

The Wellness Family

Dr. Cuperus Keeps You Informed

The Dos and Don'ts of a Wellness Pregnancy

Having a baby will be one of the biggest decisions you'll ever make and will bring with it the challenge of the unknown. While it is the most natural thing in the world, our western culture has turned having a baby into a multi-million dollar "disease" industry, convincing women that natural is no longer possible. What used to be a simple process is now complicated by products and services, options and choices, so take the time to make sure and gather all the information you can before making any decisions.

Do practice wellness not fadness – Just because it's the latest thing doesn't mean it's the greatest. Be sure to carefully consider every option presented to you during your pregnancy. Whether it's a new vitamin or exercise regimen, take a moment to discuss your options with your healthcare provider.

Don't forget the importance of good nutrition – Diet plays an important role in a wellness pregnancy. Eating whole, living foods begins by understanding that if it's in a box, a can or package, it's probably been nutritionally compromised. Processed foods are generally less healthy and have already had most, if not all, of their important vitamins and minerals processed out of them.

Do reduce your caffeine intake – Research has suggested that caffeine has been known to cause miscarriages and, if you're not already pregnant, can interfere with conception.

Don't get overscheduled – Stress can have a negative impact on your pregnancy causing problems such as hypertension and may potentially cause a miscarriage. It's important to look at your life realistically and not get overscheduled. Spreading yourself too thin during these important nine months won't just negatively affect you, but your unborn child as well.

Do a combination of exercises – Regular exercise such as walking, water aerobics, prenatal yoga or riding a recumbent stationary bicycle, will increase your heart rate which will increase your blood flow while being safe for you and your baby. Also, remembering to take deep even breaths during exercise will increase the oxygen content in your blood.

Don't be sedentary – A sedentary lifestyle is one where a woman is not active for a sustained 20 minutes

at least three days a week. Excessive weight gain during pregnancy has been linked to labor difficulties and gestational diabetes. If you're typically a person who doesn't move a lot then now is the time to change that. Moving is so important for you and your developing baby.

Do consider the source of your prenatal vitamins – Good prenatal vitamins will have everything your body needs to help your baby develop. Of course, you need the standard prenatal vitamins and minerals (such as vitamin B, iron, etc.) but you also need calcium/magnesium, choline and fish oil (omega-3).

More important than the right vitamins and minerals is the right quality. It is always best to purchase your



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vitamins from a reputable health food store and not your local corner store or department store. Paying a little more for quality prenatal vitamins will ensure that you're getting what you and your baby needs.

Don't get a "routine" ultrasound – The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends that ultrasound examinations only be performed for specific reasons, but many healthcare professionals include at least one ultrasound at 18-20 weeks as part of their routine prenatal care. Since there haven't been any documented negative effects, it's considered safe. The problem is, just because the effects aren't documented doesn't mean they don't exist and shouldn't be taken into consideration.

Even the FDA says, "While ultrasound has been around for many years, expectant women and their families need to know that the long-term effects of repeated ultrasound exposures on the fetus are not fully known."

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Don't take drugs – While it's true that your health is paramount, you need to carefully consider any drugs you take during pregnancy. Studies have shown that most drugs will cross the placenta and negatively affect your baby; these include antibiotics, antihistamines, diuretics, anticonvulsants and diabetes treatments. There are only two chemicals that have been found not to cross the placenta from you to your baby and those are heparin and insulin.

While it has generally been thought that if there were only trace amounts of the chemicals you were given in your baby's blood then the baby was okay, recent studies are proving this to be untrue.

Don't take antidepressants – A recent study found that selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), a form of antidepressants, easily cross the placental barrier. This was proven by these chemicals being found in the umbilical cords of newborns whose mothers took these drugs during pregnancy. This same study has shown that exposure to SSRI's during pregnancy may be associated with a higher risk of pre-term labor, low APGAR scores and the necessity of admitting the infant to the neonatal intensive care unit.

Do find a "Healthcare Team" – Many women are choosing to not just have a midwife or OB/GYN but to have an entire healthcare team.

Obviously, the first person in this team is going to be your midwife or OB/GYN. This person should be chosen carefully based on your desires for your delivery. Don't be afraid to interview these healthcare professionals before making a decision, making a point to ask about their c-section rate. While it's true that c-sections should be treated as a last resort, the fact that the national average has jumped 50% in the past decade proves that this isn't always the case.

You and your Family Wellness Chiropractor – Many think a Chiropractor only treats back and neck pain but many more women have discovered other benefits. Prenatal chiropractic care can mean less morning sickness, lower back pain and a shorter more quality labor and delivery. But more than that, Chiropractic care supports the integrity of your pelvic function, which includes the uterus, the muscles and ligaments, and the interfacing of the nervous and hormonal system which is important for you and your baby.

Do realize you have a choice where to give birth – Choosing whether or not to give birth at home, in a birthing center or a hospital is definitely a decision that you get to make. Today more and more women are choosing to give birth in the comfort of their own home with family and friends nearby, which is typically less invasive and will usually have no medical intervention.

Do have a birth plan established – This is the best thing you can do to make sure that your wishes are considered during your delivery. A birth plan should include your basic decisions such as moving around during labor, when to start pushing, fetal monitoring and labor induction, but also includes contingency decisions. These would include whether or not to provide an epidural, an episiotomy or c-section, as well as instructions for the nurse and staff regarding who should be with you, or stay with the baby should there be complications. Visit www.birthplan.com

Do recognize your right to make decisions – When all is said and done remember that this is your pregnancy and your baby, and you have the right to ask questions and get second opinions when you are not sure. You are in control and should make your decisions based on the information provided by those you trust on your healthcare team. Remember that, at every turn, you control what you will allow during your pregnancy and delivery, and that at any time it is alright to say, "No," and expect your decisions to be honored.

Dear Patient,

Dr. Cuperus is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss preconception or prenatal wellness with your Family Wellness Chiropractor.

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