

Wellesley Women's Care, P.C.

Obstetrics / Gynecology / Infertility

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Welcome!

We are very pleased to be caring for you during your pregnancy. Our goal is to be a partner with you and your family to provide comprehensive prenatal care and a safe, satisfying delivery. We aim to provide the best medical care with all the modern technology available, as well as attending to the emotional and educational needs of both you and your family. We've provided the following information to answer frequent questions that may arise during your pregnancy.

Common First Trimester Concerns

Amniocentesis:

If you will be 35 years old or older when your baby is due, we will discuss amniocentesis, which is used to detect genetic problems in the fetus. Amniocentesis is usually done between 15 to 16 weeks of pregnancy. Your doctor will make the arrangements to schedule your amniocentesis after a discussion with you about the risks and benefits at your first prenatal visit.

Caffeine and Alcohol:

One serving of caffeine per day is permitted and does not appear to be harmful to the fetus. Research regarding the effects of caffeine is inconclusive and continues. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause birth defects, learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and mental retardation in your baby. The adverse effects of drinking depend on the amount of alcohol consumed, the stage of pregnancy, and certain susceptibilities in the mother and her baby. The effects of even small amounts of alcohol on the unborn baby are still unclear. Therefore, the safest course while you are pregnant is not to drink at all.

Cigarette Smoking:

Smoking has been proven to be harmful to the fetus and we strongly urge you to stop smoking during pregnancy. Smoking increases the risk of low birth weight, pre-term delivery, placental abruption and fetal death. Smoking can also increase the risk of having a baby that dies from sudden infant death syndrome.

Cystic Fibrosis:

The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommends testing for all high risk individuals (those with a family history of CF) and for certain populations at higher risk for Cystic Fibrosis. At this time Caucasians are at high risk and should consider being tested. Native Americans, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, are not at an increased risk, but may request the test.

Toxoplasmosis:

Toxoplasmosis is an infection that you can get from eating raw or undercooked meat or from contact with soil/litter contaminated with cat feces. Cats become infected with the parasite from mice or rats, and then excrete the organism in their stool. Prevention is the key to avoiding this disease. Avoid eating raw or undercooked meat. Wash your hands carefully after handling raw meat or fresh produce. Wear gloves if your garden or may come in contact with soil/sand/dirt contaminated with cat feces. Allow someone else to empty your cat's litter box.

General Concerns

AFP4 (Maternal Serum Screening) Quad Screen

This is a blood test done at your 16th week of pregnancy. The AFP4 test will screen for neural tube defects. In women having an amniocentesis the AFP4 will be directly measured from the amniotic fluid (this test is not necessary if you definitely want the amniocentesis). It is your option to have this test performed, and further information, as well as a consent form, will be provided at your first or second prenatal visit.

Antibiotics:

When prescribed by a physician, penicillin or its derivatives and erythromycin are considered safe and are permitted throughout pregnancy. Sulfa drugs are permitted until the last month of pregnancy. Do not use tetracycline or quinolones during pregnancy.

Colds:

Increased fluids and rest are important; cool air vaporizers as well as saline nose drops (Ocean) can help alleviate symptoms from a cold. Do not use nasal sprays other than Ocean. If needed, Tylenol can be used for fever, body aches, or headaches. Sudafed, Actifed, Tylenol Cold (non-drowsy formula), or Sinutab (non-drowsy formula) can be used for congestion; any of the Robitussin products. Just make sure to compare labels carefully so you are getting the correct medicine and dosage. Please contact your Primary Care Physician for an appointment if you have a fever that lasts more than 48 hours.

Flu (intestinal):

For nausea and vomiting rest and clear liquid diet (no citrus or dairy products) is recommended for 12-24 hours. Start back on solid foods slowly with the BRAT diet (**B**ananas, **R**ice, **A**pplesauce, and **T**oast) and progress back to a normal diet as tolerated. For diarrhea avoid dairy products and follow BRAT diet for 24 to 48 hours, progress back to a normal diet as tolerated. If fever is present and 100.5 or higher, Tylenol is recommended. Kaopectate may be used if the above diet modifications don't alleviate diarrhea. Pepto Bismol use should be restricted for the first half of pregnancy. Call the office if fever, vomiting, or diarrhea lasts more than 48 hours.

