

Exercise and Pregnancy Guidelines



You're pregnant; congratulations! It is up to you to make sure both you and your baby are healthy and well during your pregnancy. Eating right and being active will help both of you adapt well to the changes that will happen over the next 9 months. It is important to speak with your health care provider about your ability to exercise during your pregnancy. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has stated "in the absence of contraindications pregnant women are encouraged to engage in 30 minutes or more of moderate exercise on most, if not all, days of the week. A woman should always check with her caregiver before beginning an exercise program."

Here are some simple rules to make sure you are doing things the right way for both you and your baby:

- After the first trimester, avoid exercises that require you to lie on your back. Otherwise, there is a possibility of restricting blood flow to the baby.
- Avoid any activity that could result in a fall or injury to your stomach area such as horseback riding and soccer.
- Swimming is an excellent activity, but avoid scuba diving during pregnancy.
- Look out for overheating; your body will be a little warmer during pregnancy and activities in the heat can be problematic for your baby.
- If you are out of breath, your baby is out of breath. Try to find an activity that will allow you to speak 2-3 words per breath. If you are gasping, lower the intensity; if you can sing, increase the intensity.
- After the second trimester, your body will release a hormone that loosens your joints. Avoid any activity that would stress a joint or result in a fall.

The good news is the benefits are fantastic for active mothers. Here are some of the benefits that can result from an appropriately active pregnancy:

- Lower risk of gestational diabetes
- Easier, faster "active" stage of labor
- Improvement in mood (good for everyone, even if they are not pregnant)
- Reduction of common complaints during pregnancy, such as hemorrhoids, leg cramps, back pain, etc.
- Quicker return to pre-pregnancy weight
- Reduction in bone density loss during nursing
- Strength benefits to accomplish daily activities

Stop any activity if you feel faint, dizzy, experience chest pain, vaginal bleeding, or decrease in fetal movement. Talk with your health care provider before returning to your exercise program.

Disclaimer:

Exercise is not without its risks and this or any other exercise program may result in injury. To reduce the risk of injury in your case, consult your doctor before beginning this exercise program. The advice presented is in no way intended as a substitute for medical consultation, KUTV and the Utah Department of Health disclaim any liability from and in connection with this program. As with any exercise program, if at any point during your workout you begin to feel faint, dizzy, or have physical discomfort, you should stop immediately and consult a physician.
