



Frequently Asked Questions About Pregnancy





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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PREGNANCY

Will I still be a patient at Main Line Fertility?

Yes, you will remain under the care of your Main Line Fertility physician until you are approximately 8 weeks into your pregnancy. Your appointments will consist of an ultrasound, blood work, and a consultation to ensure your pregnancy is progressing appropriately. After your 8-week appointment you will usually resume care with your regular OB/GYN.

Can I stay a patient at Main Line Fertility throughout my pregnancy?

We cannot continue to see patients or give medical advice after 8–10 weeks into the pregnancy. You will be released to the care of your OB/GYN at that time.

What are the chances of a miscarriage occurring?

Miscarriage is a word used to describe the early loss of a pregnancy before 20 weeks of pregnancy. It usually happens in the first trimester (weeks 0–13). Unfortunately, between 10 and 25 percent of known pregnancies end in miscarriage. Once a pregnancy makes it to 7 weeks with a heartbeat, the risk of having a miscarriage drops to 5 percent. By week 12, the risk may fall to 1 percent.

What are signs that I should call my Main Line Fertility Physician?

If you experience heavy red bleeding or abdominal pain you should call Main Line Fertility immediately. Light spotting is common in early pregnancy. If you have already graduated from Main Line Fertility and experience these symptoms you should contact your OB/GYN. We are unable to provide medical advice or care once you have resumed being a patient with your OB/GYN.

How do you calculate the length of a pregnancy?

At Main Line Fertility, we consider the date of conception (whether by insemination or intercourse) to be gestational day 0. Thus, on the day of the missed menstrual period a woman will be on her 14th day of pregnancy. Obstetricians generally number the days (or weeks) of a pregnancy beginning with a woman's last normal menstrual period. The difference in calculations can lead to confusion when discussing the length of a pregnancy.

How can you tell if a pregnancy is healthy?

Blood Tests

Blood hormones are particularly informative during the first 3 weeks of pregnancy. We measure human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG), progesterone, and estrogen. HCG levels will rise in a predictable way in a normal pregnancy. The level of hCG hormone will (approximately) double every 2 days during the first month of pregnancy. Because of this predictable doubling time, we focus on changes in hCG level rather than a single absolute value of that hormone to make judgements about the health of the pregnancy.

Ultrasound

Ultrasound is the more accurate and important way we measure early pregnancy. Between 18 to 23 days post conception, a pregnancy can be visualized via ultrasound as a gestational sac. By the time the gestational sac is 9mm we should visualize a yolk sac, which is the earliest visualized feature of an embryo. Beginning around the 26th day of the pregnancy, and in every case by the 33rd day, we should visualize a small embryo with a flickering heartbeat within the gestational sac. When we see the heartbeat, we gain confidence that the pregnancy is growing well.



NUTRITION FOR PREGNANCY

Eating well-balanced meals is important at all times, but it is even more essential when you are pregnant. There are essential nutrients, vitamins, and minerals that your developing baby needs.

Most foods are safe; however, there are some foods that you should avoid during pregnancy.

Raw Meat

Uncooked seafood and rare or undercooked beef or poultry should be avoided because of the risk of contamination with coliform bacteria, toxoplasmosis, and salmonella.

Deli Meat

Deli meats have been known to run the risk of contamination with listeria, which can cause miscarriage. Listeria has the ability to cross the placenta and may infect the baby, which could lead to infection or blood poisoning and may be life-threatening.

Fish

Fish is a good source of protein, essential vitamins, and nutrients for a growing pregnancy. It is recommended that pregnant women consume 8–12 ounces of fish per week. Some types of fish have higher levels of a metal called mercury than others. Mercury has been linked to birth defects. To limit your exposure to mercury, follow a few simple guidelines. Choose

fish and shellfish such as shrimp, salmon, catfish, and pollock. Do not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, marlin, orange roughy, or tilefish. Limit white (albacore) tuna to 6 ounces a week. You also should check advisories about fish caught in local waters.

