

Exercise: Physical activity during pregnancy

Physical activity can:

- Help you and your baby gain the right amount of weight;
- Reduce the discomforts of pregnancy, such as backaches, leg cramps, constipation, bloating and swelling;
- Lower your risk for gestational diabetes;
- Improve your mood and energy level;
- Help you sleep better;
- Help you have an easier, shorter labor.

Try to get 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity physical activity on most, if not all, days of the week. Before you start, talk with your health care provider about a level of exercise that is safe for you.

Not all pregnant women should exercise, especially if they are at risk for preterm labor.

Here are some things to think about when you're ready to start:

- Decide what type of exercise you will do. Pick things you will enjoy. Good activities include walking, swimming and dancing.
- Avoid activities that put you at high risk for injury from falling or trauma to your belly, such as horseback riding, downhill skiing, kickboxing or soccer. After the first trimester, don't do exercises where you lie flat on your back.
- When you exercise, pay attention to your body and how you feel. If you have any serious problems, such as vaginal bleeding, dizziness, headaches or chest pain, stop exercising and contact your health care provider right away.



For more information

For information on exercise during pregnancy:

The March of Dimes

www.marchofdimes.com/pnhec/159_515.asp

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

www.acog.org/Resources_And_Publications
(Search keywords: exercise during pregnancy)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health

www.womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/you-are-pregnant/staying-healthy-safe.cfm