

~birth is beautiful~





With pregnancy come a lot of exciting and sometimes daunting changes to a woman's body.

A woman will experience hormonal changes sometimes a change in appetite, fatigue, or frequent urination.

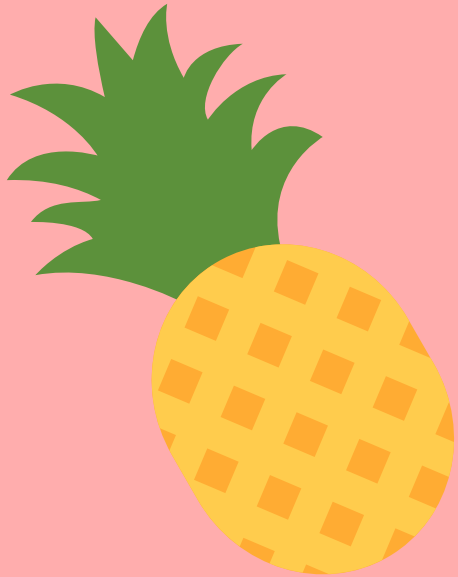
This guide is to help women feel confident in their pregnancy, help them feel informed and prepared to welcome their new little one into the world when it is time for the birth.



# ***Things to do to prepare for Pregnancy, and the “Why” answered***

- Prenatal Vitamins
  - Healthy Fats
  - 80-100 grams of protein a day
  - Leafy greens=folate and Iron
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- Limit Caffeine
  - Limit Carbs & Refined Sugar
  - Limit Fried and Fast Food
  - Avoid any kind of pain reliver
  - Excedrin
  - Ibuprofen
  - Tylenol
  - No Alcohol or Smoking

# ***What to Eat***



**pineapple**

Pineapple is a nutritious healthy fruit to eat while pregnant, full of minerals, water, vitamins and fiber, all essential for having a healthy pregnancy. It can also help with breast engorgement after birth as it is full of anti-inflammatory properties that can ease the discomfort of pain and swelling. However, if you are experiencing any heartburn or acid reflux during your pregnancy it is best to avoid.

Avacados are really the unsung heros of our time. Packed with nutrients and healthy fats, it promotes a healthy weight gain in Mom that is beneficial for both baby and mom. Loaded with folate this nutrient helps to aid in the prevention of birth defects, like cleft lip, spinal problems, and aids in babies brain development. Eating one a week can also help balance hormones.

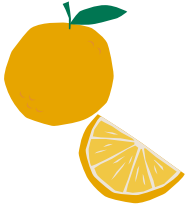


**avocado**



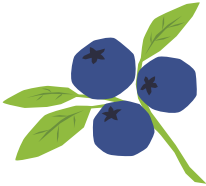
## ***Tips for pregnancy & an easier birth***

### **Oranges**



Vitamin C plays a crucial role in the body & your baby's development. Packed with nutrients, this vitamin helps protect cells, maintains blood vessels, bones, and cartilage. It can also aid in wound healing and help in the prevention of pre-eclampsia. It can be found in oranges, bell peppers, leafy greens, and sauer kraut.

### **The Superfood**



Blue berries are a great way to fight oxidative stress & inflammation before, and during pregnancy. Blue berries have a high Iron absorption which helps with the development of baby's bones & teeth, can help keep blood sugar levels in control and in some cases aid in helping to lower high blood pressure.

### **Raspberry Leaf Tea**



Raspberry leaf tea is used to strengthen the uterine muscles, which can help lead to a shorter labor duration if drank consistently shortly before baby's due date. It helps with digestion, and may help with bloating, and diarrhea. It is also a great choice as a postpartum recovery, as it helps the uterus return to its normal size, and help with reduced bleeding after childbirth.

### **Dates**



Studies show that eating dates during the last few weeks of pregnancy may reduce your labor up to six hours, as it helps to soften the cervix before labor begins, and can help reduce the risk of tearing. The high sugar content in dates may provide energy during labor, and can help to kick start your contractions .

