

BUMP AND BEYOND

Cobb & Douglas Public Health Pregnancy Newsletter



Summer Heat During Pregnancy

With the weather being so hot right now and still having a couple more months of summer heat ahead of us, there are a few things to be aware of while pregnant. The changes in your body due to pregnancy can make you more susceptible to high heat and summer temperatures. Since your body has to work harder to cool down, you are more likely to experience heat exhaustion, heat stroke, or other heat-related illnesses. Pregnant women are also more likely to become dehydrated, which also makes it more difficult for your body to cool itself by sweating.

Hot temperatures or strenuous activity can cause a pregnant woman's internal body temperature to rise, which can be dangerous for her and her baby. There have been cases where an increased internal body temperature has been linked to birth defects and other pregnancy complications.

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Summer Heat During Pregnancy

Becoming overheated in the summer heat can cause symptoms such as headache, muscle cramps, dizziness, fainting, warm skin, and nausea. You are at an increased risk of falling if you become dizzy and falling can cause pregnancy complications, including placental abruption and early labor, which could lead to a preterm delivery.

You will want to avoid extreme temperatures and the hottest parts of the day. If you are planning to be outside, plan your activities early in the day or late in the evening and try to stay in the shade.

Make sure you are staying hydrated. You should be drinking at least eight (8 ounce) glasses of water a day. Remember to take a water bottle with you if you are out and about, especially if you are going to be outside.

Strenuous activity should be avoided. Exercise like walking is safe. However, try to find a shady area to walk and do it early in the morning or late in the evening. Swimming is a good exercise as well and can help keep you cool.

When outside, make sure your clothing is light-colored and loose fitting. Loose, breathable, and light-colored fabrics will help you to stay cooler in the hot months of summer.

If you experience any symptoms of overheating, you should move inside to somewhere cooler, sip water, loosen your clothing, and apply wet cloths to the skin. If your symptoms do not improve or last longer than an hour or you experience any vomiting, you should seek medical care right away.

Though the heat during the summer months can pose some risks for pregnant women, it is still okay to enjoy the outdoors. However, it is important to know the symptoms of overheating and to take the necessary steps in order to prevent it.



The Importance of Your Postpartum Appointment

Receiving care early and throughout your pregnancy is very important to the health of you and your baby, and continuing that care after you deliver your baby is just as important. Carrying your baby for nine months and delivering your baby has put a lot of stress on your body, physically and emotionally. Your postpartum check-up, which is a medical checkup you receive after having your baby, is a necessary appointment to ensure you are recovering well from your pregnancy and delivery. Even if you are feeling fine, it is important to have a thorough assessment of your health completed by your health care provider.

New moms are at risk of developing serious and life-threatening health conditions after delivery and the risk is increased if a woman has preexisting medical conditions, such as high blood pressure or diabetes. The risks of developing serious health complications can last up to even a year after delivering a baby. Many moms are dying from health complications that could have been prevented by receiving postpartum care.

In the past, postpartum care consisted of a one-time checkup around four to six weeks after delivery. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists now recommends that postpartum care should be an ongoing process and that all women should:

- Have contact with their provider within 3 weeks of delivery
- Get ongoing medical care during the postpartum period, as needed
- Have a complete postpartum checkup no later than 12 weeks after delivery

As mentioned earlier, women are at continued risk of developing serious health conditions even up to a year after delivery. During your postpartum care and before your last postpartum visit, your health care provider should help in ensuring you are set up to continue your health care with routine visits and explain any ongoing care you may need.

If getting to your doctor's office for an in-person medical visit is a problem, make sure to ask them if having an appointment over the phone or a video call is possible. This is called a telehealth, and many providers offer this type of appointment.

Your postpartum visit should consist of a physical and emotional assessment. There are many things that new moms struggle with, and your provider should ask you questions to find out if you are having problems with any of these. Some of these could include questions about:

- Depression and/or anxiety
- Poor sleep or fatigue
- Bleeding
- Leaking urine or pain when you urinate
- Gas or constipation
- Problems with feeding or other newborn care
- Emotional support and help with other children, chores, transportation, and meals
- Basic needs, such as diapers, food, and money for bills
- Sex, including when it is safe to have it and what you can do if you have pain or concerns about a lack of interest
- Birth control and choosing the best method for you
- Timing for future pregnancies

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The Importance of Your Postpartum Appointment

You can visit the following link to find a checklist that is useful in keeping track of the topics you would like to talk to your doctor about.

<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/health-tools/my-postpartum-care-checklist>

A pelvic exam should be performed during your postpartum appointment to make sure you are healing as you should from the birth of your baby. Your provider should also check your blood pressure, weight, breasts, and abdomen. If you had high blood pressure or diabetes during your pregnancy, you could be at an increased risk of developing heart disease or diabetes in the future. During your postpartum visit, your health care provider should be able to connect you to doctors who can monitor your health and provide care for you as needed.

Talking to your doctor during your postpartum period is important to the health of you and your baby. This communication can help in preventing any health complications now and even in any future pregnancies you may have. It is okay to tell your doctor how you feel. Many of your discomforts and feelings will be normal, but some symptoms you may experience could be a warning sign of a serious and life-threatening complication. Remember, do not skip your postpartum appointments, even if you feel fine. Seeking and receiving the care provided during these appointments is crucial to the health of you and your baby, now and in the future.

