

Wellesley Women's Care, P.C.

Obstetrics / Gynecology / Infertility

2000 Washington Street, Suite 764

Newton, MA 02462

617-965-7800

We've provided the following information to answer questions that may arise during your pregnancy.

Common Pregnancy Questions

Antibiotics:

When prescribed by a physician, penicillin or its derivatives, cephalosporins, and erythromycin (except for the estolate) 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.

Sugar Substitutes:

There is no evidence to suggest that aspartame (NutraSweet) sucralose (Splenda) or stevioside (Stevia) is a risk to your baby while you are pregnant. But until more evidence and information are available, we advise you to minimize your use during pregnancy. Acesulfime, Truvia and sucralose are also choices for sugar substitutes. We recommend avoiding saccharin in pregnancy.

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 by *Lactation Care* and at Newton Wellesley Hospital.

Caffeine and Alcohol:

We recommend limiting caffeine to 100-200mg of caffeine per day. Below are typical amounts found in caffeinated beverages. Research regarding the effects of caffeine is inconclusive and continues. At typical levels of caffeine intake there does not appear to be an association between caffeine consumption and adverse reproductive outcomes including congenital anomalies, spontaneous abortion, fetal growth and preterm birth.

Typical amount found in caffeinated beverages:

Brewed coffee 8 oz.	95 – 200mg
Brewed decaf 8 oz.	2 – 12mg
Black tea 8 oz.	14 – 70mg
Green tea 8 oz.	24 – 45mg

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.

Childbirth Education:

If you are a first-time parent, we do recommend that you enroll in a traditional childbirth education class, a parenting class and if you are interested, a breastfeeding class. These and many other classes are offered through the Newton Wellesley Hospital or you are welcome to attend a class in your local community. We suggest that you find a class and enroll by your 20th week to ensure a spot. You can find more information for NWH classes on their website at <https://www.nwh.org/classes-and-resources/classes/childbirth-education>, or by contacting the Childbirth Education Department at 617-243-6649.

Cigarette Smoking:

Smoking has been proven to be harmful to the fetus and if you smoke **we strongly urge you to stop 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.

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 or saline nasal sprays. If needed, Tylenol or Tylenol Extra Strength can be used for fever, body aches, or headaches. Over the counter Antihistamines, such as Benadryl, Chlor-trimaton, Zyrtec, or Claritin are all safe but can cause drowsiness. Robitussin plain products are ok. Be 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.

Constipation:

Constipation is a very common complaint for pregnant women. Increased fluids, fiber (e.g. Metamucil or Citrucel), and exercise help the most. If these do not work, a stool softener such as Colace may be used. If these remedies do not work, contact your provider.

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, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians, are not at an increased risk, but may be tested.

Dental Care:

Regular visits to the dentist are recommended. Emergency dental x-rays are permitted as long as the abdomen is double 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 without epinephrine are permitted throughout pregnancy. Swollen and bleeding gums are common during pregnancy. You can minimize this with proper brushing and flossing.

Dizzy Spells:

During the early part of pregnancy, it is not uncommon to become suddenly faint or light-headed. 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 yourself 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. Finally, you are most dehydrated in the morning.

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.

You should stop any exercise if you develop shortness of breath, chest pain, extreme dizziness, or fatigue.

Basic Guidelines for Exercise during Pregnancy

- *hot yoga is not permitted*
- *avoid stress to your low back area*
- *stay hydrated. If sweating a lot, mix a sports drink with your water*
- *avoid doing full sit-ups and raising both legs while lying flat once you reach 16 weeks*
- *limit the intensity of your exercise program to the same limits that you set when you were not pregnant*
- *maintain your fitness level*
- *heart rate is not as important as perceived exertion. If you feel fine, keep on going; if not, stop or slow down*

Avoid

- *horseback riding*
- *water skiing*
- *scuba diving*
- *downhill skiing*
- *contact sports*
- *any exercise that can result in a serious fall*

Gastroenteritis or Food Poisoning

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. Call the office if fever, vomiting, or diarrhea lasts more than 48 hours.

Headaches:

These are common in the first trimester and are usually helped by increasing fluids and rest. 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.

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. You may also use Zantac or Pepcid as directed. 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.

HIV Testing:

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

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 of aerosol whenever possible. Exercise caution with hair dyes and permanents, it is recommended to complete the first trimester before having any hair processing done.

Listeria:

Listeria is bacteria often found in unpasteurized cheese, soft cheeses, and occasionally processed deli foods. We recommend that you do not eat unpasteurized 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.

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. Ocean or Saline nasal spray is safe in pregnancy.

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.

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.

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. Avoid hot tubs while you're pregnant. If you want to soak your feet, that is fine, just don't put your whole body in the water. Avoid saunas completely.

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". Eat up to 12 ounces (two average meals) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury. Commonly eaten fish that are low in mercury include shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, Pollack and catfish. Albacore (white) tuna has more mercury than canned light tuna, so consumption should be limited to 6 ounces (one average meal) a week. For more details visit www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish.

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 be screened with a Hemoglobin electrophoresis.

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. Thoroughly rinse fresh fruits and vegetables before eating. Wear gloves if you garden or may come in contact with soil/sand/dirt contaminated with cat feces. Allow someone else to empty your cat's litter box.

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 and stay well hydrated.

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.

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 later stages of pregnancy. Discuss any concerns you have with your provider.