



Your Nine Month Journey

Antenatal & Postnatal Health Education for mothers and fathers

**HMG-Dubai
The Maternity Team**



“Please be aware that the information provided is intended solely for general educational and informational purposes only. It is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician for any questions you may have regarding your or your baby’s medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have received in this information”

Thank you
The Maternity Team



Your nine-month journey

1. Preparing for the birth of your baby
2. Warning signs during pregnancy
3. Baby movements
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5. Constipation
6. Food in pregnancy
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Preparing for the Birth of your Baby

The **Labour and Delivery** (LDR) unit is located on the 2nd floor of Dr Sulaiman Al Habib Hospital. The unit has a total of 6 individual delivery rooms and 1 Caesarian Section operating room. All the rooms in LDR are equipped to facilitate the safe labour and delivery of your baby.

There is one designated room in the Emergency Department dedicated to obstetric care.

During your stay in LDR, you will have a dedicated team of experienced midwives and nurses assigned to you.

Husbands are encouraged to be present during the labor and delivery process

The **Neonatal Intensive Care Unit** (NICU) is also located on the 2nd floor, a short distance away from the Labour and Delivery Unit, with state of the art equipment and expert medical and nursing staff to ensure best possible care of your baby.

On the 3rd floor you find a 30 bed **Postnatal Ward** where antenatal and postnatal cases are admitted.

Dr Sulaiman Al Habib Hospital is promoting maximum contact with your newborn by encouraging rooming in, as well as having a **Nursery** for your convenience. Should your baby be in the Nursery, you can monitor your baby via a camera system connected to a screen in your room.

HMG Mission: to develop and operate state of the art medical facilities and provide innovative healthcare services to create value for people

HMG Vision: to be the most trusted healthcare provider in medical excellence and patient experience globally

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

Dr Sulaiman Al Habib Dubai Maternity Services

Maternity 24 hours
04 429 7775

Labour and Delivery Room
04 429 7718

Postnatal ward
04 429 7784

For information on our Antenatal classes and maternity tours, please call
04 429 7775

Or the OBGYN coordinator
055 712 6248



Planning Ahead

Car Seat

It is important to get a car seat before your baby is born. UAE law is stating that children under 10 should be buckled up in the back seat of the car, using a car seat. It is the policy of our hospital to encourage parents to have a car seat for your baby when you are discharged.

Make sure it is a safety-approved car seat. Getting the car seat early will allow time to install and understand how it works before the baby is born.

Before you leave the hospital with your baby, our nursing staff will show you how to position and secure your baby in the seat.

Circumcision

HMG-Dubai provides this service for all baby boys, should this be your decision.

The procedure is not always covered by insurance, so please be aware that there may be an additional cost which will be discussed with you in advance.

Our Medical Team is Board Certified and experienced. They will discuss the procedure with you and gain your consent before any procedure is carried out.

In most cases, circumcision is performed before discharge from the hospital and you will receive advice on how to care for it.

Admission to the Hospital

When your admission is planned, you will go directly to the Admission Office on the ground floor (open from 7am-7pm) for routine paperwork to be completed. (if you come for a planned admission between 7pm – 7am, proceed to the Emergency department).

Please make sure you have the necessary documents which are:

- *Passport
- *Emirates ID
- *Marriage Certificate
- *Insurance Card

BEFORE YOUR BABY IS BORN

Antenatal Education Classes

You will find our classes to be beneficial to attend. These classes are provided by our experienced midwives and cover a wide range of topics to aid you during your pregnancy, labour, delivery and after delivery.



Valet Parking

We provide valet parking free of cost to all visitors and patients. To make use of this service, please use the entrance on the ground floor, near the Emergency Department. We have free parking for visitors and patients located in the basement.



When your admission is not planned or an emergency, please go straight to the Emergency Department where you will be assessed and attended to by LDR specialists and nurses.

The majority of our staff for Maternity Services are female, however some members of our Medical Team are male. Please tell us in advance if you require females only.

Once admitted, you will receive a Username and Password for our WIFI, which is free of charge.

Always Call Before Coming

Even if you are sure it is time to come to the hospital, please call ahead so that we can prepare for your arrival. When you call, you will be asked questions regarding your pregnancy. We will help you decide what is the best thing to do next.

Contact us on 04 429 7775 or 04 429 7718

When to come to the Hospital

Contractions

Contractions are felt as a “tightening” of your abdomen. They may feel like menstrual cramps, irregular at first but as time passes the contractions will get closer together, last longer and become more painful.

