Keeping healthy during pregnancy

Information and advice for mums-to-be

Maternity

We are pleased you have chosen our services for your journey through pregnancy, birth and into parenthood. You will have lots of information to think about over the next few months and we are here to help you.

This booklet gives you information about how to keep healthy during pregnancy. If you want to discuss any of the information contained in the booklet, please speak to your midwife.

Smoking

We strongly advise you do not smoke during pregnancy as it can increase the risk of:

- miscarriage,
- having a premature baby,
- your baby being born underweight, or
- your waters breaking early which will put your baby at risk of infection.

Passive smoking (being around other people who smoke) also affects your baby.

If you or your partner would like to stop smoking, ask your midwife to refer you to the stop smoking service.

Foods to avoid during pregnancy

You should avoid the following foods during pregnancy, as they could be a risk to your unborn baby:

- Cheeses with a white, mouldy rind such as brie, camembert and blue-veined cheeses such as Roquefort. These cheeses could contain listeria, bacteria that can harm your baby.
- Raw or under cooked meat and eggs are all are possible sources of harmful bacteria for your unborn baby. Meat and eggs must be cooked properly.
- Raw seafood such as oysters or sushi that has not been frozen.
- Shark, swordfish or marlin. These fish contain unsafe levels of naturally occurring mercury. Tuna contains a small amount of mercury, it is therefore best to avoid eating more than four medium-sized cans, or two fresh tuna steaks per week.
- Liver and liver products (such as pate or liver sausage) - they may contain large amounts of the retinol form of vitamin A. If too much of this is eaten, it could be harmful to your unborn baby.

Drinks to avoid during pregnancy

- You should stop drinking alcohol during pregnancy especially during the first 3 months as it can increase the risk of miscarriage. If you choose to drink during your pregnancy, do not drink more than 1 or 2 units of alcohol once or twice a week only.
  - 1 unit = half a pint of beer or one shot (25ml) of spirit.
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- 1.5 units = 1 small glass of wine (125ml)
  Getting drunk or binge drinking may be harmful to your baby.

- You should not have more than 200mg of caffeine a day (e.g. two mugs of instant coffee, four cups of tea or five cans of cola a day). An alternative is to switch to decaffeinated hot drinks and cola instead.

Vitamins
Folic acid (400 micrograms a day) should be taken until you are 13 weeks pregnant – this reduces the risk of your baby having spina bifida (When the spine and spinal cord do not develop properly, leaving a gap in the spine).

We also advise you to take vitamin D (10 micrograms a day) throughout your pregnancy – this will help your baby's bones to develop.

Medicines
If you take any medicine regularly please check with your doctor that it is safe to carry on. You should check with the pharmacist about any medicine or herbal preparation that can be brought over the counter. All pregnant women and new mums are entitled to free prescriptions, please ask your midwife or GP for a form.

Exercise
Most exercise is safe during pregnancy but you should avoid scuba diving and any contact sports where you might be hit in the stomach or fall. If you do not do any exercise then you should consider doing light exercises such as walking or swimming. Your local swimming baths may also have aquanatal classes you can join which are for women who are pregnant.

Work
Most women can continue working during pregnancy. By law you are allowed a health and safety assessment to make sure your job does not put you or your baby at risk while you are pregnant. For more information on working, benefits, maternity leave and pay while you are pregnant you can contact the Working Families charity on the details below. They can also help if you are being treated unfairly at work:

Website: www.workingfamilies.org.uk
Tel: 0300 0120 312

Travel
- When in the car, you still need to wear your seat belt when you are pregnant. The diagonal strap should be across your body between your breasts and the lap belt over
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your upper thighs. This means the straps lie above and below your bump. It is important to take regular breaks on a long journey and to get out and stretch your legs.

- If you want to go on a plane after 28 weeks of your pregnancy, you will need a letter from your GP. Make sure you have holiday insurance and invest in some ‘flight socks’ to reduce the risk of blood clots in your legs. Please ask your midwife for further information on flying.

Vaccines during pregnancy

- Seasonal flu: Pregnant women are more at risk of complications if they get seasonal flu so you are advised to be vaccinated against it. You can have the vaccine at any stage in your pregnancy. Ask your midwife or GP for more information, or search ‘flu vaccine’ at www.nhs.uk.

- Whooping cough: There has been a rise in the number of whooping cough cases in the UK. If you have the vaccination between 28 and 32 weeks of pregnancy this will help protect your baby from whooping cough in the first few weeks of their life. Ask your midwife or GP for more information, or search ‘whooping cough’ at www.nhs.uk.

Your emotions

Most women are emotional in the first few months of pregnancy; you may cry more easily or feel more tired. If your mood stays like this as your pregnancy progresses, please speak to your midwife.

Antenatal depression is common and can affect 1 out of 5 women. We can provide support and treatment to help you with this.

For More Help and Advice

National Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Tel:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drinkline</td>
<td>0300 123 1110</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRANK - drugs helpline</td>
<td>0300 123 6600</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHS Pregnancy Smoking Helpline</td>
<td>0300 123 1044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Leche League Breastfeeding</td>
<td>0845 120 2918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Breastfeeding Helpline</td>
<td>0300 100 0212</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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NHS Choices  
Website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

NHS emergency care  
Tel: 111

Antenatal Results and Choices  
Tel: 0845 077 2290

National Childbirth Trust  
Tel: 0300 330 0700

Health and Safety Executive - at work during pregnancy  
Website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

TAMBA – twins and multiple births association  
(10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. & 7.00 p.m. – 10.00 p.m.)  
Tel: 0800 138 0509  
Website: [www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk) – for twins (or more)

Contact a Family – for families with children with disabilities  
Tel: 08088083555  
Website: [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

Working families – advice on rights at work for parents and carers  
Tel: 0300 012 0312  
Website: [www.workingfamilies.org.uk](http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk)

**Local information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sandwell Breastfeeding Network</td>
<td>07505775357</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birmingham Buddy Line</td>
<td>0121 622 6603</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birmingham Women’s Aid</td>
<td>0121 685 8551</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandwell Women’s Aid</td>
<td>0121 552 6448</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refuge Council</td>
<td>0121 622 1515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Settlement</td>
<td>0121 250 3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website: <a href="http://www.birminghamsettlement.org.uk">www.birminghamsettlement.org.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Swanswell - for alcohol and drug problems</td>
<td>0121 233 7400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website: <a href="http://www.swanswell.org">www.swanswell.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acacia - for pre and postnatal depression in Birmingham</td>
<td>0121 301 5992</td>
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<tr>
<td>Website: <a href="http://www.acacia.org.uk">www.acacia.org.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens Advice Bureau</td>
<td>Birmingham: 08444 111 444  Sandwell: 0121 544 6202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your antenatal appointments

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Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- National Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence (NICE) Guideline, Antenatal Care, CG62, June 2010
- NICE Guideline PH26, Quitting smoking in pregnancy and following childbirth, June 2010
- Health Protection Agency, ‘Pertussis (Whooping cough) immunisation for pregnant women’, accessed online January 2014
- West Midlands Perinatal Institution (WMPi), Pregnancy Notes, Version 13.1 (June 2013)

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5495 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net