### **Cheese**



Dairy products like cheese are a great source of protein, contributing to the increased protein needs during pregnancy. Always choose pasteurized cheese to avoid potential bacteria like listeria, which can be harmful while pregnant. Choose hard cheeses, like cheddar, parmesan and Swiss.

# **How to help Prepare your Vagina to Prevent Tearing during Labor and delivery**

There are a couple of things you can do, and one of them is the Perineal Massage, which you would typically start at about 34 weeks until you give birth.

Okay, so what is your Perineum?

Your perineum is a section of skin between the vagina and anus. It is the most likely spot to tear during labor. There are a couple of things you can do to help avoid this, but you should always consult with your doctor or midwife first.

Okay, so how do I do a Perineum massage?

First you are going to want clean hands. After you have sanitized them I would recommended getting into the tub or shower, as it is a clean easy place and the warm water tends to relax your muscles.

You are going to insert two fingers into your vagina and push gently back towards your butt. You want to make a rainbow motion, back and forth with your fingers.

It's important to note here that you should not be experiencing a lot of pain or bleeding, if you are, you are doing it too hard. It should feel like a nice firm stretch. It has been compared to the back of a hamstring stretch, a firm pull, but not painful. That is what you want when performing this massage.

I recommend about five to ten minutes, that should prove sufficient, three to four times a week.

It can also reduce the likelihood of needing to have an episiotomy.

What is an episiotomy?

An episiotomy is a surgical incision made in the perineum. It is performed on occasion to widen the vaginal opening if there is risk of the mother tearing.

## ***Evening Primrose Oil:***

Evening Primrose oil comes from the evening primrose wildflower, and up to 80% of its fatty acids are in the form of the omega 6 linoleic acid, with the rest in the form of gamma-linoleic acid.

This oil can help with dilation and uterine contractions. It's also been known to help women with PMS and Postpartum.

Evening Primrose is suggested to be taken orally at starting at 35 weeks, two a day with food. At 37 weeks take one orally and take one vaginally.

The gel capsule will dissolve inside the vagina, coating the cervix, softening it, preparing it for the birth of your baby.

It is suggested to insert the capsule at night, before bed and to wear a panty liner, as it can sometimes leak out a little as it dissolves.

While evening primrose oil may be beneficial, it is essential to use it safely during pregnancy.



# ***Bananas***

- Bananas are an excellent source of natural energy, for moms-to-be, without the side effects that come with processed, or starchy foods.
- Helps with proper development of brain, spinal cord, and nerves to the little baby
- Aids in the prevention of constipation
- Promotes growth of blood cells
- Bananas can also help to combat early morning sickness, as they are rich in vitamin B6
- Bananas are also a natural stress buster. Consuming bananas works well in lowering your stress and anxiety levels



# ***Apples***



What are the benefits of eating apples during pregnancy?

Apples are rich in Iron which helps to boost the hemoglobin level in the blood, which can prevent Anemia. The risk of developing anemia is always higher during pregnancy, and if neglected, it can lead to preterm labor and low birth weight in babies.

Apples can prevent free radicals from the body. Flavonoids and Phytochemicals are powerful antioxidants in the apples. Free radicals otherwise can lead to oxidative damage to cells, DNA and their functioning ability.



Daily consumption of apples reduces bad cholesterol levels, plaque formation, and inflammation of artery walls. Along with this apples are known to help reduce the risk of lung, colorectal, digestive tract and breast cancer.

It is good to note that organically grown apples are highly recommended, as apples are at the very top of the Dirty Dozen list per Environmental working Group. It is extremely important to choose less pesticides, aka pesticide crops etc, while pregnant, because everything mom eats passes right through to the placenta and onto baby in the womb.

Apples are highly contaminated due to the pesticide spraying process. This allows for the spray to not only adhere to the exterior of the fruit, but to also seep into the core because of the concave shape near the stem that creates a perfect bowl shape.

That being said, apples are a great healthy snack, high in fiber, low in sugar for a delicious fruit snack.

## ***Why to Avoid Alcohol Pregnant & FSAD disorder***

Consuming alcohol while pregnant especially during early pregnancy can result in damage to the cells that go on to form the placenta, and can disrupt the development of the baby's lungs, heart and kidneys.

