



Being Active During Pregnancy

EXTENSION

April 2022

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Physical activity is important for a healthy pregnancy. A safe and healthy pregnancy decreases risk of miscarriage, low birth weight, or early delivery. It is healthy for both mom and baby because it:

- Keeps you feeling energized
- Reduces problems like gestational diabetes and excessive weight gain
- Strengthens your heart and lungs
- Gets your muscles in shape for delivery
- Helps you be in shape after baby is born
- Decreases stress and symptoms of depression

If you were active before pregnancy, you can usually continue being active during pregnancy. As pregnancy progresses, you may need to shorten the time and intensity of your exercise. Try to be active at least 30 minutes or more on every day of the week. Discuss your activity level with your doctor.

If you were not active before pregnancy, now is a good time to start, but first talk to your doctor. You can start by going on three 10-minute walks after breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Finding an activity you enjoy or a friend to join you is a great way to stay active during and after pregnancy.

When is physical activity not safe?

When a woman has preeclampsia, severe anemia, or other high-risk pregnancy conditions, exercise may not be safe. Ask your doctor about the types of exercise that are best for you.

All pregnant women should avoid activities where you can get injured or have a risk of falling down. Any activity that involves bouncing, leaping, or sudden changes are not safe. Skydiving, scuba diving, contact sports, and hot yoga are not safe during pregnancy.

Safe types of exercise during pregnancy

- Walking
- Swimming
- Aerobic classes
- Light housework or gardening
- Playing with children
- Prenatal yoga

Tips for safe exercise during pregnancy

- Drink plenty of water before, during, and after exercise.
- Take it slow. If you cannot talk during the exercise, you may be doing too much.
- Limit outdoor activity if the weather is very hot or very cold.
- Exercising when there is snow and ice on the ground increase the risk of falling down.
- Avoid hot tubs, whirlpools, or steam rooms.

When to stop and contact your doctor

Whatever type of exercise you decide on, it is important to listen to your body's warning. If you have any of these symptoms during exercise, stop the activity and contact your doctor:

- Dizziness
- Numbness
- Contractions
- Nausea
- Headache
- Vaginal bleeding
- Faintness
- Muscle weakness
- Chest, back, or hip pain

Exercise can be a part of a healthy pregnancy and has many benefits when it is safe. Always talk to your doctor about the types of exercise that are best for you.

In some cases, such as high-risk pregnancies, exercise may not be recommended. Ask your doctor for advice about the types of exercise that is best for you. Any activity that causes bouncing, leaping, sudden changes of direction are not recommended.

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

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The Cooperative Extension Service is the largest, most successful informal educational organization in the world. It is a nationwide system funded and guided by a partnership of federal, state, and local governments that delivers information to help people help themselves through the land-grant university system.

Extension carries out programs in the broad categories of agriculture, natural resources and environment; family and consumer sciences; 4-H and other youth; and community resource development. Extension staff members live and work among the people they serve to help stimulate and educate Americans to plan ahead and cope with their problems.

Some characteristics of the Cooperative Extension system are:

- The federal, state, and local governments cooperatively share in its financial support and program direction.
- It is administered by the land-grant university as designated by the state legislature through an Extension director.
- Extension programs are nonpolitical, objective, and research-based information.
- It provides practical, problem-oriented education for people of all ages. It is designated to take the knowledge of the university to those persons who do not or cannot participate in the formal classroom instruction of the university.
- It utilizes research from university, government, and other sources to help people make their own decisions.
- More than a million volunteers help multiply the impact of the Extension professional staff.
- It dispenses no funds to the public.
- It is not a regulatory agency, but it does inform people of regulations and of their options in meeting them.
- Local programs are developed and carried out in full recognition of national problems and goals.
- The Extension staff educates people through personal contacts, meetings, demonstrations, and the mass media.
- Extension has the built-in flexibility to adjust its programs and subject matter to meet new needs. Activities shift from year to year as citizen groups and Extension workers close to the problems advise changes.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director of Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Vice President for Agricultural Programs and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of 40 cents per copy. 04/2022 KG.