

**Carrivell**<sup>TM</sup>  
for your growing needs

## Your Pregnancy





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"Pregnancy plays an amazing role in a woman's discovery of her sensuality and emotional self. Looking and feeling good is crucial. Improved self image has been shown to improve a woman's labour outcomes, birth coping ability, mothering, breastfeeding and significantly, her relationship with her loved one. This is why women respond well to all forms of encouragement and praise during these critical, culminating moments of her pregnancy - labour and birth."

Being comfortable and understanding your changing body, your diet, exercise, planning for labour and ultimately birth are crucial for a happy and healthy pregnancy.



1st Trimester



2nd Trimester



3rd Trimester

# Your 1st Trimester

1-3 Months (week 1-13)





## Ovulation

- ♥ Ovulation usually occurs between 9 & 16 days before the next menstrual period.
- ♥ Ovulation and pregnancy are most likely as soon as a woman notices a moist vaginal discharge.
- ♥ The idea that ovulation will be precisely 14 days before a menstrual period is not necessarily true, and mucus discharge might be a more accurate indicator.
- ♥ Generally the longer one has used hormonal contraceptives, the longer it takes to fall pregnant
- ♥ Fertility is compromised in smokers and quitting improves her chances of falling pregnant and reduces the chance of miscarriage.

## Smoking & Drinking

- ♥ The only known safe limit of alcohol and recreational drugs in pregnancy is none!
- ♥ Heavy alcohol intake in pregnancy is associated with a numerous problems, including poor brain development
- ♥ In smokers the blood vessels leading to the placenta are more likely to have abnormalities, which mean that the placenta is mostly thinner and more fragile.
- ♥ The placenta is baby's life-support system so oxygen and nutrient supply to baby, and waste disposal away from baby are affected when smoking in pregnancy.

## Diet & Nutrition

### Sugar

- ♥ Sugary soda drinks are unhealthy. They often contain substantial amounts of caffeine which is a stimulant and can make baby restless and keep the mom-to-be from much-needed restful sleep in pregnancy.
- ♥ Each can of sweetened soda cold drink contains a very high level of sugar, which means the body must produce a lot of insulin very quickly to break this down.
- ♥ Regular consumption of sweet beverages can for a series of complex reasons make diabetes more likely in pregnancy as well as possibly leading to unhealthy weight gain.
- ♥ An occasional glass will not cause vast problems, but do be aware that regular use will also put baby more at risk of blood sugar problems, allergies and intolerances.
- ♥ When craving something sweet, rather have a few pecan nuts or a sweet fruit like a banana before reaching for a chocolate.

## Cravings

- ♥ The most important thing is to eat healthy foods 90% of the time and to interpret cravings healthily.
- ♥ Salty cravings often are relieved by eating avocado, olives, or a baked potato with sesame seeds.
- ♥ Eating smaller meals more frequently works for many expectant women to relieve cravings.
- ♥ Cravings for abnormal substances (called pica) like soil, ash, chalk and paint on walls, mostly indicates a deficiency of an important nutrient and must be discussed with your doctor.
- ♥ A craving for soil and sand often indicates an iron shortage and it is best to take in extra dietary iron and also a supplement.



## Some Food Types

- ♥ Pungent foods help stimulate one and keep one from complacency for example spices like ginger, cumin, peppers, cinnamon, cloves, fenugreek and bay.
- ♥ Bitter foods help improve grasp of new information, of which there is plenty in pregnancy for example leafy green vegetables like spinach, lettuce, broccoli and asparagus.
- ♥ Astringent foods help prevent overeating for example dry beans, lentils, onions, turmeric, coriander, basil, dill and fennel.
- ♥ Sweet foods help to soothe anxiety and nerviness one may feel and to energise one in pregnancy for example rice, bread, honey, sweet and fully ripe sweet fruits and vegetables, milk, butter, barley, oats, avocado pear, beetroot, pecans and almonds.
- ♥ Sour foods help to help keep one grounded in reality for example lemons, semi-ripe fruit, apricots, nectarines and oranges.
- ♥ Salty foods help regulate body fluids and energise one by correct fluid distribution in the body for example olives and all foods to which you have added salt.
- ♥ Cold foods help regulate body temperature and calm a tendency to hot temper, for example salads, cool drinks, spices like dill and liquorice.
- ♥ Heavy foods support an enterprising character and help give staying power in pregnancy for example nuts, wheaten foods, dates, cheese and yoghurt.
- ♥ Unctuous or naturally oily foods have anti-inflammatory properties which can be very helpful in pregnancy for example dairy, oils, oats, some nuts and butter ghee.
- ♥ Light foods help to tone slow digestion for example grapes, apples, figs, barley, corn, spinach, asparagus and cucumber.
- ♥ Dry foods help prevent mucus disease and other congestion symptoms for example dried beans, barley, corn, potato, brussel sprouts and peas.



