laughter, but also seek out times you feel safe & peaceful inside. Get in touch with your inner joy, the joy of creating a new life.

Q. What activities promote joy?

Any pleasurable activities like listening to music you like, hobbies, dancing, singing or talking to your baby. It usually involves sharing time with others or connecting with yourself or baby: like peaceful time doing a mind-body exercise (yoga, meditation, walking), or becoming absorbed in a pleasurable activity alone or with others.

Q. How much of my time should be devoted to joy & fun?

Quality is more important than quantity. Integrate something you consider fun into what you do each day (15-20minutes per day at least).

Q. How does sexual health affect us and baby?

PRECONCEPTION

Staying sexually active 2-3x/wk in your life is positive to each partners' overall health and evidence shows that it reduces inflammation.

PREGNANCY

If your doctor clears you for sexual activity, you are free to engage but be mindful to decrease intercourse in 3rd trimester due to relative precautions. Connecting with your partner, for example hugging one another or engaging in other sexual activity is also beneficial.

POSTPARTUM

Baby's immune system improves when partners are sexually active after birth. Once cleared by doctor for sexual activity, 2-3x/wk is optimal for your health and baby's health.



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