Motherhood is a selfless venture. From sacrificing various foods to avoiding certain activities, you’ll go to great lengths to protect your baby. Thankfully, taking good care of yourself not only benefits your son or daughter in-the-making, it also helps you feel your best throughout pregnancy! Here are nine tips for a healthy nine months from the prenatal care team at Westside OB-GYN.

1. Take Your Vitamins

Take a prenatal vitamin every single day. Make sure it includes folic acid for your baby’s brain and spinal cord development. You can also get many vital nutrients from foods, such as:

- **PROTEIN**: Beans, nuts, eggs, meat, poultry, cheese, milk, yogurt, whole grain cereals
- **CALCIUM**: Cheese, milk, yogurt, greens
- **IRON**: Some cereals, rice, dried fruit, green leafy vegetables, eggs

2. Tweak Your Diet

Pregnancy can bring on some pretty interesting cravings (pickles and cheesecake anyone?), but a balanced diet is one of your first lines of defense. When pregnant you need about 300 extra calories a day, so try eating smaller but more frequent meals. You should limit your intake of soda, chocolate, coffee, and other caffeinated items. Drink 64 oz of water each day and read nutrition labels to ensure you are getting plenty of fiber.

3. Watch Your Weight

Some weight gain goes hand-in-hand with a healthy pregnancy, and can vary based on your pre-pregnancy BMI. Here’s a handy guide to help you know what to expect:

- **28-40 LBS** for underweight women - BMI < 19.8
- **25-35 LBS** for normal weight women - BMI 19.9 - 26.0
- **15-25 LBS** for overweight women - BMI 26.0 - 29.0
- **11-20 LBS** for obese women - BMI >29.0

4. Discuss Your Medications

Tell your healthcare provider about any medications you are taking, or were taking before you were pregnant. Certain over-the-counter medicines, such as Ibuprofen, are not safe during pregnancy. Refer to the Safe Medications list in your packet to learn what works best - and what to avoid.
Stay in Motion

Unless your healthcare provider has advised rest, it is a great idea to exercise during pregnancy. However, you should avoid high impact or contact sports. Make sure that you are able to carry on a conversation while exercising, drink plenty of water, and avoid becoming overheated. Lifting anything over 25 pounds is not advised.

Practice Food Safety

Food safety is very important and can help prevent a wide range of issues, including Listeriosis. This disease can cause miscarriage, premature birth, stillbirth, and issues after birth. Most healthy people fight off Listeriosis infections on their own, however; your fetus does not have the immunity to do so. For this reason, it is important that pregnant women avoid exposure.

You can avoid Listeriosis, as well as other food-borne illness by following these guidelines:

- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating.
- Wash your hands, knives, and cooking surfaces after handling raw meat.
- Wash your hands after handling deli meats.
- Throw away food that has been unrefrigerated for more than two hours.
- Do not eat deli meats or hot dogs unless reheated until steaming hot.
- Do not eat any dairy products that have not been pasteurized (labels will clearly state “pasteurized”).
- Do not consume soft or veined cheeses (Feta, Brie, Camembert, Queso, etc.) unless you can verify that they were pasteurized.
- Avoid dairy products purchased at farmer’s markets.

Avoid Harmful Substances

Avoid alcohol, tobacco (including secondhand smoke), and drugs. If you need support for substance abuse or help to quit smoking, please contact our office immediately.

Keep Clean Hands

Now that you are pregnant, it is more important than ever to maintain good hygiene, especially after certain activities. Wash your hands after gardening, preparing uncooked meat, or cleaning the litter box. Cats feces is a common source of toxoplasmosis, so if possible, have someone else clean the litter box or wear rubber gloves.

Discuss Sex Concerns With Your Provider

It is safe for most women to have sex during pregnancy unless you are instructed otherwise by your provider. Contact our office if you start cramping or experience heavy vaginal bleeding after sex.

Whether this is your first baby or your fifth, these tips will promote a healthy pregnancy. If you need further information on a certain health topic, or have concerns about your diet, activities, or lifestyle, please contact our office.

Westside OB-GYN Center and Westside Women’s Center

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