

OBSTETRICAL CARE AT WOMEN'S SPECIALTY GROUP

Congratulations on your pregnancy! We are very pleased that you have chosen us as your care team. This letter is intended to answer common questions you may have regarding your pregnancy. We hope this will be a helpful reference for you. Please note that Obstetrics is one area of medicine where the art of medicine frequently supersedes the science of medicine. So the following information has some scientific background and evidence based medicine, but other areas are my best advice based on several decades of successfully providing obstetrical care.

- **Prenatal Vitamins-** If you are already on a prenatal vitamin and tolerating it well, please continue. You should check the label and make sure it has a minimum of 400mcg or 0.4mg of folic acid or more. Most prenatal vitamins have 800mg or 0.8mg of folic acid. Over-the-counter prenatal vitamins are a good choice. Although, sometimes they are not well tolerated. If that is the case a prescription prenatal vitamin may be prescribed. The only difference between prescription vitamins and over the counter prenatal vitamins are the prescription prenatal vitamins have 1000mcg or 1 mg of folic acid. Sometimes they are a little better tolerated, but they are more expensive. Let us know what your needs are at your new OB visit. We would prefer that you continue your prenatal vitamin, as your gestational nausea allows, throughout your pregnancy and your lactational experience.
- **Diet-**Please eat a well balanced diet with an emphasis on fresh fruits, vegetables and simply prepared foods. There are no foods that specifically need to be avoided. We would like you to limit your intake of fish such as tuna or halibut to a can of tuna a week, as there are some concerns of mercury toxicity. Lake fish and Pacific Northwest salmon are fine in any quantities. Shell fish and sushi are fine also. If you are having meat such as lunchmeat, hot dogs or sliced deli meat that is processed, we would prefer that you fully cook it prior to eating it.
- **Caffeine or Soda-** Several servings per day of a caffeinated beverage is fine throughout the pregnancy. Soda is not unsafe, but provides calories and will contribute to unnecessary weight gain. Diet soda is also safe, but probably a poor choice in any significant quantity as they will also contribute to weight gain. It is a long story you have to trust me!

- **Colds, Flu & Allergies**-Your best defense against colds and flu is to take good care of yourself, eat a healthy diet, get plenty of rest, exercise moderately and drink plenty of water. Proper hand washing and cough hygiene is also essential. Tylenol Cold and sinus is helpful for many patients and is safe to use. Over the counter Claritin, Robitussin DM, Triaminic Cough Syrup, Cholr-Trimeton, Sudafed and Actifed are also helpful for many patients. A humidifier can help with congestion. Flu vaccines are recommended to all pregnant women, and can be administered at any time during the pregnancy. For allergies over the counter Flonase, Allegra, Zyrtec and Claritin are safe to use.
- **Headaches and Body Pain**- Headaches and muscle aches are very common during pregnancy. Extra Strength Tylenol is safe to use. As are low heat heating pads for body aches. You may take Motrin, Aleve, and Excedrin Migraine up to 34 weeks.
- **Acid Reflux**- Acid reflux is a common problem during pregnancy. Towards the end, as your growing uterus pushes on your stomach and increases reflux of gastric acid into your esophagus. Using over the counter Tums, Prilosec, Zantac or Pepcid can be helpful. Lying down immediately after a meal will tend to make your reflux more intense. Stronger prescription medicines are available if your symptoms become more severe.
- **Constipation**-Constipation is an unfortunate and very common symptom during all of your pregnancy. It can make you terribly uncomfortable, but will not have any effect on the baby. Your best treatment is to make sure you are well hydrated and to use Benefiber powder, 1-2 heaping tablespoons in 8 oz. of water, daily. The powder is much more effective than tablets and it is easy to use. There is no taste, grit and no flavor. If you have continued issues with constipation, using Milk of Magnesia or Mira Lax 2-3 times a day as needed will typically be sufficient. These products are available over the counter and may be useful throughout the course of the pregnancy.
- **Exercise**-We prefer that you remain physically active during the course of your pregnancy. Low impact aerobics, swimming, bicycling, stair steps and elliptical trainers are very good choices. Yoga and Pilates are also excellent choices. In the heat of the summer we would prefer that you exercise in the cool of the day and keep yourself well hydrated. We would prefer that your pulse is not over 145. Light weight lifting is fine, however we do not like vibratory equipment, deep squats or heavy weight lifting.
- **Hot Tubs & Baths**-It is safe to sit in hot tubs and bathtubs, however extremely hot water can make you dehydrated and increase your risk of a fainting spell. We advise the hot tub temperature be no greater than 100 degrees and suggest 20 minutes as a good limit.

- **Hair & Nails-** It is common for your hair and nails to become more full during the course of your pregnancy. It is also common that they start thinning after pregnancy and lactation. This is a normal physiologic event and your hair will gradually cycle through these changes. It is completely safe to have a permanent or have your hair colored. You may also have your nails done or acrylics applied. Good ventilation is suggested. Tanning booths are safe, but are going to promote fine wrinkles if over used.
- **Flying-**It is safe to fly throughout the pregnancy until the third trimester. We would prefer you do not fly after 34 weeks, unless you have a family emergency.
- **Dental Care-**You will want to continue to see your dentist and dental hygienist, as you typically would during the course of your pregnancy. You may have your teeth cleaned and local anesthetic for any dental work that is necessary. If your dentist has questions concerning advisability of dental procedures during the course of your pregnancy, please do not hesitate to have them contact us. Dental x-rays may also be obtained during the course of your pregnancy. If dental x-rays are felt to be necessary, you would have a lead apron placed over your abdomen and this would shield the baby from any x-rays and would be entirely safe for you and the baby.
- **Painting-**Many women want to paint a nursery during their pregnancy. This is perfectly safe. Good ventilation is suggested. Old admonitions about painting and pregnancy are the result of lead based paints, which is no longer available in the American market.

We are delighted that you have chosen us to be a part of your pregnancy and birth experience. We look forward to helping you have a safe pregnancy and delivery experience and enjoying a healthy baby. If you have any immediate concerns about your safety or the safety of your baby, please call the office or go immediately to Rogue Regional Medical Center Labor and Delivery

Thank you,

Alan Binette, M.D.

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