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The fetus spends the last four to six weeks of pregnancy gaining weight as it prepares to enter the world. Weight gain gives the baby energy stores to isolate birth, so that the baby does not freeze, and has enough energy for fat to survive on the first day or two after birth until hunger occurs and the connection between sucking and no longer hungry is made. Usually children lose up to 10 percent of their weight in the first few days after their birth. At this point, they realize that the pain in their abdomens disappears when they suck, explains Dr. Joshua Copel, a professor of obstetrics and gynecology and pediatrics at Yale University School of Medicine. Advertising in the weeks just before giving birth, the fetus often seems quieter. It's almost as if there is enough room for the baby to wind up and take a very good whack of the mother's bladder. Movements are still there, but they are not as large as when there is more amniotic fluid compared to a child's size in the past, says Dr Copel. Long, complicated work and offer is thought to start with the baby itself. When a child reaches full size it releases hormones, which in turn trigger the release of a number of other hormones from the mother that cause the muscles of the uterus to contract. These same chemicals also slow down the breathing movements of the fetus' lungs, which carry amniotic fluid in and out, which had become common place earlier in the third trimester. During childbirth the movements end almost completely, then start suddenly and energetically as the baby enters the world. How does a child experience powerful contractions that celebrate work? During contractions, we know that the pressure reaches about 40 or 50 mm of mercury when we put pressure cookers on the uterus. But it's around the baby. When you dive below 100 feet, you don't feel any pressure as long as you're in balance. And the baby, full of fluids, would be balanced. I don't know how to tell if there's an inconvenience to a child because it's like diving underwater, explains Dr. Copel. See how the baby moves through the delivery channel next. On page 2, during pregnancy, some issues become as important as your physical and emotional well-being. Not only do you visit your obstetrician with surprising regularity and frequency, but - perhaps to your surprise - your growing middle may also become the subject of polite conversation as those around them become more and more interested in how you do. Along with all the changes you experience, your health (and together, your child's health) deserves to be protected and fed during this unforgettable time. But when you discover that almost everything you do affects your child, you can probably feel a lot of pressure to get it right and ensure that you carry a healthy baby run. Warning fairy tales aside, pregnancy can pack joy, fear and excitement into nine months. While you're busy getting ready, starting with an updated exercise routine or kicking your caffeine cravings, be sure to carve out some zen-like time for you. After all, making time for yourself is all part of preparing for parenthood. So, if you're pondering a pregnancy or your due date, here are 10 tips you want to get acquainted with. Wonder how to get prepped for pregnancy? Read on to learn more about the action plan. Content ideally, preparing the baby begins at least three months before conception. Why so early? The better your health, the healthier your child is likely to be. Visiting your obstetrician is one of the first steps in planning a healthy pregnancy. During your appointment, you can discuss your family and personal health history, as well as all the medications you are taking [source: DHHS: Preconception]. Your doctor should make sure that your vaccinations are up to date, especially rubella and chickenpox, which are live virus vaccines and should not be given during pregnancy [source: Brundage]. Advertising Expect some suggestions for lifestyle changes too. If you live with a domestic cat, you are advised to opt out of your recycle bin duties. There is a parasite in cat feces that can cause toxoplasmosis -- an infection that can be life-threatening to develop in children. For the same reason, you can be warned to wear gloves while gardening and avoid eating undercooked meat. You will probably get a prescription for prenatal vitamins or recommendations for an over-the-counter version that provides enough nutritional value to enhance your body's needs. Keep in mind that not all multivitamins are equal: You need at least 400 micrograms of folic acid taken daily for at least one month before conception and continued through natal and postnatal periods [source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention]. Planning your bias should include a dentist visit to make sure your teeth and gums are in good health. More and more evidence suggests parodine disease makes women more likely to have a premature or low birth weight baby [source: American Academy of Periodontology]. While pregnancy can be exciting, it also prompts a bevy of physical and emotional changes. Reaching for a bottle of ibuprofen is no longer an easy act for a woman to look for headache relief. Everything you swallow, including medicines, affects your developing child. When the medicine enters the bloodstream, it passes through the placenta and enters your child's system too. What drugs are safe during pregnancy? There are no easy answers. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration labels the safety of prescription drugs, from antibiotics to antidepressants, according to the following system: A, B, C, D or X [Source: FDA: Information]. Your doctor will help you recommended during pregnancy. Advertising in general, category A drugs have not shown any risk to the fetus. Category B drugs, containing ibuprofen, are also not believed to pose a risk to the fetus. Category C drugs can cause complications in the baby's uterus, but are not actually studied in humans. Category D medicines, which contain chemotherapy agents, present clear health risks, but in some cases it can still be used. Category X drugs are known to cause birth defects and should never be used during pregnancy [Source: Greenfield: Medicines]. Over-the-counter medications require similar controls. Before taking them, the doctor is authorised to do so [source: DHHS: medicines]. And if you think herbal or homeopathic remedies are safer, remember, these substances still pass through the placenta and affect your developing child. If in doubt, talk to your doctor. Wonder how to fuel a healthy pregnancy if you're green gills? Find out, next

