

Procreational Considerations

1. Keep a menstrual calendar. Your first day of your period is day one of “full flow” of your menstrual cycle. The length of your menstrual cycle is from day one of one cycle to day one of the next cycle. If your periods are less than 21 or greater than 40 days apart, notify my office. Average menstrual cycle length is 28 days.
2. Most women will ovulate mid-cycle, approximately day 14. A woman’s egg lives only 24 hours, and the man’s sperm may live 24-72 hours. When you find your fertile day you should have coitus (sex) every other day, usually day 10-18.

How to figure out your “fertile” days!

Basal Body Temperature Method (BBT)

The temperature method is based on the fact that most women experience a slight but detectable rise in their normal body temperature just after ovulation. To perform this method, check your temperature every morning before getting out of bed. Record your temperature on a graph. Attached you will find a graph with further instructions on this method. Using a regular thermometer is okay and is cheaper than a BBT thermometer. This method is difficult for persons with varying work/sleep schedules.

Ovulation Method

This method involves changes in how much mucus is produced by the cervix and the way it feels. To do this, check your mucus at the opening of the vagina and assess for changes. For example, for most women the vagina is dry for a time just after menstruation, and then a sticky mucus may appear. Just before ovulation the mucus becomes increasingly wet and slippery and looks a little like raw egg whites. The day of greatest wetness, called the “peak” day, often coincides with ovulation. Just after the “peak” day, the mucus becomes thick again or may even disappear, and the feeling of dryness reoccurs.

Mittlesmirtz

Lower abdominal cramping, mid-cycle, that is associated with ovulation. Some women feel this cramping and some do not.

Ovulation Predictor Kits

You can purchase a kit at your local pharmacy for about \$17.00 or more. Each test is slightly different, so be sure to read the instructions. Most have you test your urine starting on day 10 of your cycle and every day until equally dark lines appear. This means you have a surge of LH. LH is a hormone produced in greater quantities prior to ovulation. You may ovulate 24-36 hours after a positive test. Do not use first morning urine. You may want to perform once or twice so you can confirm your ovulation days, but I don’t recommend monthly testing unless you are having difficulties conceiving or have irregular menstrual cycles as the tests are expensive.

Medications

Please inform me of ALL medications, prescription or from the grocery/herbal store which you take regularly. Find out your family background as well as your husbands family history. If you are unsure, find out and call me back if there are any genetic conditions in your family.

Cats

If you have a cat you can change the litter until you are pregnant! It is not necessary to get rid of your loved pet!

Exercise

I recommend an exercise routine that is safe for you to perform and for you to continue throughout the pregnancy. Walking and lightweights are great or water walking too! Most people can continue their same regimens during pregnancy. Contact sports and certain abdominal workouts will need to be discontinued. During pregnancy keep heart rate below 140 when exercising.

Alcohol, caffeine, and smoking

Decrease alcohol and caffeine consumption prior to pregnancy. Discontinue these products when pregnant. There is an association of miscarriage at 200mg caffeine consumed, so stopping now would be most desirable. If you smoke stop now! You may need to follow up with your primary care doctor for help discontinuing. During pregnancy it is also recommended not to consume green tea in the first trimester as it may decrease the absorption of folic acid. I would recommend pre-pregnancy to discontinue consumption of green tea to be safe.

Vitamins

Start a prenatal vitamin today. I will provide a prescription today if you need one. You will need 4mcg- 1 mg of folic acid daily, which is supplied in your prenatal to help decrease your chance of having a baby with neural tube defects, such as spina-bifida. If you have a history of a child affected with brain or spinal cord anomalies, you will need more folic acid.

You will also need 1,000 mg of calcium daily pre-pregnancy and then 1200-1500 mg during pregnancy. Most prenatal vitamins have less than 250 mg of calcium. If you are not getting enough in your diet (most people do not), you will need to supplement with pills, chewable, or Tums and Maalox. For example, one glass of milk may have 250mg of calcium.

If you suspect you are pregnant and have the following problems, these medications are safe to take and are available over the counter:

Constipation: colace, surfak, Metamucil products, glycerin dulcolax suppositories. Also make sure you are drinking 8 glasses of water a day, increase fruits and veggies and exercise.

Hemorrhoids: Tucks pads, anusol cream, and do warm sitz baths. Increasing fiber and using a stool softener may help as well.

Heartburn: Maalox, gaviscon, riopan, Mylanta, milk of magnesia, Tums, Roloids, Zantac, and Pepcid.

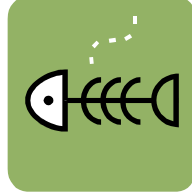
Colds: Sudafed, Dimetapp, Tavist-D, Tylenol cold and sinus, Claritin or Claritin-D

If you have a fever over or equal to 100.4 call the office or PCP, you may use Tylenol for headaches and fever, for cough we recommend Robitussin.

Diarrhea: increase fluids, Imodium A-D, call PCP if persists

Nausea & Vomiting: increase fluids, call our office if persists, but may try Emetrol. Eating small frequent snacks helps if you are pregnant.

Risk Factors for Seafood



The FDA recommends that pregnant women eat two 6-oz servings per week of fish for their complex proteins, vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids. Using computer modeling, the environmental working group applies those FDA recommendations to mercury risk standards suggested by the national academy of sciences, and the EPA. Tuna in the can should be the “light” version and only consumed no more than once a week during pregnancy.

