

Healthy Start Checklist

You've taken a pregnancy test and you're pregnant! Now what? Here are some guidelines to get your pregnancy and your baby off to a healthy start.

PRENATAL CARE AND ADOPTION:

Prenatal Care is Important:

It is important to start getting care as early as possible during pregnancy. Your doctor will be able to confirm that the pregnancy is going well, as well as monitor you for any complications that may arise during the course of your pregnancy. If you need help finding prenatal care call your Adoption STAR caseworker. If you do not have medical insurance, Adoption STAR can still help you get proper prenatal care! Also, in most cases, Adoption STAR can help you find a ride to your appointments if you are in need of one! It is important that you find a doctor who is understanding of your options and supports you in whatever option you decide, adoption or parenting. If you need us to find you a compassionate doctor, please let your caseworker know. Also, we would be happy to educate your doctor on the many positive options within adoption, just ask!

When to see your doctor:

Women are encouraged to see a doctor as soon as pregnancy is suspected and should ideally be seen within the first 12 weeks. These visits continue about once a month until the end of pregnancy, when the visits become more frequent.

When to see a caseworker:

If you are worried about the plan for your child don't wait – you can start talking about your options with an Adoption STAR caseworker as soon as you find out you are pregnant. Your caseworker can help you with securing proper prenatal care, services you may need to stay healthy, and we can even begin talking about your options including parenting or making an adoption plan. Feel free to contact Adoption STAR whenever you are ready 1-866-691-3300.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR BABY:

Nutrition:

Pregnant women should get about 300 extra calories per day. These extra calories should come from nutritious foods rather than from junk food. Folic acid, calcium and iron are all important nutrients needed during pregnancy. Although a healthy diet can provide all of the nutrients a pregnant mom and baby need, many doctors recommend taking a prenatal vitamin to ensure you're getting enough of all of the nutrients needed. An average pregnant woman can expect to gain between 25 and 35 pounds in the course of her pregnancy. If you need help obtaining healthy foods during your pregnancy, Adoption STAR can help you. Please let your caseworker know!

Exercise:

There is increasing medical evidence showing that exercise during pregnancy is beneficial. Unless you are having problems in your pregnancy, exercise can be helpful both physically as well as emotionally. Always check with your healthcare provider before starting an exercise program. Pregnant women are encouraged to participate in exercises such as walking, swimming, stationary biking, or a prenatal aerobics class.

Working and Pregnancy:

In an uncomplicated pregnancy and in most jobs, working throughout pregnancy is fine. There are some cautions however. Strenuous work, working over 40 hours a week, work that involves lifting heavy objects or standing for long periods of time as well as exposure to chemicals or radiation are not recommended for pregnant women. Within these guidelines, employment may be continued until the end of the pregnancy. Always check with your healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about your job, and follow your provider's advice if he or she recommends a change.

THINGS TO AVOID:

Medications:

Some medicines are safe to take during pregnancy, if they are really needed. But a pregnant woman should not take any medications, even over-the-counter ones without first checking with her doctor. Your doctor can help you to know if the medication is safe for use in pregnancy as well as evaluate the benefits and risks of medications to let you know if the benefits outweigh the risks.

Infections:

Infections during pregnancy can be dangerous to both the mother and the unborn baby. Infections such as urinary tract infections and sexually transmitted diseases need to be treated immediately to ensure the health of your unborn baby. Be sure to avoid cat litter and undercooked or raw foods, as these can transmit infection.

Radiation:

Radiation such as in x-rays can be harmful to the baby if exposed. Make sure that you tell your doctor that you are pregnant if an x-ray needs to be done. In most cases, steps can be taken to protect the baby from x-ray exposure.

Smoking:

Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk for miscarriage, premature birth, low birth weight and many other problems. If you smoke and are pregnant and want to quit, talk with your doctor or caseworker about effective ways to stop smoking.

Alcohol:

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy is the major cause of birth defects that could be prevented. Women are encouraged to avoid alcohol during pregnancy. Fetal alcohol syndrome is more likely to occur following exposure to continuous or heavy maternal intake of alcohol. It is important that you are honest with your caseworker about the amount of alcohol you have consumed during your pregnancy so that we can be sure to help you find the perfect adoptive family for your baby!

Illegal Drugs:

The use of illegal drugs during pregnancy should be avoided. For example, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana increase your risk of miscarriage, premature birth and birth defects. Your baby can also be born addicted to the drug you've been taking. Talk with your caseworker for recommendations if you need help quitting. If you have used drugs during your pregnancy, do not be afraid to share this information with your caseworker.

**Please do not be afraid to share any information about your pregnancy
with Adoption STAR.**

**We promise never to judge you and will be understanding of you circumstances.
You can always share anything you need to in a confidential manner with your
Adoption STAR caseworker.**



www.adoptionstar.com

1-866-691-3300