## Allergenic Foods

- ♥ Common allergenic foods include dairy, grains, eggs, shellfish, peanuts, mushrooms, onions and garlic.
- ♥ Reduce or avoid foods that typically cause allergies in your two families, as this can help prevent allergies in baby.
- ♥ If parents or the family generally are allergy prone, it takes just a little of the allergenic substance eaten by the expectant mom in pregnancy, to trigger a greater risk in baby.
- ♥ Peanuts are not nuts but legumes, and if eaten in pregnancy, be sure to only have a few at a time, best eaten raw and not roasted and salted as these tend to cause more problems.
- ♥ Some tree nuts may trigger allergies, but if there is not an allergy to any in particular in the family, moderate use in pregnancy is generally in order.
- ♥ Choose organically cultivated nuts as these are a valuable source of magnesium and calcium.

## Eating Habits

- ♥ Avoid eating on the run! Although the hurried pace of life might make this difficult, it is probably one of the most important cornerstones of healthy eating in pregnancy!
- ♥ Listen to the rhythms of your body - some people are natural 'grazers', requiring small but more frequent meals throughout the day.
- ♥ Do not eat when it feels as if food from a previous meal is not yet fully digested. This will cause indigestion.
- ♥ Try and have the main meal of the day over the midday hours as often as possible as this is when digestive activity is at its strongest and therefore uses food to the best advantage.
- ♥ Include foodstuffs from all the colour groups Mother Nature provides, most days of the week, and you will go a long way to achieving a balanced diet.
- ♥ Eat healthily 90 per cent of the time, and relax a little at other times, as far as possible, avoiding those 'treats' that contain no-no's - caffeine, tannin (in tea) and excess sugar (soda drinks, sweets and chocolates).
- ♥ An exclusively fruit diet might bring about radiant health for many people, while others do best on cooked meals.
- ♥ Some moms-to-be find that they cannot start eating before 11 o'clock in the morning and that is fine too.
- ♥ Chew your food thoroughly, remembering that digestion starts in the mouth - you will find that the symptoms of indigestion will decrease correspondingly.
- ♥ Try eating an amount that you consider too little to completely satisfy you, wait twenty minutes and then see if you are still hungry - this is a sure way of discovering whether one is eating simply for reasons of lust or from real hunger.
- ♥ It is best not to drink large volumes with a meal - liquid passes through the stomach rapidly and will wash food along with it too. This also dilutes gastric juices, impeding digestive function.
- ♥ The body's natural excretory cycle is in the early hours of the morning - eating foods at this time that support the process can be very helpful. Fruit, which has a very high water content (which in turn stimulates kidney function), is ideal.
- ♥ Support your bowel's natural cycle by making unhurried time each morning in which to heed the call of nature.
- ♥ Drink a mug of hot water first thing in the morning if you bowels are sluggish.

## Low Blood Pressure

- ♥ Low blood pressure and anaemia are frequent triggers and both are treatable, so have these checked.
- ♥ Low blood pressure with dizziness and occasionally feeling faint or even fainting, in pregnancy is very common.
- ♥ Low blood pressure is often accompanied by insufficient iron stores in the body and this too can cause dizziness and fainting.
- ♥ Low blood pressure in pregnancy is far less problematic than high blood pressure, but if one is very dizzy and fainting occurs, mom or baby might be injured.





