

BUMP AND BEYOND

Cobb & Douglas Public Health Pregnancy Newsletter



Fitness During Pregnancy

Exercise and staying active while pregnant is an important part of keeping you and your baby healthy during and after your pregnancy. Physical inactivity and excessive weight gain have been identified as risk factors for maternal obesity and related pregnancy complications. Exercising while pregnant provides many benefits. Regular physical activity can help to improve and maintain physical fitness and help reduce the chances of developing certain complications during your pregnancy. Some of the benefits of exercise are a reduced chance of:

- Gestational weight gain
- Gestational diabetes
- Gestational high blood pressure disorders
- Preterm birth
- Cesarean birth (with an increased chance of having a vaginal delivery)
- Lower birth weight

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Fitness During Pregnancy

Your recovery time after delivery and the incidence of postpartum depression might be reduced by staying physically active during your pregnancy. Having greater overall physical fitness in pregnancy is associated with having less body pain and back/sciatic pain.

Participating in moderate-intensity exercise for at least 20 – 30 minutes per day or on most days is a safe and realistic goal to set and will keep you physically fit throughout your pregnancy. As long as your pregnancy is free of medical complications, safe physical activities are encouraged. Below are examples of exercises that have been found to be safe and beneficial during pregnancy:

- Walking
- Aerobic exercises
- Dancing
- Resistance exercises (using weights, elastic bands)
- Water aerobics
- Stretching exercises
- Stationary cycling

It is important to stay hydrated, wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothing, and avoid high heat and humidity while exercising. Avoid exercises that would cause you to lose your balance, or that would cause anything to come into forceful contact with your abdomen.

Speaking to your doctor about exercise as soon as you start prenatal care can help you understand what exercises are safe for you to do during your pregnancy. For women who are already physically active before becoming pregnant, it is usually safe to continue with your current exercise program. For women who are not physically active before becoming pregnant, it is still safe and important to start participating in regular exercise, but you will need to start with low-impact activities and progress slowly. You do not want to start a rigorous exercise routine if this is something your body is not used to.

While exercise is safe during pregnancy, if you experience any of the following warning signs, discontinue exercise and call your doctor right away:

- Vaginal bleeding
- Abdominal pain
- Regular painful contractions
- Amniotic fluid leakage
- Shortness of breath before exertion
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Chest pain
- Muscle weakness affecting balance
- Calf pain or swelling

Whether you are currently physically active or not and you are pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider before deciding on and starting any new exercise program. Exercise during pregnancy can have many benefits for you and your baby, but it is important to have a full health assessment from a medical provider before beginning.

Preeclampsia

Preeclampsia is a condition during pregnancy in which the expecting woman's blood pressure increases, usually in the later months of pregnancy. It affects anywhere from 5-8% of pregnancies. It can cause problems such as too much protein in the urine and a variety of uncomfortable physical symptoms. It can also be a reason for early delivery, and in severe cases, can cause seizures, organ damage and postpartum complications. The cause of preeclampsia is still unknown, but some theories suggest it may be due to problems with the placenta or increased blood volume associated with pregnancy.

Risk factors for preeclampsia include:

- Obesity
- Hypertension established before pregnancy
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Kidney disease
- Age over 40
- Family history of preeclampsia
- African/Hispanic ethnicity
- Multiple gestation

DIAGNOSING PREECLAMPSIA

Your obstetrician will take your blood pressure at every prenatal visit. Preeclampsia is diagnosed during pregnancy as a blood pressure of 140/90 mmHg or higher, usually combined with protein detected in the urine. Other common symptoms of preeclampsia to let your provider know about include frequent headaches, nausea/vomiting, changes in vision, swelling in your hands and face, and gaining more than 5 pounds in a week.

Severe preeclampsia is diagnosed as a blood pressure of 160/110 mmHg or higher (two readings at least 4 hours apart) along with protein in the urine and test results suggesting kidney or liver damage. Symptoms that accompany severe preeclampsia can be unexplained stomach pain, difficulty breathing or fluid in the lungs, and progression to eclampsia, which is when seizure activity occurs.

COMPLICATIONS OF PREECLAMPSIA

HELLP syndrome. A complication of severe preeclampsia is HELLP syndrome. HELLP stands for hemolysis (broken red blood cells), elevated liver enzymes (from liver damage due to the high pressures), and low platelet counts (the cells that are responsible for stopping bleeding are low).

Eclampsia. If the blood pressure becomes so uncontrolled and high that it is severe enough to affect brain function, seizures can result. This is called eclampsia, and it can result in coma and even death.

Postpartum Preeclampsia and Eclampsia.

Between 48 hours and 6 weeks post-delivery, a woman is at greatest risk for preeclampsia and eclampsia after birth. This is exactly what it sounds like, and symptoms include all the same symptoms of preeclampsia during pregnancy. Having preeclampsia during pregnancy is a risk factor for developing this condition postpartum. However, a woman could have a normal pregnancy with no previous complications and still develop this condition after birth. In fact, the condition usually begins very rapidly over the course of a few days postpartum, and many times requires a return trip to the hospital.

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Preeclampsia

TREATMENTS FOR PREECLAMPSIA

Delivery of the baby is generally the treatment for preeclampsia and is the safest intervention after 37 weeks' gestation. However, if the baby is less than 37 weeks, your provider may put you on bed rest and want to closely monitor your condition for the rest of the pregnancy until it is safe to deliver.