These fish are grouped by those results: lowest in mercury, eat in moderation (no more than one serving per month) and avoid if pregnant.

Safe: Pacific salmon, farmed trout, farmed catfish, shrimp, flounder, fish sticks, croaker, mid-Atlantic blue crab, haddock.

In moderation: Canned tuna, mahi-mahi, blue mussels, eastern oysters, cod, Pollock, great lakes salmon, gulf coast blue crabs, channel catfish (wild), lake white fish

AVOID: Swordfish king mackerel, shark, tilefish, tuna steaks, sea bass, gulf coast oysters, marlin, halibut, pike, walleye, and white croaker.

Diet and Nutrition

A balanced diet is basic for good health at all times in your life. Because what you eat supports the growth of your baby, it is even more important before and during your pregnancy. An average woman needs about 2,200 calories per day. When you are pregnant, you need about 300 more calories more each day and extra nutrients to stay healthy and help the baby grow. You should reach a healthy weight before you become pregnant. You should not weigh too little or too much. To reach a healthy weight, it helps to plan your diet and work out routinely.

Helpful tips:

Limit your sugar intake!! 4 grams of sugar = 1 tsp

Limit sodas and diet sodas!

Diet sodas may increase your hunger!

Eat whole grain breads and pastas!

Small frequent meals are best instead of infrequent large portions!

30 minutes of water walking is like walking on land for one hour!

Eat your fruit do not drink it! Juices are not “good” for you. Limit to 6 ounces per day.

Other food information during pregnancy:

- Limit peanut butter consumption to 2 times a week or less.
- No unpasteurized cheeses or milk.
- Limit artificial sweeteners, Splenda is okay.
- No raw or undercooked meats. Sushi should be cooked or vegetarian.
- Cold cuts/deli meats may pose a health risk in pregnancy due to the bacteria Listeria. Make sure hot dogs are cooked not raw.

Toxoplasmosis



The parasite that causes toxoplasmosis lives in any animal that lives outdoors. Eating raw or undercooked meat or unwashed vegetables can infect humans. Coming into contact with animal feces also causes infection. The most common way it occurs in the US is by working in the garden. Rarely, it occurs from changing a cat's litter box, usually if the cat roams outdoors. Toxoplasmosis causes only mild illness in adults. Often, those exposed have no symptoms.

About one third of the public has been exposed to toxoplasmosis. Once you have been exposed, you form antibodies and become immune to the disease. Toxoplasmosis is rare, but you should take steps to prevent it.

Toxoplasmosis creates a problem in pregnancy only when the mother is first infected while she is pregnant. Of women infected with toxoplasmosis during pregnancy, about one third passes the infection to the fetus. Only one third of infected fetuses will show signs of the disease, though. The chances of the fetus getting infected are highest in the last 12 weeks of pregnancy. The problems are more severe when the infection occurs in the first 12 weeks.

If the mother gets infected, the lymph glands in her neck may swell. She may have fever, fatigue, sore throat, and a rash. She may not have symptoms at all. Her baby may be born early or too small. The baby also may have fever, jaundice, eye problems, or other severe long-term problems. Both the mother and fetus can be treated with antibiotics in some cases. Infected babies are treated soon after birth to prevent long-term problems.

The best way to protect against toxoplasmosis is to avoid being exposed to it. Be sure meat is well cooked and avoid contact with the cat litter box. Pregnant women should wear waterproof gloves or avoid gardening in areas where there are feces. Always wash your hands with soap and water after touching soil, cats, or uncooked meat or veggies. Once feces become infectious, they stay that way for a long time

Information derived from ACOG

Birth Defects

Most children in the US are born healthy. Some women though have a greater chance of having a baby with birth defects. They include women aged 35 and older and those who have a close relative or child with a birth defect.

The cause of a birth defect is not always known. Some are passed on from the parents. Some may be caused by factors in the environment. But most are caused by an error in the growth of the egg or sperm. Having extra or missing chromosomes, or parents of chromosomes, usually causes serious problems. Most children born with chromosome disorders, such as Down syndrome, are mentally retarded in addition to having physical defects. The chance of birth defects increases with age, but it remains low well into the late 30's.

Risk of having a live baby with any chromosomal problem:

| Age: | births per 1,000: |
|------|-------------------|
| 20 | 1.9 |
| 25 | 2.1 |
| 30 | 2.6 |
| 35 | 5.2 |
| 40 | 15.2 |
| 45 | 47.6 |

Risk of having a live baby with Down Syndrome:

| Age: | Risk of Down Syndrome: |
|------|------------------------|
| 20 | 1/1,667 |
| 25 | 1/1,250 |
| 30 | 1/952 |
| 35 | 1/378 |
| 40 | 1/106 |
| 41 | 1/82 |
| 42 | 1/63 |
| 43 | 1/49 |
| 44 | 1/38 |
| 45 | 1/30 |

Other tests such as screening for Cystic Fibrosis, Spinal Muscular Atrophy and Fragile -X are now available. Cost varies and insurance coverage varies as well. If you have a history of any chromosomal abnormality in your or your husband's family, you may need genetic testing and counseling.

If you are a teacher or you are around children in the public frequently. Please let me know, as you may need screening for immunity of communicable diseases. If you have not had chicken pox or have not been immunized for chicken pox, please alert us. If you are already pregnant you will not be able to be immunized. Therefore, it is prudent to avoid persons with suspicious rashes and/or known chicken pox infection.