## Nausea

- ♥ Pregnancy nausea is partially due to changing hormones, but is more common in women with a perfectionist, driven personality.
- ♥ Poor eating prior to and in pregnancy may affect the degree of nausea a woman feels.
- ♥ Nausea and aversion to certain foods in pregnancy is considered a protection mechanism, preventing one from eating possibly toxic foods.
- ♥ Eating smaller meals more frequently and eating a little before rising in the morning is an old wives' tale that really works.
- ♥ Exchanging one meal a day for only fruit stems nausea in some.
- ♥ Nausea, loss of appetite, aversion to certain foods and unpleasant tastes on the tongue or in the mouth are quite common in pregnancy.
- ♥ Tongue-scraping or brushing often helps rid one's mouth of unpleasant and metallic tastes.
- ♥ Excessive nausea and vomiting, called "Hyperemesis Gravidarum", must be treated to ensure that one doesn't dehydrate, which can be serious for baby.
- ♥ Deficiency of Vitamin B6 is associated with nausea, as is taking pregnancy supplements, in some.
- ♥ Pregnancy nausea is frequently not only in the morning and many women experience it at other times or even for the whole day.
- ♥ Nausea mostly begins after six weeks of pregnancy but can manifest later in the first trimester or hardly occur at all.
- ♥ Digestive symptoms mostly improve or cease by about 12-14 weeks of pregnancy although some women experience them throughout the 40 weeks.
- ♥ At times nausea may start later in pregnancy but then needs to be evaluated in terms of other possible factors, like blood pressure abnormalities, low blood sugar or anaemia.

## Fatigue

- ♥ Fatigue in pregnancy is quite common and there are many possible causes.
- ♥ Although pregnancy is not an illness, it is hard work - an expectant woman's body is a 24 hour factory with only one person working all shifts!
- ♥ Pregnancy is tiring and one should be guided by the body's messages, taking occasional mini-breaks if necessary.
- ♥ Generally, tiredness improves in the second trimester, once most of baby's important developments are complete.
- ♥ Pregnant women should avoid exceptionally high temperatures like in a sauna, steam baths, sun bed, hot water springs or long periods in very hot sun as baby may overheat in the womb in exceptional circumstances.
- ♥ Go to bed no later than 22h00 and rise by 06h00, responding unhurriedly to body functions, to strengthen your energy resources.

## Abdominal Bloating

- ♥ Abdominal bloating with tummy cramps is quite a common early pregnancy symptom along with nausea, constipation, food aversions and strange taste sensations in the mouth.
- ♥ Bloating is often a sign that one's diet needs to be adjusted to a more readily digestible one.
- ♥ Pregnancy supplements can cause digestive discomfort like bloating.
- ♥ Reduce or avoid grain products like cereals, pastries and bread.
- ♥ Be cautious with dairy products and fermented foods like pickles which can sometimes trigger this or make it worse.

## Emotions

- ♥ If feeling very emotional and in need of a little extra nurturing be careful not to turn to food for comfort as the foods one craves are likely to have high unhealthy fat and salt content!
- ♥ It is very normal to feel more emotional during pregnancy.
- ♥ Emotional ups and downs in pregnancy may well include irritability, anger, moodiness, anxiety, tearfulness and a feeling of needing one's personal space back.
- ♥ Sometimes emotions in first pregnancies seem worse because of the huge and unexpected adjustment.
- ♥ At times second and subsequent pregnancies are emotionally more challenging because one already has a small child draining one's resources and maybe even less understanding and support from those who think you have 'been there, done it'!
- ♥ Fluctuations in hormonal levels definitely contribute to emotional swings and if that is the only cause, these tend to settle at least somewhat by the end of the first trimester.
- ♥ Pregnancy is an overwhelming experience in many ways and poses quite a challenge physically, mentally and emotionally.
- ♥ Neither your body, mind nor emotions have even been anywhere like this before, and every facet of your life is affected by pregnancy.
- ♥ This can lead to bucket loads of tears, anxiety and even depression in pregnancy.
- ♥ Ask for extra tender loving care and nurturing from those close to you.
- ♥ Be kind to yourself and take it a little easier. This is a more 'feminine' and sensitive phase in your life and you are supposed to be more emotional!

## 1st Visit to practitioner

- ♥ In an uncomplicated pregnancy, one should first visit one's practitioner sometime toward the end of the first trimester, preferably between 10 and 12 weeks.
- ♥ Should there be reason for concern before this stage, make an earlier appointment.
- ♥ Many women are nervous of the first visit to the obstetrician or midwife, not knowing what to expect, and this is quite normal but unnecessary.
- ♥ No question in pregnancy is unimportant and one should make a list of any concerns or queries so that one does not forget to ask at a consultation.
- ♥ At each visit a few standard checks will be done, like blood pressure, weight and urine testing, a check of baby's heartbeat and growth.
- ♥ In normal pregnancies, one should see the practitioner monthly until 28 weeks, then every 2 weeks until 36 weeks and thereafter every week until the due date.
- ♥ Occasionally blood tests will need to be performed.
- ♥ Vaginal examinations are very seldom done in pregnancy to reduce the possibility of infection or stimulating cramping of the womb, but sometimes on the first visit an internal examination is done, as well as at about 37 weeks again.