Admission to the hospital is necessary when a woman's blood pressure cannot be controlled through bed rest and medications. Your doctor will want to test your blood work and urine for signs of organ damage, perform ultrasounds to check on baby, and monitor your blood pressure, heart rate, and oxygen levels continuously.

Antihypertensive medications may be given intravenously to bring down your blood pressure, and anticonvulsant medications such as magnesium sulfate may be used to prevent seizures. Sometimes, it is necessary to deliver a baby earlier than 37 weeks if severe preeclampsia is threatening the mother's life. If this is indicated, you will receive steroid injections that can help speed up the development of the baby's lungs so that it can have an easier transition into the world as a preterm infant.

ACTION PLAN FOR PREECLAMPSIA

Call your provider if you are experiencing...

- A blood pressure measurement of 140/90 mmHg or higher
- A severe headache that will not go away
- Severe stomach pain, especially in the upper right abdomen
- Facial swelling or new swelling in your hands

Go to the ER/call 911 if you are experiencing...

- A blood pressure measurement of 160/110 mmHg or higher
- Shortness of breath
- Spots or changes in your vision
- Seizures

Sources:

Preeclampsia: MedlinePlus Genetics

Preeclampsia and Eclampsia | NICHD - Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (nih.gov)

Postpartum Preeclampsia

Rewards & Incentives

We hope that you find the services provided by your Healthy Start care team to be helpful and informative. Our goal is for you to have the safest and healthiest prenatal and postpartum experience possible. We want your baby (or babies) to come into this world strong, well, thriving, and for our dads to be your #1 supporters. We appreciate you allowing us to be on this journey with you and we want you to know that we don't take our roles lightly.

Although we're not able to provide incentives for each client on each visit, you will continue to receive those items that support some of our goals, such as providing babies a safe place to sleep, introducing literacy and words through books, monitoring milestones, and offering information for a myriad of resources.

We want to go a step further! In addition to items you may already receive, we will soon have more gift card drawings!

On your monthly calls and/or visits with your Healthy Start Nurse or Care Coordinator, you may become eligible for drawings for additional gifts based on many of the healthy habits that you are already doing. Some of the ways you may have a chance to win are listed below.

- Prenatal Care
- Postpartum Care
- Well-Women Care
- GA Hope Support Group Participation
- Peer Referrals
- Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Events/Classes (gift cards may be limited)
- CAN Events Participation

Rewards & Incentives

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

With Healthy Start, all participants are **Winners!** However, we want to extend a special congratulations to our recent raffle winner for their participation in completing a Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Congratulations to the winner of our March gift card raffle drawing. Ms. O. Mitchell will receive a \$25 gift card of appreciation!!



As each of you communicate monthly with your Care Team, you should be given the opportunity to complete a survey; not only as a chance to be entered into our monthly drawing, but also, and most importantly, for you to be able to provide feedback on your experience with our programming/services and to let us know how we can improve. All that is required to be entered into the raffle is that you send confirmation of your completed survey to your Healthy Start Nurse or Care Coordinator within the month that you receive it, and your name can be entered. Please note that you do not have to participate in the raffle drawing and may complete surveys anonymously if you prefer.

Client Referrals

We are also now offering gift cards as referral incentives for other eligible pregnant women you refer to our program. To qualify for this incentive, the referred woman must fully complete the enrollment process and subsequently keep her next scheduled appointment. Please let a member of your Care Team know if you have a friend or family member who may qualify for our program.

Mom's Group Sessions

We hope many of you are finding the Moms' Group Sessions through Georgia Hope to be enlightening. This service is provided for you twice a week as a means of support and camaraderie with other ladies that may be in similar stages of life as you. We want to see each of you happy, healthy, and thriving in every aspect of your life and our hope is that this is one way to help with that.

Going forward, as a consistent participant of the Moms' Group Sessions (attending at least one weekly session 3-4 times a month) you may be eligible to earn gift cards for restaurants including Panera Bread and Chick-Fil-A while supplies last! This is just one of the small ways for us to thank you for allowing us to be a part of your journey!

Events & Classes

• **Stork's Nest**

Our local Stork's Nest is offering **free**, app-based learning modules for prenatal education classes. Earn a \$10 gift card per module! Register at <https://tinyurl.com/36k55u56> using Rho Xi Zeta for question 4.

• **Pickles & Ice Cream**

Pickles & Ice Cream is offering free, live webinars covering prenatal, postpartum, breastfeeding, and newborn care. To view class dates and times, visit: <https://picklesandicecreamga.org/events>.

• **Healthy Start Support Group**

CDPH's Healthy Start Program launched a virtual support group for moms, led by a therapist. Whether you're expecting or recently had your baby, you are welcome to attend. The group meets Tuesday evenings from 5:00pm - 6:30pm and Thursday afternoons from 2:00pm - 3:30pm. To join the Zoom call, use this link: <https://zoom.us/j/2925874010>.

• **Inspiring Fathers Program**

Inspiring Fathers is a program for individuals who support a mom in Healthy Start. We want to prepare fathers, partners, or other support figures for the mental, spiritual, and emotional responsibility of being actively involved in the child's life. The program includes a 12-week course that will teach the tools to care for the financial and emotional stability of your family. Topics will cover issues such as job training, housing assistance, self-esteem, relationship building and parenting skills. Meetings are held on Wednesdays from 6pm - 8pm over a hot meal, as we help you build a safe, strong home life for your child. Contact 770-635-0523 to register or to get answers to any questions you have about the program.



**Healthy
Start**



**Inspiring
Fathers**

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