Constipation:

Constipation is a very common complaint for pregnant women. Increased fluids, fiber, and exercise help the most. If these do not work, a stool softener such as Colace and/or a fiber-bulking product such as Metamucil or Citrucel may be used. If these remedies do not work, contact your doctor.

Vaginal Discharge:

It is normal to notice increased vaginal discharge during your pregnancy. This mucus secretion occurs from the cervix in response to the hormones of pregnancy. It is not advisable to use tampons for this discharge during pregnancy, light mini pads are recommended. If vaginal discharge becomes excessive and is itchy, irritated, or has a foul odor, you should be evaluated by your care provider.

Dizzy Spells:

During the early part of pregnancy it is not uncommon to become faint or light-headed all of a sudden. This is caused by circulatory changes in your body and will usually go away by the second half of the pregnancy. Lying flat on your back toward the end of your pregnancy can cause dizziness so lying on your left side is recommended. Some tips to avoid feeling dizzy: don't change position too suddenly, and ease your self from lying down or sitting to standing very slowly. Also avoid going for long stretches of time without eating, small frequent protein rich snacks are a good idea.

Nose Bleeds:

Frequent nosebleeds can be common in women during pregnancy due to the increased blood supply to the nasal lining. If a nose bleed occurs treat with finger pressure on the side of the nose that is bleeding. Call if the bleeding is heavy and you are unable to stop it with pressure. Nasal congestion is also very common in pregnancy. Avoid nasal sprays/drops unless prescribed by your care provider.

Round Ligament Pain:

You may experience sharp pain in one or both groin regions from stretching or spasms of the round ligaments. These cord-like structures originate beneath the groin region and extend to the top of the uterus on both sides. Sudden movements like rolling over in bed or walking may aggravate round ligament pain. Reduced physical activity, position change, and the application of warm heating packs usually help to alleviate symptoms.

Heartburn:

Heartburn is another very common complaint in pregnancy. Eat small frequent meals and avoid fatty or spicy foods. Do not eat just before lying down and use extra pillows at night if they help. Antacids may be used such as Tums, Maalox, Mylanta, or Rolaids. Do not use baking soda or bicarbonate preparations for your heartburn.

Hemorrhoids:

Hemorrhoids are enlarged veins right at the opening of the rectum. These are very common in pregnancy. Preventing constipation is your first defense. If you do suffer from hemorrhoids you can try soaking in a warm tub or sitz bath twice a day, and use Tucks Pads (witch hazel pads or cream) or ointments such as Anusol. Please call the office if a hemorrhoid becomes hard and very painful. You may also use Topical Hydrocortisone 1% for painful or itchy hemorrhoids.

Dental Care:

Regular visits to the dentist are recommended. Emergency dental x-rays are permitted as long as the abdomen is shielded. If it is not an emergency, waiting until the second or third trimester for x-rays is better. Normal cleaning and repair with Novocain or other local anesthetics are permitted throughout pregnancy. Swollen and bleeding gums are common during pregnancy. You can minimize this by using proper brushing and flossing.

Breastfeeding:

We encourage and support breastfeeding. For first time parents, we recommend a breast-feeding class as well as some reading. Breastfeeding classes are offered at our office by *Lactation Care* and at Newton Wellesley Hospital. The reading list also suggests several resource guides for breastfeeding.

Childbirth Education:

We recommend childbirth education for everyone as well as parenting and breastfeeding classes for first time parents. Classes fill up quickly, so sign up early (12-16 weeks). Information on traditional childbirth education classes, as well as other parenting courses offered by Newton Wellesley Hospital will be provided for you in your prenatal pre-registration packet. For any questions regarding the childbirth classes contact the Childbirth Education Department at Newton Wellesley Hospital at 617-243-6566.