**This marks the end of your first trimester!**



# Your 2nd Trimester

4-6 Months (week 14-26)





## Breast Care & Colostrum

- ♥ Preparing your breasts in any special way during pregnancy for nursing is not really necessary, although it will do no harm to apply a nourishing lotion to keep the skin supple.
- ♥ Do not be tempted to brush nipples with a nailbrush or toothbrush as this common old wives' tale will just hurt breast tissue and possibly lead to infection.
- ♥ The massaging of breasts in pregnancy to try and increase colostrum or milk supply is without any positive effects and might well hurt breast tissue, and is also best avoided.
- ♥ Colostrum, which is the precursor to mother's milk, is made in the mammary glands from as early as 8 weeks of pregnancy.
- ♥ Colostrum is a sticky, yellow-white substance and is very nutrient-rich and sweet.
- ♥ Sometimes a little colostrum trickles out in pregnancy but often not at all and this is not indication of whether or not one will produce sufficient milk once baby is born.
- ♥ Colostrum helps break down or thin any mucus baby has swallowed or produced for easier sneezing out after birth.
- ♥ Colostrum acts as a laxative on meconium, the thick green-black stool that coats baby's bowels while in the womb.
- ♥ Colostrum contains an amazing immunity package of antibodies that will last the baby for quite a few months after birth.
- ♥ Colostrum is extremely nutrient rich, so that baby only needs a teaspoonful at a time to be the equivalent of 50ml of mother's milk.
- ♥ Colostrum contains excellent levels of Vitamin K, which protects baby against bleeding.

## Pigmentation:

- ♥ Pigmentation marks mostly start in the second half of the pregnancy, resolve spontaneously in the months after birth, and are mostly gone by 3-6 months.
- ♥ Freckles and other blotches usually either become bigger or darker in pregnancy.
- ♥ Moles often increase in size in pregnancy, mostly without any problems.
- ♥ Pigmentation and related changes are due to the hormones of pregnancy and seldom of any concern although one should also avoid prolonged exposure to the midday sun.
- ♥ Darker skinned women and brunettes are more prone to pigmentation changes in pregnancy.
- ♥ Chloasma is the medical name for the common butterfly-like pigmentation over the nose and cheeks and brownish discolouration around the mouth.
- ♥ Increased areola size (brown area around the nipple) and a darker pigment of this area is common in pregnancy too.
- ♥ The linea nigra is the stripe down the centre of the abdomen and through the navel which develops in the second half of pregnancy.

## Weight Gain/Showing

- ♥ Many women are the picture of radiant beauty and health with a lovely feminine glow, lustrous hair and beautiful skin and nails now. Most niggles improve in this trimester.
- ♥ In the first trimester one gains about 10% of total pregnancy weight, from 12-20 weeks about 25%, the most in the following 8 weeks until the end of the second trimester at 45% and this drops to about 20% in the last stretch.
- ♥ The swelling of one's abdomen in pregnancy becomes visible to oneself long before others notice it.
- ♥ Just when one notices one's belly starting to grow is very varied for women and depends on a number of factors.
- ♥ Women with good muscle tone might show pregnancy a lot later as the abdominal muscles keep the womb deeper inside the abdominal cavity.
- ♥ Short women might show sooner as the pregnancy per force grows 'outwards' sooner.
- ♥ First pregnancies take longer to show than subsequent ones, when the abdominal muscles have already stretched considerably previously.
- ♥ Pregnant women often notice a slight bulging around the waistline or above the pubic area from about 16 weeks.
- ♥ Others might well only notice your 'bump' growing from 20 weeks.
- ♥ Some women feel they carry more in their 'bums', but this is just putting on some extra fat, an evolutionary 'supply' for your body, should you need more energy after birth!

## Braxton-Hicks

- ♥ Rest a little more and Braxton-Hicks contractions often dissipate.
- ♥ Take a warm bath for rapid relief of uncomfortable Braxton-Hicks contractions.
- ♥ Massage your abdomen gently with light oil when Braxton-Hicks contractions become a little too uncomfortable.