Smoked Seafood

Refrigerated, smoked seafood often labeled as lox, nova style, kippered, or jerky should be avoided because it could be contaminated with listeria. This type of fish is often found in the deli section of your grocery store. Canned or shelf-safe smoked seafood is usually fine to eat.

Fish Exposed to Industrial Pollutants

Avoid fish from contaminated lakes and rivers that may be exposed to high levels of polychlorinated biphenyls. This is primarily for those who fish in local lakes and streams. These fish include bluefish, striped bass, salmon, pike, trout, and



walleye. Contact the local health department or Environmental Protection Agency to determine which fish are safe to eat in your area. Remember, this is regarding fish caught in local waters and not fish from your local grocery store.

Raw Shellfish

The majority of seafood-borne illnesses are caused by undercooked shellfish, which include oysters, clams, and mussels. Cooking helps prevent some types of infection, but it does not prevent the algae-related infections that are associated with red tides. Raw shellfish pose a concern for everybody, and they should be avoided altogether during pregnancy.

Raw Eggs

Raw eggs or any foods that contain raw eggs should be avoided because of the potential exposure to salmonella. Some homemade Caesar dressings, mayonnaise, homemade ice cream or custards, and Hollandaise sauces may be made with raw eggs. If the recipe is cooked at some point, this will reduce the exposure to salmonella. Commercially manufactured ice cream, dressings, and eggnog are made with pasteurized eggs and do not increase the risk of salmonella. Restaurants should be using pasteurized eggs in any recipe that is made with raw eggs, such as Hollandaise sauce or dressings.



Soft Cheeses

Imported soft cheeses may contain listeria. You would need to avoid soft cheeses such as Brie, Camembert, Roquefort, feta, Gorgonzola, and Mexican style cheeses that include queso blanco and queso fresco, unless they clearly state that they are made from pasteurized milk. All soft non-imported cheeses made with pasteurized milk are safe to eat.

Unpasteurized Milk

Unpasteurized milk may contain listeria. Make sure that any milk you drink is pasteurized.

Pâté

Refrigerated pâté or meat spreads should be avoided because they may contain the bacteria listeria. Canned pâté or shelf-safe meat spreads can be eaten.

Caffeine

Although there have been many studies on whether caffeine increases the risk of miscarriage, the results are unclear. Most experts state that consuming fewer than 200 mg of caffeine (one 12-ounce cup of coffee) a day during pregnancy is safe.

Alcohol

There is NO amount of alcohol that is known to be safe during pregnancy, and therefore alcohol should be avoided. Prenatal exposure to alcohol can interfere with the healthy development of the baby. Depending on the amount, timing, and pattern of use, alcohol consumption during pregnancy can lead to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or other developmental disorders.

Unwashed Vegetables

Vegetables are a safe and necessary part of a balanced diet. However, it is essential to make sure they are washed to avoid potential exposure to toxoplasmosis. Toxoplasmosis may contaminate the soil where the vegetables were grown.



EXERCISING WHILE PREGNANT

There are usually many questions that come to mind when planning how to exercise during pregnancy. Physical exercise is bodily activity that improves or maintains physical fitness and overall health and wellness. This type of exercise during pregnancy is important and can help with some common discomforts of pregnancy and even help prepare your body for labor and delivery.

In most cases, exercise is safe during pregnancy. You will usually find it is even recommended. Typically, the first rule of thumb is if you were physically active before you were pregnant, it is likely safe to remain active during pregnancy. More than likely, your healthcare provider will tell you to remain active, as long as it is comfortable and there are no other health conditions suggesting otherwise. Discuss what type of exercise is appropriate for you with your Main Line Fertility Physician before starting or continuing any exercise program.

Benefits of exercise during pregnancy

Exercising just 20 to 30 minutes, 3 to 4 days per week can benefit your health during pregnancy. It is important to be active and get your blood flowing.