one. During pregnancy, what you eat and drink is the main source of nutrition for the baby. Stock your fridge and pantry with nutrient-rich foods to ensure the necessary boost during pregnancy, namely -- B6, B12, iron, calcium and folic acid. You should start producing the part. Bananas and whole grains, rich in vitamin B6, encourage red blood cell production. Sweet potatoes have vitamin A for growing bones. Spinach and salmon are filled with calcium, which helps prevent bone loss during pregnancy and helps with the growth of your developing baby bones [source: KidsHealth.org]. Don't you like anything on this short list of power food? Don't worry. There are many replacements to get the diet you need. Advertising If you think swallowing the prenatal vitamin every day has your nutritional needs covered, think again. Your body and child just needs more nutrition than one vitamin can offer. For example, you can't get the recommended daily amount of calcium in the prenatal vitamin alone. Why? If it had been added, the pill would be too large to be swallowed [source: March Dimes: Multivitamin]. While your prenatal vitamin supplies extra folic acid and other nutrients to help prevent birth defects, be sure to eat an additional diet to increase your child's growth and protect your health. Which foods may pose a health risk to your child? Next, we reveal some dangerous ingredients that you should avoid. Your first prenatal check may not take place until you are well into the first trimester, but this period is when important development milestones occur [source: Brundage]. Knowing this, you want to steer clear of potentially toxic ingredients. Many dangerous ingredients lurk in common food. You want to avoid foods that may be contaminated with Listeria, bacteria that can cross the placenta and cause [Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture]. If they are not made from pasteurised milk, soft cheeses such as brie, camembert and feta are imported on this list. Raw eggs, fish, poultry, beef and pork should not be swallowed, either. Staying away from raw meat is not usually pregnant, often restless, woman. But if you're struck by the craving for sashimi or homemade ice cream (which often contains raw eggs), it can be easy to forget the risks [source: Harms]. Other foods, such as certain types of seafood, may contain high levels of mercury and should be eaten with rarity [source: Dimes March: avoid]. Advertising You should also avoid alcohol and cigarette smoke. Both substances pass through the placenta and can cause damage [source: Kaiser Permanente]. Coffee consumption, however, can be mixed reviews. Although caffeine goes directly into your child's bloodstream, many women continue to drink coffee during pregnancy. In small amounts, caffeine seems OK. A 5-ounce cup of coffee is about 180 milligrams of caffeine, so a cup a day shouldn't cause too much concern [source: Organization of Teratology Information Specialists]. Marinaded? Ice cream? What a cliché! For many pregnant women, however, these and other cravings rich in fat, sugar and salt are a reality. Before you're over the fault of having thought about fueling your child's growth with potato chips, please note: It's OK to indulge in some appetite as long as you've eaten a balanced diet first. Maybe your craving will leave you wondering if you are missing a certain nutrient. The answer is a resounding one. Next time you reach a bag of pretzels, your body may crave the additional sodium it needs to balance the extra fluids caused by pregnancy. By contrast, your craving may be unrelated: a woman who crunches ice cubes may actually have anemia - a condition ice cubes do nothing to alleviate [source: MedicineNet]. Advertising Mostly appetite is safe. But when you're going to miss items that don't use food, the problems are on your feet. Eating items such as chalk, charcoal, dirt or toothpaste signals a condition called pica. While scientists suspect that this may trigger the body's lack of certain vitamin or minerals, this condition may be harmful to you and your child. Not only can these non-edible items be potentially toxic or contain parasites, they can reduce your body - and your child's - ability to absorb nutrients from the food you should eat [source: American Pregnancy Association]. Exercise can take your mind off cravings and help alleviate a number of complaints. Read on to find out how and why to stay mobile. Not only is it safe (if you can go to your doctor) to exercise during pregnancy, it's a good idea. A solid 30 minutes of exercise each day can help reduce back pain and constipation -- two common pregnancy complaints. It can also help you to sleep better and Your posture and mood, two things that tend to wane as pregnancy progresses. Working during pregnancy promotes muscle tone and strength, helps you cope with labor pain and allows you to bounce back after pregnancy [source: American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists]. Exercise, especially one that contains fresh air, may even help alleviate morning sickness [source: Cram]. Advertising Some exercises, such as walking, yoga, swimming and low-impact aerobics, are ideal even for beginners. Activities like running can be safe for the baby and the mother, but only if you were already doing them regularly before becoming pregnant, and you still may need to change the workout [source: Butler]. The key