



Educational Handout

Physical Activity in Pregnancy

Why exercise?

Physical activity in pregnancy is highly encouraged for the following reasons:

- ☞ Gives you more energy
- ☞ Increases your strength so you don't tire as easily
- ☞ Helps prepare you for childbirth
- ☞ Reduces pregnancy discomforts by strengthening and stretching your muscles
- ☞ Helps you sleep better
- ☞ Helps with your mood, reduces stress and lifts your spirits
- ☞ Helps get your body back after the baby is born.
- ☞ Decreases the risk of complications like high blood pressure and diabetes.
- ☞ Helps your baby be in a good position.

Exercise Guidelines

- ☞ Make sure you stay hydrated. Drink lots of water!
- ☞ You may continue exercises that you are used to. Don't take up a new sport or exercise routine that your body is not familiar with. It is easier to fall and get hurt while pregnant.
- ☞ If you don't usually exercise regularly, start slow. 15 minutes a day, 3 times a week then increase to 30 min a day 4 times a week.
- ☞ Listen to your body. If you feel dizzy, like throwing up, have blurred vision, pain or other "weird" symptoms: STOP. Sit down, breath deep and drink some water. If symptoms persist or get worse: Page your midwife.
- ☞ It's easier to get hurt while exercising and pregnant. Remember to stretch before and especially after exercising.

Good exercises in pregnancy:

- ☞ Swimming
- ☞ Water aerobics
- ☞ Walking/Jogging/Running
- ☞ Yoga
- ☞ Aerobics/Dance
- ☞ Activities you are used too

Exercises to avoid in pregnancy:

- ☞ Contact sports (hockey, boxing, etc)
- ☞ Sports that you can easily fall or get hurt (skiing)
- ☞ Sport or exercise that you have never done

If you are unsure, ask your midwife if the activity is appropriate. Your midwife will also tell you if you should not be doing physical activities.