Exercise:

- *Helps reduce backaches, constipation, bloating, and swelling*
- *May help prevent or treat gestational diabetes*
- *Increases your energy*
- *Improves your mood*
- *Improves your posture*
- *Promotes muscle tone, strength, and endurance*
- *Helps you sleep better*

Regular activity also helps keep you fit during pregnancy and may improve your ability to cope with labor. It will also make it easier for you to get back in shape after your baby is born.



RECOMMENDED EXERCISES DURING PREGNANCY

KEGEL EXERCISES

Pregnant women who perform Kegel exercises often find they have an easier birth. Strengthening these muscles during pregnancy can help you develop the ability to control your muscles during labor and delivery. In addition, toning all of these muscles will also minimize 2 common problems during pregnancy: bladder leaks and hemorrhoids.

Kegel exercises are also recommended after pregnancy to promote perineal healing, regain bladder control, and strengthen pelvic floor muscles. Kegel exercises can be done anywhere, and no one knows you're doing them.

SWIMMING

Many health care providers and fitness professionals say swimming is the safest exercise for pregnant women. Swimming keeps your body toned without adding weight and stress to your joints. Swimming raises your heart rate and allows you to enjoy a safe cardiovascular exercise that is not likely to cause overheating.

Another benefit of swimming during pregnancy comes from the safety of not falling. During pregnancy, your balance will be off, making you more susceptible to tripping or falling. Swimming cancels that risk (at least while you are in the pool). Although swimming is a water sport, not all water sports are safe during pregnancy. You should avoid other water activities such as scuba diving or water skiing.

WALKING

Walking is very beneficial because it is safe for your body. It is easier on your knees than running and can be easily worked into your schedule. Start slowly and be sure you stretch well before you begin. Set realistic goals and wear good shoes to decrease the risk of falling or pressure on your feet.

RUNNING & JOGGING

Usually if you are in the habit of running, you can continue running. However, if you did not run before pregnancy, you may want to speak to your health care provider before you begin a running program. If you run, make sure you're well hydrated, avoid over-heating, and wear good shoes.

RECOMMENDED EXERCISES DURING PREGNANCY

BICYCLING

The best thing about biking is that the bike supports your weight, so there is less stress on your body. A stationary bike is great exercise because there is a low risk of falling. Start slowly and do not over-exert yourself.

STAIR CLIMBING MACHINES

These machines pose a small risk of falling; however, it is recommended to use the side rails as they provide balance support. Stair climbing is an excellent way to raise your heart rate.

YOGA

Yoga has a long-standing reputation for relieving stress and pressure on your body. Most forms of yoga will be safe for you

and your baby, as long as they are not excessively rigorous. Some yoga instructors offer special classes for pregnant women. Avoid lying flat on your back for extended periods of time and try not to overstretch.

There are a number of streaming videos available that educate and equip you for doing yoga from the comfort of your own home.

