

What questions to ask doctor about pregnancy

PREGNANCY TIPS AND ARTICLES

ARTICLE

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Discuss with your doctor how to balance your diet intake, exercise, perform daily activities, and ensure that your medication and supplements are safe for your pregnancy.

Yay, you're pregnant! Now what? Here are some of the essential questions you need to ask your doctor about your pregnancy.

The key to having a more comfortable pregnancy is knowledge. This will help to keep you and your baby safe during this time.

**Are all of my current medications safe for me to take while I'm pregnant?
What about my beauty products?**

Finding out that you're pregnant means many big lifestyle changes. The change that is the most talked about is the change to your diet. However, you need to evaluate everything that comes into contact with your body.

Ask your doctor about the safety of all of the medications, supplements or nutrients you are taking. In terms of beauty products, avoid anything that contains retinols, retinoid or salicylic acids. Your doctor will be able to advise you if you're uncertain about some products.

Can I continue exercising while I'm pregnant?

The quick answer is yes, you can continue to exercise. However, much like you've made changes to your diet and beauty regimes, you need to change your exercise plan as well. Some things to keep track of are to make sure you're still getting enough calories for you and your growing baby and to drink plenty of water. It's worth noting that you should avoid lying flat on your back after your first trimester or exercising in high heat or humidity.

What are the best foods for me to be eating during my pregnancy?

We've all heard the expression, "eating for two", but knowing that is simply not enough! Your body requires higher amounts of several nutrients during your pregnancy, including iron, calcium, protein, choline, folate and DHA.

According to HealthHub Singapore, pregnant women require 67 grams of protein, 19 milligrams of iron and 1,000 milligrams of calcium per day.

Iron is important for mums to stay healthy. The body uses it to make the red blood cells that carry oxygen around your body. Being low in iron can lead to anaemia and pregnancy complications, including premature birth, a low birth weight and postpartum depression. For some tasty sources of iron, visit your local meat counter for lean red meat, poultry and fish.

Don't worry if you're vegetarian. Pregnant women who are vegetarian or vegan can get their iron through iron-rich plants, including dark green vegetables and legumes, as well as enriched grains, nuts and seeds.

Protein sources on a vegetarian diet include whole grains, beans and legumes, soy products, vegetables, and nuts and seeds. A balanced vegetarian diet, providing adequate calories and including these foods, will likely meet protein needs. The meal-planning chart above provides plenty of protein for pregnancy.

Calcium, as you most likely already know, plays a crucial role in strengthening bones. But did you know that the nutrient is also important for your circulatory, muscular and nervous systems? Protein helps your baby to grow so make sure you're eating plenty of lean meat, beans, peas and eggs!

Choline intake needs to be increased both during pregnancy and breastfeeding. During pregnancy, it contributes to your baby's brain and spinal cord development. However, the foetus absorbs choline by depleting the mother's supply of choline. Additionally, milk contains choline which is why new mums need to make sure they are replenishing their choline. Pregnant women should be consuming 450 mg per day

and breastfeeding women should be consuming 550 mg per day. Eggs, fish and dark green vegetables like brussel sprouts and broccoli are all good sources of choline.

The key time for pregnant women to be increasing their folate levels is during the first 4 weeks of pregnancy. Folate helps the development of the brain, spine and skull of your baby in the earliest stages of pregnancy and helps to prevent neural tube defects. Women who are trying to become pregnant should add lentils, okra, asparagus and spinach to their diet in order to increase their folate levels.

DHA is an omega-3 fatty acid which helps with brain development during pregnancy. Pregnant women require 300 mg of DHA daily, however, this can be difficult to achieve as fish is the best source of DHA. Instead, many pregnant women take supplements, such as S-26 Mama, to make sure they are getting enough DHA for their baby's development.

What are the different ways I can manage pain during delivery?

Mums, it is natural for you get concerned about the pain that you will experience during delivery. But here is the good news! There are many options for pain relief during labour. You need to discuss these in advance with your doctor and birth partner as part of your birth plan.

Some natural techniques of coping with the pain from contractions include massage and breathing exercises. Some women even choose to give birth at home as they find the familiar setting comforting.

There are many more options available in the hospital including Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) which emits small electrical pulses into your back, nitrous oxide which is inhaled, pethidine which is injected or an epidural which must be administered as early as possible.

How do I swaddle my newborn?

Swaddling a baby helps them to stay warm and can help to keep them calm as well. Some mums even find that it helps their babies sleep for longer! It's important to do it correctly, so ask one of the nurses to go through the process with you a few times until you have it down pat. An improper swaddle around the legs can damage your baby's soft cartilage.

What if I struggle to breastfeed my

baby?

Driven by the maternal instinct, all mothers would love to breastfeed their newborns. However, some might feel challenged in this department. If you find yourself in a situation like this, the hospital can set you up with a lactation consultant (a trained breastfeeding specialist) who teaches new mums how to feed their newborns. They can also help women who are struggling with any aspects of breastfeeding, including latching difficulties, low milk production or painful nursing (read more about lactation specialists in Singapore).

Being pregnant is scary, and it can be hard to keep track of everything you need to know. Hopefully, this list of questions helps you to gather some of the information you need to make your pregnancy a little easier.

Make it easy to get all the essential nutrients through your pregnancy with Wyeth's nutrient supplement S-26 MAMA which helps pregnant mums reach their nutrient requirements and supports appropriate weight gain.

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