So why and how does this affect the baby and it's development?

When alcohol is consumed by the mother, it passes through her and to the baby's placenta. There the baby cannot get rid of the alcohol that has now passed to it, from the mother, as the baby's liver isn't fully developed and it is missing the enzyme that the mother has, that allows her to break down the consumption of the drink she had. This then affects the baby's brains and central nervous system, as it is very sensitive to the toxic effects of the alcohol.

This can affect the learning, speech and physical development of your child.



Binge drinking is especially dangerous because you go from zero alcohol in your system to a very high alcohol level.

This makes it possible to damage the heart enough that some children will be born with what is known as FASD, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum disorder, and it can result in abnormalities in the body.

Some cases have resulted in some children being born with three chambers in their heart instead of four, resulting in having to endure surgeries from a young age sometimes even into adulthood.

Children that suffer from FASD express the pain of not only their physical difficulties and challenges to their emotional state, in which they have expressed a lack of friends, or being able to make friends as a result of their difficulty with understanding social cues from others that are not within their own family.

## ***Smoking, Pregnancy & the Risks***

Smoking can restrict fetal growth, which can lead to babies being born too small, increase the risk of baby being born with birth defects, can cause miscarriage and stillbirths to happen.

There is no safe level of smoking during pregnancy, even a few cigarettes a day can cause significant damage to the development of lungs and brain, potentially leading to long term health problems.

Exposure to secondhand smoke can also harm a developing baby.

If you smoke and are expecting, talk to your midwife or doctor about what you can do to help quit, whether it is a support group, or available resources to help you find the best option.

# ***All trimesters Safe exercises***

## Child's Pose:

This is where you will want a wide-leg pose, starting on your hands & knees. Gently lower your body to the floor, your arms stretching out in front of you, above your head reaching as far as you can go. As your arms reach out, let your legs fall wide apart, knees out feet in. Slowly lift your body up, makin slow smooth circular motions with your pelvis.

## Cat Cow:

Start on your hands & knees. Suck in a breath, round your back up, towards the sky. Gently lower back down, focusing on the hips. Repeat.



A bit more on exercise during your pregnancy. It is truly an exciting time as you wait to meet your new little one, and you may be wondering how much you should or should not do.

As with everything exercise related, always check with your doctor or midwife to ensure not to overdo it, or harm yourself or the baby.

Walking is another great way to support the health of you and your baby, as walking strengthens your core and legs, gets you out in Nature.

Staying active ensures that when the time for labor comes, your body will be strong and capable of what it is about to undertake. Being prepared mentally and physically also ensures a better ability for the body to be able to heal post-partum also.

It is important to note that this has nothing to do with the healthy weight gained by mom during pregnancy to ensure a healthy baby.



## Downward Dog:

Lift your hips up, heels almost touching the floor, your hands fully stretched, and your head down. You can feel your calves stretch. Now flex one of the knees, hold it for a second and then again straighten your leg. Flex the other knee and hold it for a second and then straighten your leg. After doing this five times, lower your body and get down in child's pose.

## Wall Slide:

Flex your knees slightly and press your arms against the wall in a way so your forearms are at a 90 degrees with the upper arms. Now, slowly extend your arms overhead by straightening your elbow and pressing the back of your palms and wrists to the wall. Five reps to complete set.

## Clamshell:

Keeping your heels together, raise your leg as much as possible. Pause for a second and then return to starting position. Do this five times. Repeat the exercise on the other side.

# ***How to Financially prepare for Baby***

Create a budget.

Prioritize Needs over Wants.

Focus on essential items and avoid unnecessary splurges.

Another thing to consider when welcoming your new little one is to consider a birthing center or homebirth if trying to keep things more affordable. As a general rule the average homebirth is between \$1,500.00 to \$5,000.00, while hospital births can be anywhere from \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00 before insurance.

Some benefits of a birthing center or home birth is lower rates of medical intervention, the ability to follow your own birth plan more, reduced risk of hospital acquired infections.

Some risk of homebirth or birthing center is the lack of quick access to an emergency center.