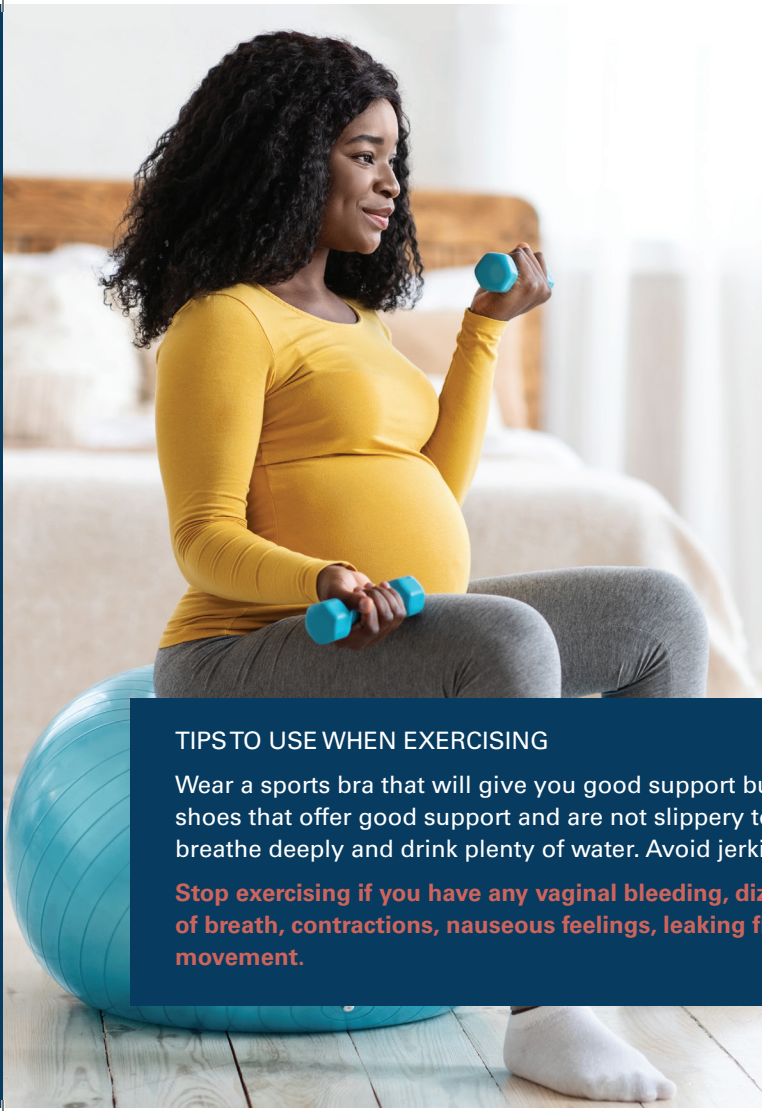
AEROBICS

If you already participate in aerobics, you will most likely be able to continue; however, you should speak with your health care provider before beginning a new program. Keeping your balance can sometimes be difficult, so you'll want to be careful as you get further along in your pregnancy. Taking a class

specifically designed for pregnant women is a good idea. Most health clubs offer them. Do not exercise lying flat on your back for extended periods of time.

DANCE

Dancing can be done in your home or at a gym that offers special classes for pregnant women. Avoid a lot of spinning, leaping, and jumping.



EXERCISES TO AVOID DURING PREGNANCY

While pregnant, avoid activities that put you at increased risk of injury or trauma. Exercises to avoid include:

- Contact sports
- Exercises that put you at risk of getting hit in the abdomen or could result in a fall
- Activities which may cause you to become overheated (i.e. “Hot yoga”)
- Activities performed above 6,000 feet (if you do not already live at a high altitude)

TIPS TO USE WHEN EXERCISING

Wear a sports bra that will give you good support but avoid other tight-fitting clothes. Wear shoes that offer good support and are not slippery to help avoid falls. Also make sure to breathe deeply and drink plenty of water. Avoid jerking motions.

Stop exercising if you have any vaginal bleeding, dizziness, chest pain, faintness, shortness of breath, contractions, nauseous feelings, leaking fluid from your vagina, or decreased fetal movement.

PERSONAL CARE

Massage

Studies indicate that massage therapy performed during pregnancy can reduce anxiety, decrease symptoms of depression, relieve muscle aches and joint pains, and improve labor outcomes and newborn health.

It is important to seek care from a certified prenatal massage therapist. Certified therapists have received training beyond the national standards for massage therapists and know how to address specific pregnancy and massage needs. They are aware of how to position you safely and prevent strain on the uterine ligaments. They are also able to watch for symptoms of blood clots and varicose veins.

Main Line Fertility Physicians advise patients to refrain from getting a massage during their first trimester of pregnancy.

Hot Tubs and Saunas

Hot tubs and saunas can raise your body temperature to a level that can be dangerous for your developing baby, and we recommend you forgo using them during your pregnancy.

