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SPECIALIZING IN WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE NEEDS

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## CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PREGNANCY!

This letter contains important information we recommend you review early in your pregnancy. It includes a schedule of routine visits, laboratory and diagnostic tests. This is followed by frequently asked questions in pregnancy. At the end of this letter is a list of suggested books that cover pregnancy and the postpartum period.

We look forward to working with you throughout your pregnancy and providing you with excellent prenatal care. Your delivery will occur at Paoli Hospital's Family Centered Maternity Unit – the premier delivery unit in Chester County. Dr. Marlino is a solo practitioner and will be on call for your delivery 48 of the 52 weeks in the year. During the four weeks of the year Dr. Marlino will be on vacation or at conference, the obstetric patients will be covered by the all women physician group of Great Valley OB/Gyn.

## CHANGES IN PREGNANCY

Some of the physical changes that you may experience are nausea, frequent urination, breast tenderness, fatigue, bloating and constipation. You can alleviate some of these symptoms by increasing rest periods during the day, eating six small meals per day (instead of 3 large meals) and increasing your fluid and fiber intake. Your body will undergo hormonal changes which may cause mood fluctuations. Fear and ambivalence are as common as excitement and joy in the early months of pregnancy.

## PREGNANCY VISITS

During your first few visits, your doctor or nurse practitioner will complete a history and physical exam. You will be seen initially every 4 weeks until 28 weeks, then every 2 weeks until 36 weeks and then every week until delivery.

## ROUTINE TESTS IN PREGNANCY

### First Trimester

In the first trimester, usually following the initial visit, you will have a panel of blood tests performed called an OB Panel. This includes: blood type, Rh, CBC (blood count), hepatitis B, Rubella titer, Syphilis, rubella status, HIV and cystic fibrosis carrier test. You will be offered an optional test for SMA (spinal muscular atrophy).

### 10 weeks to 20 weeks

During this time, a variety of genetic tests will be offered.

These include a CVS (chorionic villus sampling) for women of advanced maternal age usually performed at 11 weeks gestation, sequential screen offered to all women usually performed between 10-13 weeks with a followup blood test at 16 weeks, and an amniocentesis for women of advanced maternal age usually performed around 16 weeks gestation. For more detailed information on any of these tests, please go to Genzyme Genetics at [www.mytestingoptions.com](http://www.mytestingoptions.com).

### 20 weeks

A level II ultrasound will be performed in the Perinatal Testing Center at Paoli Hospital. For patients with Keystone Insurance who are under 35 years of age with an uncomplicated pregnancy, your ultrasound will occur at your capitated radiology site based on your primary care physician. At this ultrasound, the fetal anatomy will be reviewed as well as growth and amniotic fluid volume. The sex of the baby can usually be determined at this gestational age.

### 26-28 weeks

A pregnancy one hour glucola will be performed to screen you for gestational diabetes. This test involves drinking a 50g glucose drink and then having blood drawn exactly one hour later to evaluate how your body metabolized the glucose. You will not need to fast for this test. We will also repeat a blood count/CBC to check for anemia.

### 35-37 weeks

GBS Test – A cotton swab of the recto-vaginal area will be taken to test for the presence of Group B Streptococcus, a common bacteria present in approximately 20-25% of women as part of their normal vaginal flora. During a long labor, this bacteria can cause severe infections in the newborn. If the culture is positive, you will be given antibiotics during labor or upon rupture of membranes until delivery.

### SHOULD I TAKE VITAMINS OR AN IRON SUPPLEMENT DURING PREGNANCY?

We recommend that you take a prenatal vitamin each day in pregnancy. Over the counter brands that contain 0.8mg of folic acid are sufficient for women with no family history of neural tube defects. There are a variety of prescription prenatal vitamins available as well. If you are anemic, you will be instructed on iron supplementation. Iron may be constipating and will turn your stool dark. A stool softener will help with the constipation. Increasing your daily intake of water and fiber will also help.

### IS EXERCISING SAFE IN PREGNANCY?

YES – you are not sick, just pregnant. As long as you are not experiencing any bleeding or have been instructed not to exercise for medical reasons, exercise is generally safe in pregnancy. Exercise to a level where you are short of breath but able to still carry on a conversation. Drink plenty of water before, during and after exercise. If you do not exercise much, a daily brisk walk (30-45 minutes) is an excellent way to stay in shape.

#### CAN I USE THE SAUNA OR HOT TUB IN PREGNANCY?

NO – we recommend you do not use hot tubs or saunas in pregnancy.

#### WHAT ABOUT EATING FISH IN PREGNANCY?

Predator fish such as shark, mackerel, tilefish and swordfish, contain higher levels of mercury and should be avoided in pregnancy. For more information on specific fish amounts that are safe in pregnancy and general food safety tips in pregnancy, go to [www.cfsan.fda.gov/pregnancy.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/pregnancy.html).

#### HOW MUCH CAFFEINE IS SAFE IN PREGNANCY?

Large doses of caffeine have been shown in some studies to increase the risk of miscarriages and low birth weight babies. To be safe, decrease your caffeine consumption to less than 150mg per day – the equivalent of 1-2 cups of coffee per day.

#### HOW ABOUT SOFT CHEESES AND DELI MEATS IN PREGNANCY?

Unpasteurized soft and semi-soft cheeses can contain a bacteria called Listeria. Several weeks after exposure, a flu-like illness can occur in the pregnant mother. The infection can spread to the fetus and cause a miscarriage or stillbirth. Deli meats that are not reheated may also contain Listeria and should not be eaten.

#### WHAT IF I LIVE WITH A CAT?

Have someone else change the litter box to avoid exposure to toxoplasmosis. Wear gloves when gardening outside since toxoplasmosis can spread from dirt.

#### HOW DO I TREAT A COLD IN PREGNANCY?

The best treatment is rest and plenty of fluids. You may take Tylenol for aches and fever. Throat lozenges and saline nasal drops are fine. If the symptoms are very bothersome, you may take Sudafed for congestion and Robitussin for cough. If your symptoms persist for more than a week, or you have a fever >101 degrees, you need to be seen by a doctor.

#### CAN I TRAVEL DURING PREGNANCY?

Yes, as long as your pregnancy is uncomplicated and you are not having any bleeding or premature labor, you can safely travel up to 36 weeks in the continental US and 34 weeks outside of the continental US with a singleton pregnancy. Make sure you drink plenty of water before, during and after the trip. Expect to see increased swelling in the feet. It is important to “stretch your legs” every hour to ensure good circulation and avoid developing a blood clot. Please discuss your travel plans with your care provider.

#### IS THE FLU SHOT SAFE IN PREGNANCY?

Yes, the flu shot is recommended by the CDC in all trimesters of pregnancy.

#### CAN I GO TO THE DENTIST IN PREGNANCY?

Yes, you should go to the dentist for routine cleaning and dental work. Avoid routine x-rays. You may have fillings placed by using a local anesthetic such as Novocaine without Epinephrine. Any questions, have your dentist call us.

#### CAN I GET MY HAIR COLORED OR HIGHLIGHTED IN PREGNANCY?

It is safe to color your hair in pregnancy, but we recommend you wait until after the first trimester (12 weeks) and that it is done in a well-ventilated area.

Suggested Reading:

Your Pregnancy and Childbirth: Month to Month 5th edition – available at [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org)

Caring For Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to age 5 5th edition – American Academy of Pediatrics

The Nursing Mother's Companion – Kathleen Huggins RN, M