

Sugar Land Advanced OB/GYN Center, P.A.
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PRENATAL INSTRUCTIONS

Congratulations on your pregnancy! The following information may be of interest to you as part of your obstetrical care.

- ✘ **Alcohol and smoking:** Please avoid all alcohol and tobacco during pregnancy because of their harmful effects to your baby. Alcohol consumption during pregnancy may cause fetal malformation and mental retardation. Smoking may cause fetal growth retardation and placenta abruption.
- ✘ **Backache:** It is a common problem during pregnancy due to postural change from a straight position to a backward stance. Relaxation of the pelvic joints and the vertebral discs of the lower back during the latter part of the pregnancy may also contribute to the backache. Wearing low-heel shoes, sleeping on your side, applying a heating pad on your back may provide some relief.
- ✘ **Cat litter box:** Cats carry Toxoplasmosis, a parasite that may cause fetal mental retardation. Avoid changing the litter box and wash your hands thoroughly after handling all pets.
- ✘ **Diet:** Try to eat a balanced diet including the following:
Complex carbohydrates: Whole wheat bread, brown rice, whole grain, legume, pasta, fresh fruits and vegetables.
Protein sources: Skim milk, low fat cheese & yogurt, lean meat, poultry, fish and beans.
Avoid eating fried, fast food, and foods high in saturated fat, refined sugar and starches. Also avoid raw meat or seafood. You should drink eight 6 to 8 eight-ounce glasses of fluid including milk and water per day. Fruit juices (Orange juice, apple juice...) should be limited to one glass per day due to high sugar content. Eliminate coffee, tea, sweets and soft drinks as much as possible. Although there is no evidence of documented fetal anomalies, it is recommended that you consume food or soft drinks containing artificial sweetener such as Nutrasweet moderately.
- ✘ **Dental checkup:** It is recommended that you should have regular dental cleaning and checkups during pregnancy. Dental works should be scheduled when you are beyond 14 weeks gestation. Avoid X-rays exposure unless it is extremely necessary.
- ✘ **Exercise:** You should include at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise daily. Do what feel comfortable, never exercise to the point of discomfort. Your heart rate should not exceed 140 beats per minute. Walking, swimming, strength exercises (Weight training), elliptical machine and stationary cycling are good exercises. Activities to avoid would be horseback riding, skiing, scuba diving, motorboat, motorcycle riding, high-impact aerobic exercises, or other jarring sports. Women with a history of premature labor, premature rupture of membrane, multiple miscarriages, multiple births, bleeding, placenta previa, incompetent cervix, gestational hypertension...should avoid exercises.
- ✘ **Medications:** Please check with my office prior to taking any prescriptions or over-the-counter medications. Try to avoid taking any medications if the discomfort is minor or tolerable. For common illnesses, the following list of medications may be obtained over-the-counter:
Allergy: Benadryl 25 mg tablet / Claritin 10 mg may be used. It may cause drowsiness.
Cold/Flu/Sinus: Most cold symptoms will improve within 7-10 days without any medications. The use of humidifier, rest and increase of oral fluids may be helpful. **Sudafed** (30 mgs) tablet, Vicks **sinex** or **Afrin** nasal spray are helpful for nasal congestion. **Tylenol** may be used for fever or body ache. Flu vaccine is safe during pregnancy and is recommended during flu season.
Constipation: You need to increase fiber in your diet by eating more fresh fruits, vegetables and drinking plenty of water. Surfak, Colace, Metamucil, or Fibercon tablets may be used.

Cough: Robitussin DM cough syrup may be used.

Diarrhea: Avoid dairy products such as milk and cheese for a few days. Stay on clear liquid diet. You may also drink any balanced salt solution or Pedialite. Kaopectate can be used also.

Headache: Regular strength (Up to 2 tablets at a time) or extra strength Tylenol (One tablet) may be taken.

Avoid Aspirin, Advil, Aleve, Motrin and Nuprin.

Hemorrhoids: Increase fluid and fiber such as fruits and vegetable in your diet to keep your stool soft. If it is uncomfortable, you may use over-the-counter Preparation H or Anusol cream.

Indigestion/Heartburn: Avoid sour, greasy and spicy foods. Avoid lying flat after eating, sleeping with your head elevated with pillows may provide relief. On occasion, you may need to take antacids such as Maalox, Mylanta, Milk of magnesia, Roloids or Tums. Do not use antacids with baking soda or sodium bicarbonate such as Alka-Seltzer.

Sore throat: Cepacol, Sucrets lozenges or Chloraseptic spray may be used.