Retinoids

Retinoids (also known as tretinoin) are a type of vitamin A that speeds up cell division (quicken your skin's renewal) and prevents skin collagen from breaking down. These powerful substances are found in some antiaging moisturizers and treatments for acne, pigment disorders, and plaque psoriasis.

We recommend our patients avoid retinoids while pregnant. Some studies have shown taking high doses of vitamin A during pregnancy can be harmful to an unborn child. Oral retinoids, such as isotretinoin (a prescription acne treatment previously sold under the brand name Accutane), are known to cause birth defects.

Avoid products with these ingredients:

- *Avage, Fabior, Tazorac (tazarotene)*
- *Avita (tretinoin)*
- *Differin (adapalene)*
- *Panretin (alitretinoin)*
- *Retin-A, Renova (tretinoin)*
- *Retinoic acid*
- *Retinol*
- *Retinyl linoleate*
- *Retinyl palmitate*
- *Targretin gel (bexarotene)*

Acne

Many women have breakouts in the first trimester because of changing estrogen levels, even if they've always had clear skin. If you're dealing with pregnancy-induced acne, a dermatologist can likely give you a safe topical antibiotic.

A facial wash that contains no more than 2 percent salicylic acid (look for the percentage on the product label) is considered safe.

Do not use leave-on acne lotions, gels, and creams, as well as at-home peels, which can contain salicylic acid or retinoids. Steer clear of the oral form of the retinoid Accutane.

Avoid products with these ingredients:

- *Avage, Fabior, Tazorac (tazarotene)*
- *Avita (tretinoin)*
- *Différen (adapalene)*
- *Panretin (alitretinoin)*
- *Retin-A, Renova (tretinoin)*
- *Retinoic acid*
- *Retinol*
- *Retinyl linoleate*
- *Retinyl palmitate*
- *Salicylic acid*
- *Targretin gel (bexarotene)*
- *Tretinoin*



Hydroxy acids

Hydroxy acids such as beta hydroxy acid (BHA) and alpha hydroxy acid (AHA) are found in products to treat certain skin disorders, including acne, skin inflammation, and redness.

They're also found in a number of cleansers, toners, and exfoliants touted to reduce the signs of aging.

Salicylic acid is the most common BHA you'll find listed as an ingredient and the only BHA that has been studied in pregnancy. High doses of the acid in its oral form have been shown in studies to cause birth defects and various pregnancy complications. Other BHAs have not been studied in pregnancy.

Very little of a BHA would be absorbed into the skin when it's applied topically, but because oral salicylic acid is not safe during pregnancy, we recommend avoiding excessive or frequent use of skin products containing BHAs.

If you must have a peel, have it done professionally at your dermatologist's office to ensure safety.

The two most common alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs) in cosmetic products are glycolic acid and lactic acid. AHAs have not been studied in pregnancy, but because only small amounts are absorbed into the skin, they are considered low risk when used in skin treatments. Still, to be safe, it's a good idea to use them only in small amounts.

Products containing these ingredients should only be used in small amounts:

- *Alpha hydroxy acid (AHA)*
- *Azelaic acid*
- *Benzoyl peroxide*
- *Beta hydroxy acids (BHA)*
- *Beta-hydroxybutanoic acid*
- *Betaine salicylate*
- *Citric acid*
- *Dicarboxylic acid*
- *Glycolic acid*
- *Hydroxyacetic acid*
- *Hydroxycaproic acid*
- *Lactic acid*
- *Salicylic acid*
- *Trehalocanic acid*
- *Tropic acid*
- *2-hydroxyethanoic acid*

Soy

While soy-based lotions and facial products are generally safe to use, soy has estrogenic effects that can make dark patches of skin (known as melasma or chloasma) worse, as can oil of bergamot, which is in many organic products.

However, the 'active soy' found in some product lines is okay because the estrogenic components have been taken out.

