

Welcome to Dr. Sherri Levin and Associates! We are very excited to care for you during your pregnancy and we want you to have a healthy pregnancy. This packet reviews some basic conditions and information about pregnancy but it is *not* comprehensive and you are welcome to read additional pregnancy guides that are helpful to you.

Your pregnancy should be shared with the family and you may bring other children to your appointments if you desire. Small children should have another adult to supervise them during your appointment when you have your ultrasound (around 20 weeks).

Our clinic hours are as follows:

Monday 8:00-4:30

Tuesday 9:00-4:30

Wednesday 8:00-4:00

Thursday 8:00-4:30

Friday 8:00-12:00

Closed on Saturday and Sunday and some major holidays.

If you call the office when it is closed, you will be given the number for the answering service. If you have concerns that you feel need to be discussed with a doctor, please call and leave a message with the answering service. Your phone call will be returned by Dr. Sherri Levin, Dr. Anne Gonzalez or Dr. Amelie Chu depending on who is on call.

General prenatal instructions

During your pregnancy you should abstain from alcohol, medications or drugs that are not safe in pregnancy or that have not been cleared by your doctor, smoking and douching or use of tampons.

You should limit your caffeine intake to 200 mg daily (approximately 12 oz coffee).

Common medical problems

Heartburn – You may use TUMS, Maalox, or Mylanta. If you are taking more than the recommended amount or feel like your symptoms are not improving, you may take Zantac (ranitidine) over the counter as recommended on the bottle. If your symptoms do not improve, you should talk to your doctor about other available treatments.

Colds

You may take over-the-counter medications (listed in the chart) for symptom relief. You should call the office if your temperature goes over 101 F or if your symptoms worsen. You should call the office if you have asthma or other medical problems that make you more susceptible to breathing difficulties.

Headaches

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is safe to take in pregnancy (as recommended on the bottle). If you have a severe headache that is sudden in onset and not relieved with acetaminophen you should call the office.

Constipation

Constipation is a common problem during pregnancy because the hormones slow down the movement in the GI system. It is very important to drink 6-8 glasses of water daily and to increase your fiber intake to approximately 25 gm per day. You can eat fiber-rich foods or take a fiber supplement such as Metamucil, Citrucel, Fibercon and Benefiber. It is also safe to take Colace (docusate) which is a stool softener. Occasional use of Milk of Magnesia is safe.

Hemorrhoids also develop or worsen during pregnancy due to the increased pressure on the veins in the rectum from the pregnant uterus. It is important not to strain during a bowel movement. Warm baths and Preparation H or other similar hemorrhoid cream can help reduce symptoms.

Nausea and Vomiting of Pregnancy (Morning sickness)

Nausea often begins in the early weeks of pregnancy and worsens by weeks 10-12 and gradually improves after that for most women. It can occur at any time during the day. It is important to eat frequent small meals. Bland carbohydrates are well tolerated as well as citrus juices. Occasional vomiting is not uncommon but you should call the office if you are unable to keep any fluids down for a 24 hour period. Please see the medication list for medications that can be taken over-the-counter to treat symptoms.

Dental problems

Dental problems can occur and should be taken care of when they arise. If you require a dental x-ray, this should be avoided between weeks 8-15 but can be done after that with an abdominal shield. If you must have an x-ray during the 8-15 week timeframe, it is unlikely the amount the exposure of the baby to radiation is very insignificant.

Swelling

Swelling can occur at any time during pregnancy but worsens in the third trimester. It is important to stay well hydrated and to avoid a high sodium diet. It also helps to elevate the legs and feet above the level of the heart as much as possible while at home. Ted hose are tight compression stockings which also help reduce swelling.

Exercise in pregnancy and the postpartum period

If you do not have any medical or obstetric complications, 30 minutes or more of moderate exercise a day on most, if not all, days of the week is recommended (150 minutes per week). After the first trimester you should avoid lying on your back or standing motionless for long periods of time. You may need to be monitored more closely if you engage in very strenuous physical activity during pregnancy (such as long-distance running). Contact sports or activities that have an increased risk of falling should be avoided. Scuba diving should be avoided. The changes that occur in your body during

pregnancy generally persist for 4-6 weeks postpartum and you should wait until after this period to return to your pre-pregnancy exercise routine or until cleared by your doctor.