- ❖ **Nausea/vomiting:** This can occur any time during the day or night. Symptoms will usually improve after 12 to 16 weeks gestation. Simple ways of preventing nausea include avoiding greasy, spicy foods, citric foods or sour drinks. Crackers, toast and a small glass of milk early in the morning can be helpful. You should eat small and frequent meals. Try not to eat and drink at the same time.
- ❖ **Personal hygiene:** You should avoid saunas, steam baths, Jacuzzis or extremely hot baths throughout pregnancy especially during the first trimester. Extremely high temperature may increase risk of birth defects. Bath water should not exceed 100 °F. Showering is a safer than bathing. Avoid douching and using tampons during pregnancy.
- ❖ **Prenatal vitamins:** You should take prenatal vitamins daily between meals or at bedtime. Prenatal vitamins do not cause weight gain. Pregnant patients need about 1200 mg. of **calcium** per day. You should increase the calcium intake with yogurt, cheese, green leafy vegetables, and broccoli or calcium supplements with either tablets or chewable form if you are unable to drink milk.
- ❖ **Sexual intercourse:** As long as you and your partner are comfortable, you may continue having intercourse unless otherwise instructed. Absolute contraindications to sexual intercourse are placenta previa, vaginal bleeding, premature labor, premature rupture of membrane, cervical cerclage...
- ❖ **Stretch marks:** Most cases are not preventable. Try not to gain weight rapidly. Applying moisturizer lotion or Cocoa butter vitamin E cream over the breasts, abdomen, and thigh may be helpful.
- ❖ **Traveling:** You can safely fly in a pressurized airplane. Avoid long distance traveling or flying after 34 weeks (8 ½ months) gestation or if your pregnancy is complicated by premature labor or placenta previa. Be sure to stretch or walk every 1-2 hours during long trip to prevent blood clots in the legs.
- ❖ **Vaginal discharge:** White non-odorous vaginal discharge will increase during pregnancy. As long as the discharge does not cause any itching or discomfort, there is no need to treat it. Monistat cream or other similar over-the-counter preparations can be used during pregnancy to treat yeast infection.
- ❖ **Weight gain:** The ideal weight gain for the average size mother is 25-35 lb. during the entire pregnancy. The thin patient should gain between 28-40 lb. For the overweight patients, the total weight gain should be limited to 15-25 lb. Pregnancy is not the time for you to engage in any diet program.

FOR THE MONTHS TO COME

- ❖ The normal duration of the pregnancy is 40 weeks calculated from the first day of your last menstrual cycle. Most patients will deliver their baby between 37 and 41 weeks. There is no scientific way to determine accurately the date of your delivery.
- ❖ Your prenatal visits frequency is every 4 weeks up to 28th week. Then the visits will be every 2-3 weeks up to 36th week. Starting with your 36th week, the visits are weekly until delivery. During these visits, we will check your weight and blood pressure; testing your urine for glucose and protein. We also check the growth and the heartbeat of your baby. A pelvic exam is done during the last month to check the position of the baby head and cervical dilatation. The visits are also a good time for you to discuss any problems or questions about your pregnancy.

- ✘ It is important to keep your appointments because good prenatal care contributes to the good health of both mother and baby. If you are unable to keep your appointments, please inform our office.
- ✘ Emergencies such as deliveries, on occasion, arise during office hours and a wait may be inevitable. We will try to contact you should this occur. Please understand these emergencies are very unpredictable. **If you were delivering during office hours, you would want me to be with you.**

✘ **Blood tests and other testing during pregnancy**

Obstetrics profile: To check for blood count, blood type, rubella titer, hepatitis B, syphilis, and urinalysis, HIV etc. during the first visit or when the fetal heartbeat is audible.

Nuchal translucency: To screen for Down's syndrome and trisomy 18 by measuring the thickness of the baby's neck by a high-resolution ultrasound and a concomitant blood test at approximately 12-week-gestation. The test is optional for patients younger than 35 years of age.

Quadruple screen: This blood test is also done to screen for Down's syndrome, trisomy 18 and spina bifida between 15-18 weeks if you decide not to have the nuchal translucency test.

Diabetic screen: To screen for gestational diabetes between 24-28 weeks. A blood test will be drawn one hour after drinking a sugar solution. **You do not have to fast for this test.** If this test is abnormal, you will be asked to return for a 3-hour glucose tolerance test. You will need to fast overnight for the 3-hour test.

Vaginal group B strep: To screen for group B streptococcus carriers at 35 weeks. If you are a carrier, your health may not be affected but the baby may acquire an infection either during or after delivery. There is no need for treatment before delivery if you are a carrier. You will be given intravenous antibiotics at the onset of labor to prevent the newborn infection.

HIV testing: A second HIV test at the third trimester as required by State law.