## Exercise

- ♥ One of the aims of exercise in pregnancy is to feel and look good.
- ♥ Exercise helps ensure maximum fitness and have sufficient stamina to see one through labour and birth.
- ♥ Women who exercise regularly find that they have far less mood swings, tearfulness and even cravings during pregnancy.
- ♥ Physical fitness ensures less aches and pains in pregnancy because posture is improved, tone of muscles and ligaments maintained better and one's body is generally stronger.
- ♥ The final weeks of pregnancy, which are so trying for many women, will feel far easier too if in good shape.
- ♥ Recovery after birth is far more rapid, as you start from a position of greater strength.
- ♥ High impact exercise like heavy aerobics and some forms of horse riding carry more risk and should preferably be avoided in pregnancy.
- ♥ If you have a spotting vaginal discharge or cramps in the lower pelvis, cease all exercise immediately and see your doctor before resuming your programme.
- ♥ Exercise should suit you as a person and be enjoyable- if you have already found your ideal body movement form, stick to that once you have checked safety.
- ♥ Warming up gradually at the start of an exercise programme and stretch and relaxation exercises are non-negotiable routines to include.
- ♥ Never over-exercise as this can be detrimental to pregnancy, make labour more difficult and baby more fretful after birth.
- ♥ Walking and other forms of exercise like swimming and dancing are excellent for overall strength and posture and can improve ligament pain.
- ♥ Massage of painful areas using safe oil may provide some relief from pregnancy ligament pain.
- ♥ Correct posture by pulling in tummy muscles and buttocks, keeping shoulders back and down and slightly tilting the chin upwards when walking, alleviates ligament pain.
- ♥ Yoga in pregnancy is an excellent form of exercise and strengthens both mind and body.
- ♥ The control needed in yoga helps tone even the smallest of muscle groups, while keeping an expectant mom optimally supple.





## Babies Movements

- ♥ Some women feel baby's movement as early as 16 weeks, but it depends on one's weight, how baby lies in the womb, the amount of amniotic fluid and various other factors.
- ♥ Initially movement feels like air bubbles or butterflies and is not a constant sensation from day to day, so might seem like it comes and goes. It is quite common that in a first pregnancy a woman only really identifies movement at about 22 - 24 weeks.

## Lifting Heavy Objects

- ♥ Although it might well do no harm to lift heavy objects while pregnant, the ligaments in the back are all softer and stretch due to pregnancy hormones and so could ache or tear more easily.
- ♥ When lifting objects in pregnancy, always bend at the knees and lift close to your body, keeping your back as straight as possible as you come upright.
- ♥ As pregnancy progresses, reduce the weights lifted in accordance with comfort levels.
- ♥ Once one's 'preggy bump' is quite big, it is far more difficult to bend effectively at the knees when picking up heavier objects, and one needs to exercise caution.
- ♥ Picking up older toddlers is a particular challenge in pregnancy as they are not a 'steady' weight, but might well wriggle or perform sudden movements - rather be seated and encourage a child to clamber on to your lap.

## Itching During Pregnancy

- ♥ It is not clearly understood why itching occurs in pregnancy, but it is fairly common.
- ♥ Especially the abdomen and breasts, and sometimes areas like the buttocks, labia (lips around the vagina), upper arms and thighs are prone to itching in pregnancy.
- ♥ Itching is sometimes attributed to stretching of the skin or hormonal changes.
- ♥ Itching is mostly not serious but extremely irritating.
- ♥ Vitamin E cream often soothes itching skin in pregnancy.
- ♥ Add a handful of bicarbonate of soda to your bathwater to soothe itching skin.
- ♥ See your doctor if you experience undue itching in pregnancy and also feel ill, nauseous or you notice signs of jaundice (yellow staining of the whites of your eyes, for example) as this would need treatment.
- ♥ Extreme itching in pregnancy may be linked to a condition called obstetric cholestiasis that requires medical treatment.