<https://www.marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/postpartum/your-postpartum-checkups>

<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/health-tools/my-postpartum-care-checklist>

<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/experts-and-stories/the-latest/what-to-expect-at-a-postpartum-checkup-and-why-the-visit-matters>



The Role of Fathers in Pregnancy

Welcoming a new life into the world is an incredibly special and transformative experience. And while much of the focus during pregnancy tends to be on the expectant mother, it's important not to overlook the vital role that fathers play in this journey. Yes, dads, you are just as crucial to those better birth outcomes! In fact, research shows that when fathers are actively involved throughout pregnancy, it can have a profound impact on both mom and baby.

When it comes to pregnancy, fathers have a significant role to play. Gone are the days when dads were mere spectators in this journey. Today, we understand that their involvement goes far beyond providing emotional support or attending doctor's appointments.

First and foremost, fathers provide essential practical and emotional support for their partners. From helping with household chores and running errands, to offering a comforting shoulder to lean on during moments of vulnerability, their presence can make all the difference. Research has shown that women who have involved partners experience reduced stress levels and increased overall satisfaction with their pregnancy experience.

Additionally, fathers actively participating in prenatal care appointments allows them to stay informed about the progress of the pregnancy. This knowledge not only empowers them but also helps foster a stronger connection with both the expectant mother and the unborn child.

Studies indicate that when fathers engage in positive behaviors such as promoting healthy lifestyle choices or encouraging regular exercise during pregnancy, mothers are more likely to follow suit. This shared commitment toward well-being benefits not only mom, but also contributes to better birth outcomes for baby. Research also shows when fathers are involved in pregnancy, women tend to have lower levels of stress hormones such as cortisol- this decrease in stress levels has positive effects on both physical and mental well-being during pregnancy.

Furthermore, paternal involvement leads to better birth outcomes for babies. Studies indicate that infants born to engaged fathers have higher Apgar scores at birth—a quick assessment used to evaluate newborns' overall health—and they also have reduced rates of preterm birth and low birth weight.

The Three Ps of Fatherhood

Provide, Protect, and Be Present

Fatherhood is a journey filled with joy, responsibility, and love. It's a role that goes beyond just being present physically. Fathers play a crucial role in providing for their families, protecting them from harm, and being actively engaged in their children's lives.

Fathers are providers. They work hard to ensure that their family's needs are met. This includes financial support by working to provide a stable home and ensuring there is enough food on the table. But it also extends beyond that - providing emotional support and guidance to both the mother and child during pregnancy.

Fathers are protectors. They have an innate instinct to keep their loved ones safe from any harm or danger. During pregnancy, they can be supportive by attending doctor appointments with the mother-to-be, advocating for her needs, and creating a safe environment at home.

Fathers need to be present both physically and emotionally throughout the entire journey of pregnancy. Being present means actively participating in prenatal classes together with the mother-to-be - learning about childbirth techniques or gaining knowledge about infant care.

When fathers take an active role during pregnancy it not only strengthens their bond with their child, but also sets a positive foundation for future parenting. The support they provide can positively influence birth outcomes while fostering healthy relationships within the family unit.

So let us celebrate all those amazing fathers who are there every step of the way during pregnancy! Your involvement truly makes a difference in creating healthier births and happier families.

Remember: You matter!



Family Extravaganza Event

sponsored by

Healthy Start of Cobb & Douglas County

Saturday, August 26th from 1:00pm to 5:00pm

The event will be held at the South Cobb Recreation Center located at 875 Riverside Parkway in Austell.

There will be vendors for health screenings, family resources, games, activities, snacks, and more!!

Contact the Healthy Start Office for more details (770)635-0523.



Rewards & Incentives

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 June gift card raffle drawing. N. Graham 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.

Moms' 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 Moms' 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.

To join the Tuesday Zoom Meetings from 5:00 – 6:30pm

[https://cdphonline-org.zoom.us/j/84700178631?](https://cdphonline-org.zoom.us/j/84700178631?pwd=cDl6aU1tVHh2UStISm93Y0dYcTB2dz09)

[pwd=cDl6aU1tVHh2UStISm93Y0dYcTB2dz09](https://cdphonline-org.zoom.us/j/84700178631?pwd=cDl6aU1tVHh2UStISm93Y0dYcTB2dz09)

To join the Thursday Zoom Meetings from 2:00 – 3:30pm

[https://cdphonline-org.zoom.us/j/82763074795?](https://cdphonline-org.zoom.us/j/82763074795?pwd=a0w2MGVoaGloanp5aWRlOHpOcTlrZz09)

[pwd=a0w2MGVoaGloanp5aWRlOHpOcTlrZz09](https://cdphonline-org.zoom.us/j/82763074795?pwd=a0w2MGVoaGloanp5aWRlOHpOcTlrZz09)

• **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**

**COBB & DOUGLAS HEALTHY START HAS
OFFICES IN SOUTH COBB, DOUGLASVILLE, MARIETTA, & SMYRNA
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