

Pregnancy Heart Health

A Guide to Heart Health Through Every Trimester



What to Know

Pregnancy is often considered the body's first major "stress test."

Pregnancy places extra demand on the heart and blood vessels, which can reveal underlying issues or increase risk for future heart disease. It's important for pregnant women to understand how pregnancy affects heart health and the long-term impacts that can result from pregnancy induced conditions.



Heart Healthy Habits for Your Pregnancy



Move More, Sit Less

Regular exercise (at least 30 minutes, 5 days/week) supports healthy weight gain, lowers the risk of high blood pressure and gestational diabetes, and benefits your baby's growth.



Make Healthy Eating Choices

"Eating for two" in pregnancy means eating twice as healthy, *not* twice as much. Focus on whole foods such as vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, and limit processed foods, added sugars, and foods high in salt.



Be Tobacco-Free

Quitting smoking as early as possible in pregnancy reduces risk of premature birth, placental problems, birth defects, and high blood pressure. It also reduces the risk of future heart disease for you and your baby.



Consider Breastfeeding, If Possible

Infant feeding choices vary and are personal. When possible, breastfeeding may support postpartum weight changes and lower long-term risk of heart disease and diabetes.



Prioritize Regular Prenatal Appointments

Prenatal visits track heart rate, blood pressure, blood sugar, and iron levels to identify serious complications and ensure your heart adapts well to pregnancy.

Unique Heart Disease Factors During Pregnancy

- **High Blood Pressure**
Women with high blood pressure (BP) during pregnancy are two to three times more likely to develop chronic high BP – a major risk factor for heart disease.
- **Preeclampsia**
Women with preeclampsia have an increased risk of pre-term labor. Long-term, they also experience higher risk of stroke and death from heart disease.
- **Gestational Diabetes**
Women with gestational diabetes during pregnancy are at higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart attack, and stroke.