**This marks the end of your second trimester!**

# Your 3rd Trimester

7-9 Months (week 27-40)





## Back ache

- ♥ One would recognise sciatica (painful disorder from the hip down the back of the thigh and surrounding areas) by the following symptoms: Dull ache in the buttock, sharp shooting pain down the back of the leg and in the foot of the affected side, a lame or numb feeling down the affected leg, burning or tingling in the toes and certain areas of the leg, the skin may be very sensitive to touch and the foot may not have full range of motion.
- ♥ Massage the affected foot, leg and buttock to help relieve pain, inflammation and the burning ache of sciatica.
- ♥ Women often don't take enough care when bending and picking up weighty objects and even other children when expecting, and this makes them more prone to stumbling and tripping, which together with the stretched and softened ligaments, means the body cannot compensate as effectively and lower back injury is more likely.
- ♥ If you have a previous back injury, discuss exercise and posture in pregnancy with a physiotherapist.
- ♥ Ensure a sensible exercise programme throughout pregnancy - walking and swimming are wonderful for overall muscle tone and strength of back muscles.
- ♥ Rest frequently during an acute sciatica attack.
- ♥ Wear a Carriwell Pregnancy Band to support the entire abdominal and lower back region, contributing to less pressure in the lower back area and better posture.

## Swelling

- ♥ An expectant woman's blood circulation is often compromised due to the weight of the whole pregnancy (not just baby) on the major blood vessels in the abdominal area, keeping blood flow from being as efficient as normal.
- ♥ As pregnancy progresses, many women are often less agile and mobile and that too makes blood circulation less efficient.
- ♥ The hands and feet, being relatively bony areas, show water retention fastest as there is so little fleshy area to accommodate the swelling.
- ♥ Another fairly common area where swelling can be troublesome is the fluid of the eyes, leading to visual disturbances and sometimes one cannot wear contact lenses and may even need a new lens prescription for spectacles.
- ♥ Nasal congestion may well also be a form of swelling experienced in pregnancy, rather than a cold or sinus congestion.
- ♥ Swelling can however be a serious symptom if accompanied by other signs like protein in the urine, elevated blood pressure, visual disturbances, headaches, dizziness and nausea.
- ♥ Walk briskly for five minutes of each hour especially if in a standing or sedentary occupation.
- ♥ Do ankle and calf exercises while seated to stimulate circulation.
- ♥ Do not cross legs at ankles or knees while seated.
- ♥ Walk briskly each day for at least 20 minutes.
- ♥ Rest sufficiently with your feet up to counteract swelling.
- ♥ Plunge feet into a tub of cold water to relieve swelling and pain.
- ♥ See your doctor urgently to check for toxemia of pregnancy if you have any of the serious symptoms listed above, you notice swelling in the morning already, if baby's pattern of movement changes significantly or you do not feel well, especially if you are close to or in the third trimester of pregnancy.

## Varicose veins

- ♥ Varicose veins in pregnancy are quite common, especially in the calves.
- ♥ One can develop varicose veins in the labia and groin area too.
- ♥ Varicose veins of all forms are generally very uncomfortable with aching in the affected body part.
- ♥ There is often an inherent family weakness in the circulatory system, especially the elasticity and strength of the muscular sheath of the blood vessel wall.
- ♥ For varicose veins in the legs, genital area and piles, rest often in between activity.
- ♥ Put your feet up and do not cross legs at the ankles or knees so that circulation is not further impeded if you have varicose veins.
- ♥ Firm supportive stockings are sometimes necessary to support circulation and soothe pain, although these can be very uncomfortable in pregnancy especially in hot weather.
- ♥ Occasionally lie with your buttocks up on a pillow or two to relieve the pressure of genital veins and piles.
- ♥ Do this exercise for considerable relief from varicose veins in the legs: lie flat on the floor with your buttocks up against the wall and your legs extended up the wall; gradually open your legs against the wall until you feel stretching of the inner thigh muscles; draw them together again; keep your feet against the wall and draw your knees down towards your chest and then gradually return your legs to the starting position; repeat ten times 2-3x/day.
- ♥ Genital varicose veins respond well to a firm pressure pad worn inside one's panty.
- ♥ Ice packs wrapped in a face flannel and applied to any bulging painful area with varicose veins gives some relief.
- ♥ Exercise regularly, eat at least three pieces of fresh fruit a day and drink sufficient fluids if prone to varicose veins.
- ♥ See your doctor if the area where varicose veins are located looks bruised, is very painful or if you feel unwell and abnormally short of breath.