- ✘ **Ultrasounds:** It is a safe technique to determine the fetal growth, twin, placenta location etc. **A normal ultrasound does not guarantee a normal baby.** On occasion, I will refer you to the hospital for a detailed ultrasound if it is necessary. Ultrasound is not used to determine the sex of the baby because it is not reliable and its expense is not covered by the insurance carrier.

- ✘ **Childbirth preparation classes (Lamaze):** The class is recommended for first time parents. Refresher courses are also available. These classes are given on the campus of the hospital. The information is available online at memorialhermann.org. You can also call (713) 222-CARE for additional information.

- ✘ **Hospital registration:** This process can be done anytime during your pregnancy. You can register online by entering the website memorialhermann.org. You will need to go to the hospital to sign some paperwork even if you already register online. The registration office is located in the Pavilion building, next to the 7777 medical plaza building.

- ✘ **Hospital tour:** To reserve a free tour of the labor and delivery area, please call (713) 222-CARE. The information is also available online at memorialhermann.org.

- ✘ **Pain relief during labor:** Intravenous pain medications such as Fentanyl or Stadol are available at your request. **Epidural anesthesia** is also available and it is provided by the anesthesiologist the procedure is given only when it is requested by you. Epidural anesthesia is safe and does not cause long-term back pain. If you do not have insurance, you need to pay for the procedure in advance at the time of hospital registration.

- ✘ If you have **special requests** for delivery, please mention them to me for discussion during your visits. Your husband or partner is encouraged to be with you during labor and delivery.

- ✘ **Pediatrician:** You should choose a pediatrician during the prenatal period. Please give the name of the pediatrician to the nurse while in labor. The hospital staff will notify the pediatrician of your choice when the baby is born. Please let me know if you need help in selecting a pediatrician.

- ✘ **Circumcision:** Please discuss the risks and benefits of the procedure with your pediatrician or with me before deciding on the procedure. I will usually be the one to perform the procedure before the baby is discharged.

- ✘ **Breast-feeding:** The decision of feeding your baby is up to you and your pediatrician. However, breast-feeding has several advantages over formula. I would encourage you to consider it for your baby. After delivery, a hospital breastfeeding specialist will guide you through the process. Breast-feeding class is also

available. The information can be accessed online at memorialhermann.org.

- ✘ **Maternity leave:** Each Company sets its own rules and regulations regarding maternity leave. Please check with your company's guidelines or benefit department regarding this matter. Unless there are specific medical indications or problems, it is difficult for me to make an exception to your company policy.

WHEN TO CALL US

- ✘ A number of pregnant patients will have **vaginal spotting** during the course of her pregnancy. If the bleeding persists or is heavier than a period, please let me know. Occasionally you may have vaginal spotting after intercourse; if the bleeding is heavy please call the office. Vaginal exam, especially during the last month of the pregnancy, may also cause vaginal bleeding. If the bleeding concerns you, please call me any time.
- ✘ You will begin to feel **fetal movements** around 4 ½ months (18 weeks) to 5 months (20 weeks) of your pregnancy. If you are concerned that the baby is not active, please lie down on your side and count the fetal movements. Please call me if the fetus moves less than 4 times per hour.
- ✘ Please try to contact me during office hours for non-urgent, minor problems or for prescription refills. Please have your pharmacy number handy when you call, should it be required.
- ✘ If there is an **emergency after office hours**, please call the main office number at **(281) 322-2222**. Please press option number one or two after calling the main office. There will be an **answering service number** for you to call at the end of the message. Please indicate to the operator that you are my patient and the nature of the emergency; I will return your call. If I am out of town or not available, the physician on duty will return your call. In the event of a telephone interruption, please call Memorial Hermann Hospital Southwest labor and delivery at **(713) 456-5228** for further instructions.
- ✘ At the onset of labor, please call me if you are having regular contractions every 5 minutes apart, each contraction lasting 45-60 seconds for an hour (**5-1-1**). Please call sooner if you live far from the hospital or if you have a history of fast labor. Also call if your water bag ruptures or if you have excessive vaginal bleeding even if you do not feel any contractions. If labor is starting, **please do not eat or drink**. When you arrive at the hospital, please go directly to the Emergency Center. The emergency room staff will bring you to the labor and delivery unit. It is best to park in the parking garage while you are in labor as a special parking fee is given to the family member.

Finally, our ultimate goal in providing your obstetrical care is your continued good health and the delivery of a healthy baby. We are looking forward to know you better during your pregnancy. If you have any questions at any time, please do not hesitate to ask. It is our privilege to have you as a patient.

Sincerely,

Tom T. Nguyen, M.D., F.A.C.O.G.