



Middlesex-London Health Unit
50 King Street, London, ON N6A 5L7
519-663-5317

Published 2015. Copyright of the Middlesex London Health Unit. All rights reserved.

Prenatal



Baby Steps To A Healthy Birth

Brought to you by the Middlesex-London Health Unit

Welcome To Pregnancy

Did You Know?

RELIABLE INFO

With all the information at your fingertips, it is important that you find the most reliable information to help you make the best decisions for you and your baby.

MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

To help you make informed decisions go to:
<https://www.healthunit.com/making-informed-decisions>.

This booklet has information that is important for you to know during your pregnancy. For more detailed information visit www.healthunit.com/prenatal-health.

HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

Speak with your healthcare provider so that you have a clear understanding about your tests and procedures.

RISKS & BENEFITS

Be sure that you understand the risks and benefits of every option for you and your baby.



The highest % of births happen between **8 am & 12 pm**



During pregnancy your blood volume will increase by **50%**



During pregnancy your uterus will expand up to **500x** its normal size



In Utero babies play with their umbilical cord, suck their thumb, cry, and dream.



An Elephant is pregnant for **22 MONTHS!**



Number of births per year in Middlesex-London: **4800**

Prenatal Care Starts Now



Warning Signs During Pregnancy

It is important to begin your prenatal care as soon as you find out you are pregnant. Choose a healthcare provider who you can talk to and who is supportive of your pregnancy and birth plan. There are many options available to you:



- Care for pregnant women, babies, and families.



- Care for pregnant women and deliver babies
- They do not care for babies after they are born.



- Care for women with low risk pregnancies and their babies for six weeks after birth.
- They provide care during labour & birth at home or in the hospital.



- Care for women with low risk pregnancies, babies, and families.
- Nurse practitioners do not deliver babies.

Immediately talk to your healthcare provider if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Trickle, gush of fluid, bright red spotting or bleeding from your vagina
- Sudden swelling of your face, fingers, hands, legs and/or feet
- Ongoing headache, blurred vision or spots before your eyes
 - Dizziness or feeling unwell
- Fever and chills (temperature above 38.3° C or 101°F)
 - Ongoing nausea and vomiting
- Pain or burning feeling while urinating (peeing)
 - A decrease in your baby's movement
 - Feeling that the baby is "pushing down"
- Change in number and/or strength of contractions
- Unexplained abdominal pain or any injury to your stomach area

Take Care of You

It is important that you recognize when something isn't right with your mood.

Approximately 15-20% of pregnant women experience a mood or anxiety disorder.

Dramatic Change in Appetite

Inability to Concentrate

Anxiety or Extreme Irritability

Symptoms of Depression & Anxiety May Include:

Persistent Sadness or Lack of Interest

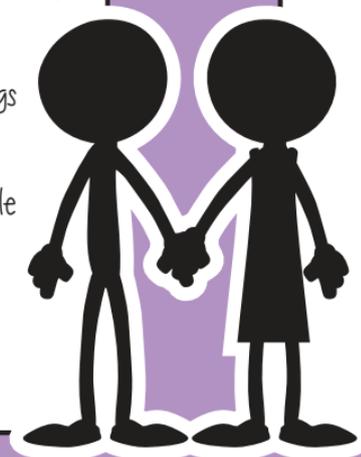
Sleep Problems & Extreme Fatigue

Frequent Mood Swings

Talk to your healthcare provider if you or your partner notice any of these symptoms.

Tips to stay healthy emotionally

- Be active and eat well; take time to rest; relax.
- Do something you enjoy every day (see a movie, listen to music, read a book).
- Share your thoughts & feelings with someone you trust.
- Surround yourself with people who support you.
- Make time to go out, visit friends, or spend time alone.



Tips for partners, families and friends

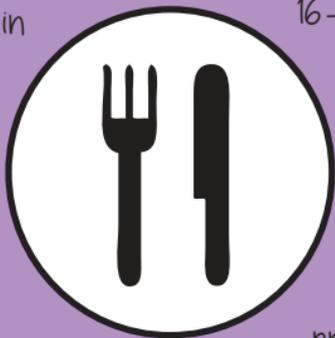
- Support, communicate, and be patient!
- Promote good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle for mom.
 - Exercise together.
 - Attend prenatal classes to learn about the birthing process; develop a birthing plan together.
- Be involved in the pregnancy experience.

Eat Well

Canada's Food Guide

will help you choose the type and amount of food that's right for you.

- Good nutrition is important in pregnancy.
- Include a variety of dark green and orange vegetables and fruit, whole grains, low-fat milk products, lean meat and meat alternatives daily.
- Have at least 150g (5oz) of cooked fish each week.



Multivitamins

In addition to a healthy diet, taking a multivitamin that has at least 0.4mg of folic acid and 16-20mg of iron is recommended during pregnancy.

- Limit caffeine to no more than 300mg per day.
- Most herbal teas are not proven to be safe during pregnancy. Herbal teas that are generally considered safe if taken in moderation (2-3 cups per day): citrus peel, ginger, lemon balm, orange peel, and rose hip.

Did You Know?

Pregnancy weakens the immune system making food poisoning more likely.