## Piles

- ♥ Piles (or haemorrhoids) are a form of varicose vein.
- ♥ Piles or haemorrhoids are varicose veins of the anal region and are more common in pregnancy.
- ♥ Piles may protrude externally or remain inside the rectum.
- ♥ If you pass fresh blood with bowel movements or notice tags of skin or even grape-like clusters protruding from the anus, these are piles.
- ♥ Piles burn, itch and are very uncomfortable and usually become worse during pregnancy and labour if not treated.
- ♥ Exercise regularly to tone all body tissues as piles are then less likely.
- ♥ Avoid constipation to further decrease the risk of piles.
- ♥ Drink water liberally.
- ♥ Take care not to pick up excess weight in pregnancy to lessen the chance of piles forming.
- ♥ Tell your doctor or midwife if you have piles as this may affect the type of birth you can have.





## Palpitations

- ♥ One's blood volume increases by about 40-50% during pregnancy.
- ♥ The maternal network of blood vessels is greatly extended to supply baby with nutrients, oxygen and a waste disposal system.
- ♥ The mom-to-be's heart must work much harder to pump the extra blood she has around the extended blood vessel network.
- ♥ An expectant woman carries around 12kg or more extra weight by the end of pregnancy and so the circulatory and respiratory systems are more taxed.
- ♥ Palpitations, the feeling of one's heart beating harder and faster, and shortness of breath, are quite common from now on in pregnancy.
- ♥ If palpitations soon cease and you in no other way feel unwell, there is in all likelihood no reason for concern.
- ♥ Palpitations might occur even when resting in pregnancy but should settle quite soon.
- ♥ Walk briskly regularly to keep fit and improve stamina.
- ♥ If you are a very anxious person, you will be more prone to palpitations and breathing exercises will improve matters.
- ♥ If you feel unwell and palpitations or shortness of breath stay for quite some time when you are not exerting yourself at all or if you feel as if you have a fever, see your doctor.

## Pelvic aching

- ♥ When lower pelvic aching seems unbearable, cup your hands around the lower part of your 'bump' and 'lift' it up a little as this will instantly soothe the pressure you feel.
- ♥ Go down on all fours, with your arms bent at the elbows, so that your buttocks are higher than your head, to relieve lower pelvic pain, as baby then puts less pressure on the nerves in the groin.
- ♥ Walking and other forms of exercise like swimming and dancing are excellent for overall strength and posture, but be guided by your body's messages and rather do little bits frequently than overdo it in one session.
- ♥ Cross your hands in the small of your back and press up against a wall to provide relief from lower backache.
- ♥ Try and correct posture by pulling in tummy muscles and buttocks, keeping shoulders back and down and slightly tilting the chin upwards.
- ♥ If low pelvic pain and backache are accompanied by ligament pain elsewhere in the abdominal area, wear a Carriwell maternity support band at night.

## Breathing exercises

- ♥ Balanced breathing for relaxation in pregnancy is an excellent way of preparing mentally for labour, birth and mothering.
- ♥ Find a comfortable chair that allows you to sit upright with your spine straight and feet on the floor - it is best not to lounge backward while doing balanced breathing.
- ♥ Close your eyes, let your mind rest, and place the thumb of your right hand beside your right nostril, your two middle fingers beside your left nostril.
- ♥ To perform the exercise, gently close one nostril, then the other, as you breathe normally.
- ♥ To keep your arm, from getting tired, it helps to tuck your right elbow in close to your ribs, but don't prop it up on your chair or on a table.
- ♥ Begin each breath on the exhale and finish on the inhale - this is different from most breathing exercises, which begin by taking in a deep breath.

### The basic rhythm of balanced breathing is as follows:

- ♥ Gently close the right nostril with your thumb and slowly exhale through your left nostril.
- ♥ Inhale easily through your left nostril.
- ♥ Close the left nostril with the two middle fingers and exhale out of the right nostril.
- ♥ Inhale easily through the right nostril.
- ♥ Alternate nostrils for 5 minutes. Then lower your arm and sit back comfortably with eyes closed for 1 or 2 minutes.
- ♥ In balanced breathing, you do not need to take deep breaths - just let your breathing come naturally but a little slower and deeper than usual.
- ♥ If at any time you feel like breathing through your mouth, go ahead, then return to the exercise as soon as you feel comfortable again.
- ♥ You might find your nose blocking up initially, but this phase will soon pass.





