

# EXERCISE DURING PREGNANCY

## BENEFITS OF EXERCISE IN PREGNANCY

### PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Increased energy and a more positive, stable attitude with improved self image
- Reduced stress

### PHYSICAL

- Improved posture, strength, circulation, sleeping habits and ability to lose weight after delivery
- Reduced risks of too much weight gain in pregnancy, muscular-skeletal discomforts, wear and tear on your joints, gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia, constipation and swelling

### LABOR BENEFITS

- Increased muscle strength, cardiac strength, breathing control and endurance, aiding in an easier delivery
- Decreased risk of operative delivery

### FETAL BENEFITS

- Improved stress tolerance, growth and advanced neurobehavioral maturation
- Decreased fat mass

## WHERE TO START?

Where to begin greatly depends on your current exercise routine. Many exercises you normally do may be safe to continue throughout pregnancy. If you're unsure, read through the "Exercises To Avoid" section of this packet. Below are some good things to keep in mind when exercising while pregnant.

1. Exercise can include a warm-up, stretch and cool-down.
2. Thirty minutes a day at least four days a week is recommended.  
If you are unaccustomed to exercise, begin with five minutes a day. Add five minutes each week until you reach 30 minutes.
3. Combine cardio, strength and flexibility exercises for the most benefit.
4. Dress comfortably in loose-fitting clothes.  
Wear a supportive bra and a support belt if you feel too much pressure on your pelvis.
5. Stay hydrated.  
Drink 2 to 3 liters of water every day to avoid overheating and dehydration.
6. Increase caloric intake slightly, especially with proteins and carbohydrates.
7. Listen to your body.

It is normal to become more winded with exercise when you are pregnant, but if you experience any of the symptoms listed under "Warning Signs" you're doing too much and should stop immediately.

## SUGGESTED EXERCISES

### *Walking*

A great place to start if you're not used to exercising regularly

### *Swimming*

A full-body workout with the benefit of buoyancy to take the baby weight off your back

### *Cycling*

Excellent cardio exercise. You may want to try a stationary bike to avoid falling.

### *Aerobics*

EvergreenHealth and many surrounding gyms offer aerobic classes especially for pregnancy.

### *Running*

Recommended primarily for women who are already used to running. This is when a support belt comes in handy. If you're not used to running regularly, start with a light jog until you're comfortable.

### *Strength training*

The intensity of strength training really depends on your previous routine. If you're used to lifting weights or Cross Fit, make some modifications so it isn't as strenuous. If you're not used to exercise, start with very light weights and low intensity and work up slowly depending on your body's response.

### *Yoga*

EvergreenHealth and many surrounding gyms offer yoga classes especially for pregnancy.

Yoga is an excellent exercise to help relieve common aches and pains associated with pregnancy, while also providing cardio, strengthening and flexibility benefits. Hot yoga is recommended primarily for women who are already used to hot yoga, and is safe only at temperatures below 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

## EXERCISES TO AVOID

Activities that have an increased risk of injury, activities that involve changes in the center of gravity, and activities that include jerky, bouncy, sudden or high-impact motions are all risky during pregnancy. Use your best judgment when deciding what kind of exercise to do. If you are unsure, feel free to contact the office. Specific exercises we suggest avoiding are:

Football	Soccer	Volleyball	Handball
Basketball	Trampoline	Sledding	High-intensity weight- lifting
Snowmobiling	Ice Hockey	Gymnastics	Waterskiing
Scuba diving	Jarring (High Impact) activities or activities where a fall is likely		
Horseback Riding	Roller blading	Skiing	Skydiving

Rollercoasters and amusement park rides that drop suddenly.

## **WARNING SIGNS**

If you begin experiencing any of the following symptoms, discontinue exercising until symptoms resolve.

Shortness of breath

Dizziness

Fainting

Chest pain

Intense headache

Muscle weakness

Leg pain

Swelling

Bleeding

Uterine contractions

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## WEIGHT GAIN

The average recommended weight gain in pregnancy is 25 to 35 pounds; however your provider may recommend a different weight goal depending on factors such as your pre-pregnant weight, your dietary habits before and during your pregnancy, and the size of your baby and placenta.

You will be weighed at each visit. Initially weight gain is slow.

Most women will gain between 0 and 15 pounds by the end of the first 20 weeks of pregnancy and gain an average of 1 pound a week during the second 20 weeks

### AVERAGE WEIGHT GAIN DISTRIBUTION DURING PREGNANCY

Baby	7.5 lbs
Placenta	1 lb
Uterus	2 lbs
Amniotic Fluid	2 lbs
Breasts	1 lb
Blood Volume	2.5 lbs
Fat	5 lbs
Tissue Fluid	6 lbs
<b>Total</b>	<b>27 lbs</b>

Table 1. 2009 Institute of Medicine and National Research Council Recommendations for Total and Rate of Weight Gain During Pregnancy, by Prepregnancy Body Mass Index

Prepregnancy BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	Total Weight Gain		Rates of Weight Gain*	
	Range (kg)	Range (lb)	Mean (Range) (kg/wk)	Mean (Range) (lb/wk)
Underweight (less than 18.5)	12.5-18.0	28.0-40.0	0.51 (0.44-0.58)	1.0 (1.0-1.3)
Normal weight (18.5-24.9)	11.5-16.0	25.0-35.0	0.42 (0.35-0.50)	1.0 (0.8-1.0)
Overweight (25.0-29.9)	7.0-11.5	15.0-25.0	0.28 (0.23-0.33)	0.6 (0.5-0.7)
Obese (30.0 or higher)	5.0-9.0	11.0-20.0	0.22 (0.17-0.27)	0.5 (0.4-0.6)

BMI: Body Mass Index

\* Calculations include a total first-trimester gain of 2 kg (1-3 kg) for all except obese women, who should gain 1.5 kg (0.5-2.0 kg).

Data from institute of Medicine/National Research Council (Committee to Reexamine IOM Pregnancy Weight Guidelines, Food and Nutrition Board and Board on Children, Youth, and Families). Weight gain during pregnancy: reexamining the guidelines.

Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2009.

**YOUR STARTING BMI IS: \_\_\_\_\_**

<b>BMI</b>	<b>TOTAL WEIGHT GAIN</b>
<15.5	28-40 lbs
18.5-24.9	25-35 lbs
25.0-29.9	15-25 lbs
30-34.9	11-20 lbs
>35.0	<10 lbs

**\*\*Please note: Gaining more than the recommended amount during pregnancy increases your risk for cesarean section, diabetes, and a large baby. Also, it may be more difficult to lose the weight after baby is born, and these excess pounds increase your lifelong health risks**