

# HEALTHY MOM Tips for Self-Care in the Second Trimester



Ongoing care from trusted professionals, understanding changes in your body, and healthful diet, exercise and rest – all contribute to feeling your best through a time when baby is busy growing and developing.

## You and Your Care Team.....

Your prenatal appointments serve to keep you and your health care provider up to date on your health, as well as baby's. You should feel free to bring any of your questions and concerns to your health care providers. Write down any questions or concerns you may have and share them with your doctor on your next visit.

Appointments will be once a month through the second trimester (till 28 weeks), every two weeks in the early third trimester (till 36 weeks) and then weekly until delivery. (This may vary if you have special medical concerns.)

**Need to change an appointment?** Call your provider's office at least 24 hours in advance to reschedule.

### TIMELY TESTING

Your provider will order a glucose screening to be done between 24 and 28 weeks of pregnancy to test for gestational diabetes, a common but potentially serious condition. Be sure to have the test done when indicated.



### PLANNING FOR BIRTH AND BABY

Redeemer Health offers a variety of childbirth classes to help make the transition to life with a new baby as easy as possible for moms and support people.

You could choose a one- or two-day class for a review of the labor and birth processes, including breathing and relaxation tips. Multiweek classes build on relaxation skills, provide a tour of the Redeemer Health Maternity Center, and offer time to enjoy the camaraderie of other moms and support people.

For anyone who has previously given birth, a refresher class offers a brief review of the labor process and comfort measures.

Redeemer Health also offers classes on breastfeeding, infant care and CPR, and special sessions for siblings-to-be.

**Sign up ahead for a childbirth class** to begin by about the six or seventh month of your pregnancy (weeks 25-28). Ask your care team for details.

## WHEN TO WORRY, WHEN TO NOT

Be aware of the signs of preterm labor: persistent cramping or contractions between weeks 20 and 37 of pregnancy. Preterm labor can result in premature birth. The earlier a premature birth, the greater the health risks for the baby.

The specific cause of preterm labor isn't always clear. Certain risk factors might increase the chance of preterm labor, but it can also occur in moms with no known risk factors.

**Contact your doctor if you have any labor symptoms that do not go away with hydration or movement.**



## Good Nutrition for a Healthy Start .....

You're most likely to hit your nutritional goals if you focus on fruits, vegetables, lean protein, whole grains and dairy products.

To get the right balance, divide your plate: Fill half with fruits and vegetables; a quarter with whole grains; and a quarter with a source of lean protein. Add a dairy product at every meal.

### VITAMINS, YES. CONSTIPATION, OH NO!

It's important to keep taking prenatal vitamins throughout your pregnancy. But sometimes the iron in prenatal vitamins can contribute to difficulty moving your bowels. To help avoid constipation:

- Drink plenty of water.
- Add fiber to your diet from fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans and legumes.
- Exercise regularly (with your doctor's OK).
- Avoid holding bowel movements.

If you try these and are still experiencing constipation, ask your provider about using a stool softener or over-the-counter prenatal vitamins without iron.

### KEEPING HYDRATED

Staying well hydrated can also be one of the best defenses against preterm labor. Be sure to drink at least 8-12 cups (64-96 oz.) of water a day.

### FOCUS ON DIET, NOT YOUR WEIGHT

On average, women gain 25-35 lbs. during pregnancy. Some moms may need to gain less and some more, depending on their pre-pregnancy weight.

Remember that your weight gain is less important than the quality of your diet. Fruits and vegetables are among the best choices for good nutrition – as a bonus, they may help to suppress food cravings.

**Wondering what to eat?** See the "Nutritional Guidelines for Pregnancy" and do your best.

## Being Comfortable in Your Body.....

Your second trimester may bring an unexpected sense of energy. It's a good time to focus on activities that improve your overall well-being.

### EXERCISE FOR STAMINA

Exercise increases a mom's strength and stamina. It helps you to feel better and possibly sleep better at night. Walking, swimming, yoga, stretching and any other activity that is low impact can have tremendous benefits for mom and baby.

Use common sense and incorporate exercise into your daily life as much as possible, at least 3-4 times a week for 20-30 minutes.



Kegel exercises help to tone muscles specifically used in childbirth and help to prevent problems with urinary incontinence and sexual functioning later in life.

### AHHH, BODYWORK

Try to set aside time each day to relax. You might also consider some bodywork from Blissful Beginnings &

Beyond at Redeemer Health. Prenatal massage with one of our licensed, certified professionals brings relief from stress on weight-bearing joints, helps alleviate back pain and fatigue, and provides emotional support through nurturing touch.

### DENTAL CARE FOR MOM (AND BABY!)

You might be noticing changes in your mouth, such as tender or bleeding gums, or even loose teeth. This can be normal during pregnancy and should go away after baby is born.

But it's still important to take care of your teeth to prevent cavities and other dental problems. Brush, floss, and limit sugary foods and drinks. Getting the right vitamins and nutrients is also good for baby's teeth, which begin to form before birth. And remember that it's safe – and a good idea – to continue to visit your dentist while you're pregnant.

**If you are experiencing problems with your teeth or gums,** ask your provider for more information about dental care during pregnancy



You can find more information about all stages of pregnancy at [redeemberbaby.com](http://redeemberbaby.com).