AVOID:



- Raw or undercooked meat, poultry and seafood.



- Unpasteurized milk, fruit juice and cider.



- Soft cheeses such as feta, brie and camembert and blue-veined cheeses unless they have labels that clearly state "made from pasteurized milk".



- Foods made with raw or lightly cooked eggs. (Eggs are to be cooked until the yolk is firm.)



- Raw sprouts, especially alfalfa sprouts.

- Reheat luncheon (deli) meats, hot dogs and refrigerated smoked seafood to 74°C/165°F. Canned pâtés and meat spreads are safe to eat.

Regular Exercise Matters

Exercise helps you with the physical demands of labour and birth.

Daily Kegel exercises will help to strengthen pelvic floor muscles which will aid in the birth of your baby.

Talk to your healthcare provider about what exercises are right for you during your pregnancy.

Staying active and eating well can help you gain the right amount of weight during pregnancy.

Start easy and progress gradually. Don't overdo it- you should be able to carry a normal conversation during physical activity.

Pay Attention To Your Pattern Of Weight Gain

Ideal weight gain depends on how much you weighed before pregnancy.

Talk to your healthcare provider if you are concerned with your pattern of weight gain.



Breasts 2-3 lbs

Placenta & amniotic fluid 4-6 lbs

Uterus 2-3 lbs

Baby 6-8 lbs

Extra blood volume 4 lbs

Extra fluids 2-3 lbs

Maternal fat stores 5-8 lbs

TOTAL 25-35 lbs

Changes During Pregnancy

You may experience many of the following changes during your pregnancy.

First trimester

- Morning sickness
 - Feeling tired
- Urinating often
- Feeling faint

Second Trimester

- Breast changes
- Ligament pain
- Bleeding gums
- Nosebleeds

Third Trimester

- Braxton-Hicks contractions
- Swelling of ankles, feet
 - Varicose veins
- Increased urination
- Back discomfort
- Faster heart rate and breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Indigestion & heartburn
 - Changes in mood
 - Sleep disruption
- Loss of balance & dizziness

Contact your healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns.

Feeding Your Baby

- Breastmilk is the natural food for newborns, containing everything your baby needs.

- Breastfeeding is important for the health and development of your baby.

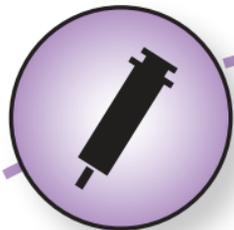
- Learn what you can before your baby arrives to make the best feeding decisions for you and your family.



Consider...

Immunization

- Immunization is important for expectant and new mothers. It protects mom's and baby's health.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about the vaccines that are safe to receive while you are pregnant.



Visit Your Dentist

- Pregnancy may affect the health of the gums & teeth.
- Regular dental cleanings and check-ups are safe at any time during pregnancy. Tell your dentist or dental hygienist that you are pregnant.



Mind Your Medication

- Check with your healthcare provider or pharmacist before you take any medications.
- For information about medications, call Motherisk at 1-877-439-2744.



Eliminate Exposures

- Exposure to some everyday substances may have harmful effects during pregnancy. Some chemicals may pass from the mother to the fetus.
- Always remember to wash your hands well with soap and warm water.



Butt Out

- Smoking has harmful effects on both you and your baby. Chemicals found in cigarettes in addition to the smoke produced, cross the placenta and enter the baby's blood stream.
- It's never too late to quit or cut back smoking!



Avoid Alcohol



Alcohol passes from you to your baby. It may affect the baby's developing brain, organs and body. Talk to your healthcare provider about your alcohol use.

There is **NO** safe...

- Amount of alcohol to drink during pregnancy.
- Type of alcohol.
- Time to drink alcohol during pregnancy.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

A term used to describe the range of harm that may result from drinking alcohol during pregnancy. There is no cure. It is the leading cause of preventable developmental and cognitive disabilities among Canadian children.

- It is never too late to quit.
- If you or your partner are having trouble not drinking alcohol, help is available.

Talk to your healthcare provider or call Motherisk at 1-877-439-2744 if you are concerned with the amount of alcohol you drank before knowing you were pregnant.

Prenatal Attachment

Attachment is the emotional connection and relationship between you and your baby.

Attachment with baby begins in pregnancy and is important for you, your partner, and your baby's mental and emotional wellbeing.

You and your partner can talk or sing to your baby, rub your belly and feel for your baby's movements.

A calm stress-free environment will help your baby feel safe and be healthy.



Be Prepared



For Parenthood

- Becoming a parent is about more than just having a baby. It is important to know that new moms and dads experience the transition to parenthood differently. A new baby in the family, especially a first child, may bring about many changes and challenges for new parents.



For Birth

- Prenatal classes are a great way to meet other pregnant women. By talking with others, you can better prepare for your own labour and birth, learn about caring for your baby and be more prepared for parenthood.



For Feeding Your Baby

- It is your right to make an informed decision about how you feed your baby. It is important for you to have all the information before you choose what is best for you and your baby.

For More Information



Prenatal Health

Supporting you with information to make the best decisions for you & your baby

www.healthunit.com/during-pregnancy