## Perennial Preparation

- ♥ Lie on your back, knees pulled up, arms relaxed at your sides, tense the muscles around your urethra, vagina and rectum and count to three, then relax totally, repeating six times, for pelvic tone.
- ♥ Try this tip to help locate pelvic muscles accurately - when you next go to the loo, interrupt the flow of urine by pinching - the sensation will be exactly the same as one uses the same muscles.
- ♥ Lie on your left side, left leg slightly bent at the knee, right leg flexed more and resting on a pillow, left arm behind your back, right arm flexed in front of you and resting on the same pillow as your head, tense your perineal muscles, repeat six times but steadily increase amount as you get the hang of it.
- ♥ Practise tensing these very important perineal muscles almost anywhere and at almost any time, for example in the car or bus on the way to work, in the lift, on the loo!
- ♥ It is also important to be able to help open perineal muscles voluntarily at birth.
- ♥ To help prepare your perineum to stretch easily at birth and to strengthen your thighs and pelvic muscles and ligaments, imitate a butterfly.
- ♥ Sit on the floor with your buttocks pressed right up against the wall, your back straight and shoulders relaxed, bend your knees, bring the soles of your feet together, place your hands on your knees, push them downwards with butterfly-like movements for a few minutes at a time, most days of the week.
- ♥ Use a pregnancy and birth ball to good effect by sitting securely, then lunging from side to side to stretch the perineal area.
- ♥ Roll your pelvis around in big circles on the birth ball.
- ♥ Toning and stretch exercises will increase suppleness, tone the pelvic area and strengthen back muscles.
- ♥ Practice squatting to strengthen the muscles of your legs, buttocks and pelvis as well as helping stretch pelvic tissue.

## Perennial Preparation II

- ♥ The perineum is the thick muscle wedge between vagina and anus.
- ♥ Massaging one's perineum for 4-6 weeks before birth helps make the area more supple and able to stretch.
- ♥ Using the correct oil and massage technique can help avoid perineal tearing or the need for an episiotomy, the cut done to increase the dimensions of the vaginal outlet.
- ♥ Massage your perineum at least 5 nights a week before retiring.
- ♥ Ensure that your hands are clean and spray or pour a little oil onto your fingertips.
- ♥ Place your thumbs into the vaginal outlet and massage the perineum between your index, middle fingers and thumbs for a few minutes until the area feels softer.
- ♥ Keeping your thumbs in position, stretch the vaginal outlet sideways a number of times and then down and slightly forwards.
- ♥ If you find it difficult to reach the area over your swelling abdomen, lie on one side or stand with one foot up on a chair and use only one hand to do something similar, or one's partner can assist.
- ♥ Perineal massage also increases awareness of the area that must stretch to let baby out and it is easier to focus on it in the birth process and visualise it opening.
- ♥ If you have thrush or another vaginal infection, make sure this is cleared before starting this massage routine.

## Preparing for labour

- ♥ Prepare a list of preferences important to you for labour and discuss these with your partner, doctor or midwife and hospital.
- ♥ A birth plan is simply a flexible wish list but will help focus you on what you want.
- ♥ Learn to visualise how you attain a goal; apply this in labour too, literally 'seeing' how the baby moves down in the birth canal and then is born.
- ♥ Use water in labour and during the actual birth too for effective pain relief, if you like the idea.
- ♥ Deep baths, relaxing showers or moist sheets wrapped around your belly can all be tried.
- ♥ Pace yourself through early labour by either sleeping a little longer, resting and reading or keeping busy with easy activities or gentle walking.
- ♥ Explain to your partner that you might well need him to not touch you at all during labour.
- ♥ Explain to your partner that anxiety and a tendency to shorter endurance levels might make you impatient, angry and scared in labour and that it would be very valuable for him to reassure you often and not take your comments personally.
- ♥ Tell your partner and staff that you will ask if you need your hand to be held or your back massaged.
- ♥ Keep your bladder empty in labour so that it does not impede baby's downward movement.
- ♥ You might feel a need to have less talking and touching once labour is intense - communicate this to your partner or caregiver so that they understand and respect your wishes.
- ♥ During pushing contractions, remember to continue breathing. Take deep breaths and really push down hard in the vaginal area but then come up for a fresh breath! About 4-5 pushes per contraction are possible.
- ♥ Most of all, remember that there is more time without than with the pain of contractions in labour!
- ♥ Keep up liquid and snack intake throughout labour to ensure your energy does not lag at critical times.
- ♥ Comfort objects, music and massage techniques are essential for well-being in labour.

## Congratulations!! It's a ...



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