Travel

Unless you have been told by your doctor that it is not safe to travel, occasional air travel during pregnancy is considered safe and is allowable up to 36 weeks by most airlines. Some airlines have earlier restrictions, particularly for international flights (less than 34 weeks), so it is best to check with your airline. You may also need documentation of your gestational age which we can provide for you. Ground transportation is considered safe at any gestation (for an uncomplicated pregnancy).

***Please understand that complications can occur during any pregnancy and if you have a complication while traveling in the US or out of the country, it may be unsafe for you to travel home. If you deliver prematurely, it may be a prolonged period of time before it is safe for you or the baby to return home. For these reasons, we recommend staying in the local area in the third trimester.**

When you travel, it is important to minimize the risk of a venous thromboembolism (blood clot) and you should move your lower extremities or get up and walk around every two hours (as long as it is safe). Compression stockings should also be worn to reduce swelling while traveling as well as the risk of a blood clot. If you have been on a long trip and you notice pain and swelling in one leg you should call the office immediately.

Diet and Weight Gain

The recommended weight gain in pregnancy is different for each individual based on a woman's pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI). We will review this with you at one of your first appointments and give you a sheet outlining your target weight gain. If you have any of the following we will recommend an early glucose screen to insure you do not have diabetes or insulin resistance: BMI >30, family history of diabetes in a first degree relative, history of gestational diabetes in a previous pregnancy or if you have had a previously large baby (over 4000 gm/8 lb 8oz). If you do not have any of the above, we will do a routine glucose test around 28 weeks to screen for gestational diabetes.

Sexual activity

You may continue to engage in sexual activity as long as it remains comfortable for you and you have not been told to abstain by your doctor. If you have the following, you should avoid all sexual activity and avoid putting anything in the vagina: cerclage in place, preterm labor, ruptured membranes. There may also be other conditions in which sexual activity should be avoided and your doctor will discuss this with you. It is normal to contract after sexual activity or an orgasm but they should go away with rest. It is not uncommon to have some spotting after intercourse but you should call the office if it is bright red bleeding.

Symptoms of Miscarriage (First trimester)

If you have active bleeding, passage of tissue or clots or severe cramping accompanied by bleeding you should call the office. If you pass tissue you should try to place it in a container so that it can be brought into the office. It is not always necessary to be seen in the emergency room for a miscarriage and the doctor on call will decide the appropriate treatment for you. If you have severe pain and lightheadness and have not yet had an ultrasound to confirm a normal pregnancy in the uterus you should call the office immediately.

It is important to understand that 1/3 of all pregnancies have some bleeding in the first trimester and this does not necessarily mean you are having a miscarriage.

Concerning Symptoms in Second and Third Trimester

Call the office immediately or go to Labor and Delivery for the following: gush of fluid or bright red bleeding (like a period).

It is normal to have Braxton-Hicks contractions in the second and third trimester. They are usually irregular. If they become persistent you should rest, drink lots of water to insure that you are well hydrated and insure that you are emptying your bladder regularly. Start timing them from the start of one contraction to the start of another contraction. If you have 8 contractions in an hour you should call the office.

If you have other symptoms such as abdominal pain, worsening headaches, changes in your vision or any other concerning symptoms, please call the office.

Cord blood banking

It is the law in Texas to inform you of umbilical cord blood banking. Umbilical cord blood contains cells that can be transplanted into a person to aid in the treatment of some diseases. There are public and private cord blood banks. There is rigorous screening for infectious diseases prior to donation to a public bank. Private banks were initially designed for use by the same individual later in life, should that individual develop a disease. The chance of this unit of blood being used by the individual or family member is approximately 1/2700.

Foods to Avoid in Pregnancy

All poultry, meat and fish should be cooked thoroughly. Avoid seafood high in mercury such as swordfish, shark, king mackerel and tilefish. It is safe to eat 8-12 ounces of seafood every week such as shrimp, crab, canned light tuna (chunk white tuna and tuna steak should be limited to 6 ounces per week), salmon, pollock, catfish, cod and tilapia. Avoid all raw fish and raw shellfish. Cook eggs thoroughly. Avoid unpasteurized foods. Many cheeses are very healthy and safe to eat in pregnancy such as mozzarella and cottage cheese. Cheeses such as brie, feta, camembert, blue cheese and Mexican-style cheeses such as queso fresco are not always pasteurized and should be avoided. If the cheese is labeled as pasteurized or made with pasteurized milk, it is safe in pregnancy.