Avoid products with these ingredients if you have melasma:

- *Lecithin Phosphatidylcholine Soy*
- *Textured vegetable protein (TVP)*





Hair Remover

Lotions that remove your hair chemically (depilatories) or that minimize hair are considered safe, as long as you use them as directed.

If you've had an allergic skin reaction to hair minimizers or removal creams in the past, then you should avoid these products during pregnancy as well.

Sunscreen

Even sunscreens with ingredients that penetrate the skin are considered safe during pregnancy. However, as an extra precaution, you might opt for products that use titanium dioxide and zinc oxide—physical sunblocks that don't penetrate the skin.

In addition to sunscreen, avoid the sun between 10am and 4pm; wear a sun hat, sunglasses and sun-protective clothing; and reapply your sunscreen every 2 hours.

Makeup

Many makeup products are marked “noncomedogenic” or “nonacneogenic” - meaning they're oil-free and don't clog pores. These are safe and will not affect the health of your baby.

Avoid cosmetics that contain retinol or salicylic acid (found in some makeup for acne-prone skin).

Steroids

Steroid creams – such as over-the-counter hydrocortisone creams – are often used for minor skin irritations, inflammation, itches and rashes caused by contact dermatitis, mild eczema, rashes, psoriasis, soaps, detergents, cosmetics, jewelry, poison oak, poison ivy, poison sumac, and insect bites.

These topical steroids are considered safe to use during pregnancy. More potent steroid products are sometimes prescribed by dermatologists or primary care physicians, and most of these are safe as well. Speak with your dermatologist about the safety of any prescribed products, including topical prescriptions, before using them during pregnancy.

Hair Coloring

We encourage our patients to refrain from coloring their hair during their first trimester. However, if you must color your hair, we suggest avoiding application techniques where the dye is applied to the hair and scalp because the pores in your skin can soak up the chemicals. For a safer alternative, try techniques where color is painted directly on to the hair shaft or pulling hair through a cap that covers your scalp before applying color. Ensure you are in a well-ventilated area and wear gloves if you apply the dye yourself.

Tanning Beds

There are no studies that provide conclusive evidence that tanning beds directly harm your baby. However, we advise against any activity that might raise your body temperature including tanning beds. Overheating is associated with spinal malformations in the baby.

Sunless Tanner

Avoiding UV rays will ensure healthier skin and less chance of skin cancer, hives or worsened chloasma.

The only concern is whether the active ingredient, dihydroxyacetone (DHA), is able to penetrate the skin. Studies do not confirm that it can, but we encourage women to wait until after the first trimester to apply tanner.

Cosmetic Injectables

We ask patients to avoid cosmetic injectables while pregnant. There have been no well-controlled studies of Botox or similar product in pregnant women. Animal studies have shown problems, such as miscarriage, birth defects, and low birth weight when pregnant animals were given high dosages of Botox.



MEDICATION: SAFE USAGE DURING PREGNANCY

The following medications are safe to take during pregnancy. Take as directed by dosing instruction on box.

CONDITIONS/SYMPTOM	SAFE MEDICATIONS Please note the generic equivalent is also safe.
Acid Reflux	Tums®, Pepcid®
Nausea and Vomiting	Doxylamine®, Ginger Capsules, Vitamin B6
Insomnia	Benadryl®, Doxylamine®
Allergies*	Benadryl®, Claritin®, Zyrtec®
Cold	Benadryl®, Robitussin®, Tylenol®, Extra Strength Tylenol®
Constipation	Colace®, Dulcolax®, Fiber, Metamucil®
Headache	Tylenol®, Extra Strength Tylenol®
Yeast Infection	Monistat 3®, Monistat 7®
Safe During Treatment and Pregnancy	Flu Shot (recommended), Covid Vaccine & Booster (recommended), Novacaine, Tuberculosis Test, Tdap Vaccine, Tetanus Booster, Hepatitis B Shot, Dental X-Rays

* Avoid decongestants