Exercise:

Regular exercise 4-5 times a week is recommended. Brisk walking for one half hour or just about any low impact exercise you are accustomed to is fine. Remember to keep the heart rate at or below 140 and do not exercise “to the limit”. **You should stop any exercise if you develop shortness of breath, chest pain, extreme dizziness, or fatigue.**

Basic Guidelines for Exercise during Pregnancy

- *avoid impact exercise during pregnancy*
- *avoid stress to your low back area*
- *exercise for shorter periods of time and rest frequently*
- *avoid doing full sit-ups and raising both legs while lying flat*
- *limit the intensity of your exercise program to the same limits that you set when you were not pregnant*
- *reduce weight-bearing exercise (running, weight machines) in favor of non-weight-bearing exercise (swimming, walking).*

Headaches:

These are common in the first trimester and are usually helped by increasing fluids and res. Tylenol may be used if necessary by following the recommended dose on the bottle. DO NOT use aspirin or Ibuprofen. If you notice that headaches are associated with visual changes, excessive nausea and vomiting, fevers, or other neurological signs, please call our office immediately.

HIV Testing:

HIV testing is recommended for all pregnant women. There are effective medications to prevent HIV transmission to a newborn child.

Listeria:

Listeria is bacteria often found in un-pasteurized cheese, soft cheeses, and occasionally processed deli foods. We recommend that you do not eat un-pasteurized or soft cheese (brie, blue, goat, feta, soft mozzarella). Outbreaks of Listeria occasionally occur in other foods. These are reported to the health department and in the media. Avoid these foods in the event of an outbreak.

Seafood:

Mercury and PCP's are found in certain fish and shellfish. "Light tuna" in a can, can be eaten but no more than 12oz. per week. Swordfish, shark, king mackerel, tilefish, and tuna steak are definite "no, no's". Overall fish intake should be restricted to 12oz. per week.

Sexual Activity:

Intercourse is unrestricted throughout pregnancy unless a complication such as bleeding, placenta previa, pre-term labor or ruptured membranes has occurred. Desire for sex may rise or fall significantly during pregnancy. If you lose interest in sex, don't worry. It happens to a lot of women and doesn't usually last long. Many women and their partners are concerned that sexual activity will harm the baby. Don't worry, the baby is well protected by amniotic fluid, bone, and muscle, he/she won't be affected at all.

Sickle Cell Anemia:

We recommend women and/or their partners of African American descent should be screened. This can be discussed with your doctor and scheduled at the time of your first prenatal visit.

Tay-Sachs:

Women and their partners of Jewish, French Canadian, or Cajun descent will have the option of being tested for this disease. Women and their partners of Jewish descent will also be offered testing for Canavan's Disease, Cystic Fibrosis, and Familial Dysautonomia, along with other inherited genetic diseases.

Painting:

Latex and water based paints are ok for you to use if you are in a well-ventilated area and you limit your exposure time. Avoid any lead based paint as it can potentially harm your baby. If oil based enamels, paint thinners, or paint strippers are used in your home, leave the area for 24 hours or until the odor subsides.

Travel:

Air travel is permitted throughout pregnancy, but it is recommended to stay close to home during the last six to eight weeks of the pregnancy or earlier if there are complications. Whether traveling by air, train, or car, be sure to move around at least every two hours. **Do not use Dramamine in pregnancy for motion sickness.**

Saunas and Hot Tubs:

Very hot water and steam should be avoided during the early part of your pregnancy. You can harm your baby if you raise the temperature of his/her environment over 100 degrees for an extended period of time. Avoid hot tubs while you're pregnant. If you want to soak your foot that's fine, just don't put your whole body in the water. Avoid saunas completely.

Household Chemicals:

Avoid prolonged or heavy exposure to as many household chemicals as possible. When using cleaning agents you should wear gloves and work in well-ventilated areas. Avoid use of pesticides, insecticides, and weed killers. Try to use pump sprays or aerosol whenever possible. Exercise caution with hair dyes and permanents, it is recommended to complete the first trimester before having any hair processing done.

Aspartame (NutraSweet):

There is no evidence to suggest that aspartame is a risk to your baby while you are pregnant. But until more evidence and information is available, we advise you to minimize your use during pregnancy.

Work:

You'll probably be physically able to work during your entire pregnancy, but you should take some precautions with your job. Your job shouldn't expose you to chemicals or radiation that may be harmful to your baby. Try to arrange for short rest periods during the day when you can sit down and put your feet up. If you have complications, some jobs will not be safe to continue, especially in the latter stages of pregnancy. Discuss any concerns you have with your doctor.