to exercising safely, regardless of your pregnancy fitness level, is known signs of over exertion. Read on to find out what to watch. When you're pregnant, life doesn't end. By the time you overcome the fatigue usually brought in during the first trimester, you may feel ready to take on the world. Plus, you also have an extra incentive: a term that arrives in just a few months. This may ask you to engage in hobbies and projects that you have so far postponed. The good news is that keeping your mind and hands busy can calm pre-parenthood nerves. You also have a sense of accomplishment as you tick things off your pre-baby to-do list. Advertising While there's nothing wrong with an extra project at work or at home, you want to find a pace that suits your pregnancy. It's important to know when you're overreacting - physically or mentally. If you feel dizzy or faint, stop and rest. It's a sign that your body needs more oxygenated blood because it can't keep up with what you're doing. Some huffing and puffing is normal when your lung room makes way for a baby's new home. The inability to catch your breath is a different story. This means that you should ease your level of activity. And if your heart rate exceeds 140 beats per minute, rest until it returns to normal [source: Mayo Clinic]. Making sure you get enough sleep can go a long way towards refueling your daily activities. On the next page, find out some tips to get some eye off. Pregnancy fatigue often takes short revenge during the second trimester and then returns (often with vengeance) during the third trimester. You need at least eight or nine hours of sleep to get enough energy to get through the day [source: Stokes]. It can help make a nap, even if it's only 20 minutes at lunchtime. Ironically, although you may miss spending the first trimester of pregnancy in bed, by the time you hit the third trimester, it becomes harder to sleep comfortably for a long time. If you ever slept in your stomach, you must now figure out how to rest in another position. Lying on the left side optimizes blood for you and your child. Try a proppatod pillow between your knees to support your ever-expanding pelvis and place one near your stomach for extra comfort [source: Silva]. Advertising If you really can't sleep at night - by extra trips to the toilet and heartburn - try to rest more often in any 24-hour period. Napping at your lunch hour, after work and during the nightly news matches. It may also relieve your mind, which may help you rest better at night too. Of course, there's a lot to be thankful for during pregnancy. Heartburn and a dozen other inconveniences most women experience, however, are not on this list. Heartburn can strike at any time during pregnancy, but it is more likely to occur when your stomach grows. An abundance of the hormone progesterone delays digestion and loosens the valve, which never kept your stomach acids creeping up into the esophagus. To battle heartburn bouts, eat small meals and stay upright for an hour after leaving the table. If heartburn bothers you at night, use pillows to sleep in the reclined position. Over-the-counter medications for heartburn are usually OK, but you should check with your doctor to be sure [source: Greenfield: heartburn]. Advertising irritating leg cramps may become more common during the second and third trimesters. There are several reasons for increased frequency, from mild dehydration to baby pressure to spinal nerves. The good news is that a little premeditated, you can help prevent these muscle cramps. Stretching your legs is a good preventive measure, but not pointing to the toes because it can trigger cramp. Exercise (even leisurely walks) should help. Massaging your feet, taking a warm bath or using a heating pad can also provide some relief [Source: Dimes March: Changes]. If you're distracted by back pain, then ditch the heels, buy a supportive mattress and keep your posture under control. Beating back pain requires a lot of minute correction throughout the day and night. Don't guess over the keyboard, and make sure you stretch your muscles now and then [source: Livermore]. Nine months may seem like a stretch forever if you're worried about meeting your child, but the delay also allows time to lighten your new role as a parent. If you are stressed - about pregnancy, birth, your working life and the inevitable responsibilities that occur in your extended family - it can affect your baby. Constant or sudden stress can cause premature work because it releases the hormone triggering contraction. Chronic stress can cause a weakened immune system for you and low birth weight for the baby [source: Before]. How much stress is too much? It's a difficult decision. Navigating career and family demands can be difficult, but for some women, leaving a term-oriented job for months of pre-child rest can be just as stressful. It's all about how you handle it, you are often anxious, confused or tearful, it is time to ask for help. In the long run, learning to manage stress during pregnancy is a good practice for parenting. Learn to prioritize, grow a support network and make a conscious effort to relax, either through antenatal massage or just a few quiet self-time. You're well on the road to a balanced life as a new mother. For more information about pregnancy, see the links on the following page. HowStuffWorks takes a look at the fascinating case of a woman who experienced ectopic breastfeeding after giving birth. American Academy of Periodontology. Gum disease and pregnancy problems. 8 February 2010, obstetrics and gynecologists. Exercise during pregnancy. February 17, 2010. Pregnancy Association. Pregnancy and Pica: Non-food appetite. 17, 2010, Stephanie. Prejudice against health. An American family doctor. 65, 12th 2507-14th Joan Marie. Fit and Pregnant: Pregnant Woman's Guide to Exercise. Vitesse Press. 2006.Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Folic acid. 14, 2010, Catherine. Fit for mannequins. 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