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Early Pregnancy Guidelines for IVF patients

Congratulations on your pregnancy! Now that you are pregnant, you probably have many questions about things you can and cannot do during this time. Here are some guidelines that should answer many of your questions. If you need information that is not covered in the written materials we have given you, please feel free to call us.

We will follow you through your first trimester of your pregnancy. After that, you will start seeing the obstetrician(s) who will deliver your baby. We are happy to answer your question at any time. However, once your obstetrician sees you for the first time he or she will want to manage your care.

Medications

As you know, not all medications have been determined to be safe for pregnant women. It is best to use as little medication as possible when you are pregnant. However, there are some medications that are considered safe during pregnancy. Below is a list of over-the-counter medications that we feel are safe for you to take during your pregnancy. You may take these without calling the office.

For Cold, Cough, Congestion, Allergies (use according to directions on the package)

- Sudafed® (pseudoephedrine)
- Robitussin® (DM and plain) (guaifenesin)
- Tylenol® or Extra Strength Tylenol® (acetaminophen)
- Benadryl® (diphenhydramine)

For Heartburn (Use according to the directions on the package)

- Rolaids® (calcium carbonate)
- Maalox® (calcium carbonate)
- Tums® (calcium carbonate)

For Aches and Pains

- The use of Tylenol® is safe in pregnancy. Please avoid the use of Ibuprofen.

For Constipation

- Constipation is a common problem in pregnancy. Increase your intake of fluids, fiber and fresh vegetables.
- You may also add Metamucil® or Colace®. These are stool softeners that can be purchased over the counter.

Caffeine and Nutrasweet™

The use of artificial sweeteners in pregnancy is controversial. Therefore, if you use artificial sweeteners, limit their use. We do recommend limiting your caffeine intake to 1 cup or less per day. Numerous studies on animals have shown that caffeine can cause birth defects, preterm delivery, reduced fertility, and increase the risk of low-birth weight offspring and other reproductive problems. There have not been any conclusive studies done on humans though. It is still better to play it safe when it comes to inconclusive studies.

Smoking

It is important not to smoke during pregnancy. Smoking can cause growth retardation and prematurity. If you are a smoker, we strongly advise you to take this opportunity to quit smoking. This is for your health as well as for the health and well being of your baby.

Alcohol and Drugs

The current FDA (Federal Drug Administration) recommendation is that you should not have any alcohol during your pregnancy. Using alcohol during pregnancy may cause severe anomalies in your new born. Use of recreational drugs during pregnancy may also cause poor outcomes.

Foods to Avoid

- Fish intake should be limited to once a week due to the possibility of high mercury levels in the fish. Mercury levels can vary from different species. (tuna has high levels)
- Avoid unpasteurized milk, cheeses and juices. They may contain listeria, a type of bacteria.
- Avoid undercooked or raw meat, which may contain bacteria.

Excessive Heat

Avoid things that might make you too hot. Getting too hot during pregnancy can raise your core body temperature which also increases your baby's body temperature. This can be harmful to the baby and could lead to abnormal development. Do not use saunas, steam baths, and hot tubs, especially in the first trimester. Be sure that you are able to perspire when exercising in order to cool off your body.

Physical Activity

NO EXERCISE-just like what we reviewed for guidelines after transfer. Keep your heart rate below 120 beats per minute and do not become over heated or dehydrated. Avoid high impact sports and activities where there is a potential for falls. Avoid any activity that makes you short of breath. Drink plenty of fluids. When in doubt about whether or not what you are wanting to do is appropriate, use the above guidelines-if it falls outside of that, you should not do it. Again, no exercise. This is our recommendation until 12 weeks of pregnancy. At that stage of pregnancy, please consult your OB on what is deemed appropriate for exercise.

High Altitude

If you go to the mountains during your pregnancy, please try to remain under 10,000 feet for any activities. At high altitudes, you take in a decreased amount of oxygen due to decreased air pressure. This means less oxygen for your baby, as well.

Travel

It is safe to travel during pregnancy if you are not having any complications. If traveling by car or airplane, be sure to wear your seatbelt. You also should get up and stretch every once in a while, empty your bladder frequently, and drink plenty of fluids. Consult your obstetrician for recommendations on travel during your second and third trimesters.

Nausea

Nausea can be a normal symptom in pregnancy. It is often related to the increases in pregnancy hormones. Most nausea decreases considerably after the first trimester (12 weeks). It is important for you and your baby to receive nutrition. The following suggestions may help with nausea:

- Eat small, frequent meals.
- Place crackers or toast next to your bedside and nibble on them before getting up.
- Rise slowly from bed. Give yourself a few minutes to adjust.
- Drink small amounts of fluids with meals as your stomach fills quickly. Try sipping fluids between meals.
- Try peppermint tea, ginger tea, Gatorade™, 7-Up™, or ginger ale.
- You may also try acupressure bands, which work for some people.

Dental Exams

It is safe to have dental cleaning done during pregnancy. Local anesthetic for fillings may be used as long as it does not contain epinephrine. Dental x-rays may be done, only if necessary. Be sure they use a lead apron to shield your abdomen.

Vaginal Discharge

You may notice an increase in vaginal discharge during pregnancy. This is due to pregnancy hormones. Good personal hygiene is usually all that is required. Vaginal douching is not recommended during pregnancy. If you notice itching, burning, or odor, you may use Monistat® externally. Please call your doctor if this does not take care of your symptoms.

Cat Litter

Avoid cleaning or changing cat litter while you are pregnant. There is a possibility of being exposed to toxoplasmosis when changing cat litter. For the same reason, wash your hands after handling raw meat or working with garden soil.

Sex / Orgasm

We recommend that you abstain from intercourse/orgasm until a heart beat can be clearly visualized upon ultrasound.

Side pain

Many women experience side pain during pregnancy, especially when stretching or lifting. This is usually ligament pain caused by a growing uterus pulling on the ligaments. Don't worry about this kind of pain, which is usually relieved by a change of position. However, if you are experiencing spotting along with pain, or if the pain is persistent or becomes severe, we want to hear from you immediately.

Nutrition

It is important to have a well balanced diet and take a prenatal vitamin daily. During pregnancy you need an additional 300 to 400 calories per day. If you are carrying twins you need an extra 600 calories per day. Average weight gain during the first 20 weeks is 10 pounds, even if you are carrying twins. The recommendations for gestational weight gain are as follows (this is based upon pre-pregnancy BMI):

- Underweight women should gain 28-40 lb
- Normal weight women should gain 25-35 lb
- Overweight women should gain 15-25 lb
- Obese women should gain 11-20 lb

Please Call your doctor if you have the following symptoms

- Bleeding, especially if bright red and associated with cramping
- Continuous cramping
- Severe nausea or vomiting, when you are unable to keep fluids down for 24 hours
- Severe pain unrelieved by Tylenol®.