You can tell you are in labour when you have contractions that fulfill the 3 points below together:

- *Regular with varying intervals (few minutes to longer)
- *Painful, meaning you are unable to tolerate them while they build up over at least 30 seconds. After they ease off, the pain will subside completely.
- *Continue for 2 hours (if first baby) and 1 hour (if second baby or more)

If you are in labour or you are not sure, contact us on 04 429 7775 or 04 429 7718

Rupture of membranes or commonly called “waters breaking”

They may rupture at any time. An uncontrollable gush of fluid along your thighs is a definite sign that the sac has broken. Sometimes instead of a gush you might notice a trickle of fluid or feel you have wet yourself while sleeping. In this case, empty your bladder and walk for 5 minutes with a dry pad on your underwear. If the pad gets wet, you may have rupture of membranes. If you are not sure or your membranes have ruptured, contact us on 04 429 7775 or 04 429 7718





Bloody Show

This is a sign that labor is approaching.

It means that the mucous plug in the cervix has loosened and has been expelled. It is usually pink to red and jelly-like (mucus-like)

No need to contact us except if you are bleeding like menses or more with or without abdominal pain. In this case, contact us on 04 429 7775 or 04 429 7718

Baby movements

If your baby is not moving normally or you are not sure, contact us on 04 429 7775 or 04 429 7718

What to Bring

It is best to leave jewelry and valuables at home.

Make sure you bring with you:

- *If booked with one of our community based doctors, a copy of the antenatal blood tests done.
- *Insurance card
- *Snacks and drinks for your support person
- *Your own toiletries
- *Own clothes to wear after delivery, if desired (we provide gowns)
- *Clothes for you and baby to wear home
- *Car seat

We provide the following:

- *Slippers for you
- *Small amount of toiletries
- *Maternity pads
- *Disposable underwear
- *Under pads
- *Nappies
- *Baby products
- *Baby clothes (although you are welcome to bring your own)





WARNING SIGNS DURING PREGNANCY

If you experience one of the following symptoms, please contact your doctor / phone the labor ward and go to the Emergency Department directly.

Come to the Emergency department when you experience:

- Bleeding or spotting from your vagina.
- A gush or leak of water from your vagina
- A decrease in your baby's normal movements and activity.
- sudden swelling of your face, hands, or feet.
- continued bad headache that won't go away after resting and/or taking paracetamol
- Blurred vision or spots before your eyes.

The below listed symptoms can be warning signs:

- Uterine cramping or tightening 6 or more times per hour if you are less than 37 weeks pregnant.
- Sharp, non-stop pain in your belly.
- Fever over 38°C.
- Nausea or vomiting that won't go away.
- Pain and/or burning when you urinating

Vague signs of preterm labor are:

- menstrual-like cramping.
- a dull, low backache.
- pelvic pressure or heaviness.
- intestinal cramping, with or without diarrhea.
- an increase or change in the character of vaginal discharge.
- a general feeling that "something is not right."

If you came in contact with someone who has measles, German measles, chicken pox, or other illnesses you are concerned about, if you have never been vaccinated or had these illnesses, contact your doctor and come to the emergency department

NOTE

**Labor ward HMG-Dubai
044297775**

**Dubai Ambulance in case of
emergency: 999**





BABY MOVEMENT IN PREGNANCY

What are normal movements for an unborn baby in pregnancy?

Most women are first aware of their baby moving when they are 18–20 weeks pregnant. However, if this is your first pregnancy, you may not become aware of movements until you are more than 20 weeks pregnant. If you have been pregnant before, you may feel movements as early as 16 weeks. Pregnant women feel their unborn baby's movements as a kick, flutter, swish or roll.

During both day and night, your baby has sleep periods that mostly last between 20 and 40 minutes, and are rarely longer than 90 minutes. Your baby will usually not move during these sleep periods. The number of movements tends to increase until 32 weeks of pregnancy and then stay about the same, although the type of movement may change as you get nearer to your due date. Often, if you are busy, you may not notice all of these movements.

Importantly, you should continue to feel your baby move right up to the time you go into labour and during labour.

How many movements are enough?

There is no specific number of movements which is normal. During your pregnancy, you need to be aware of *your* baby's individual pattern of movements. A reduction or a change in *your* baby's movements is what is important.

What factors can affect me feeling my baby move?

You are less likely to be aware of your baby's movements when you are active or busy.

If your placenta (afterbirth) is at the front of your uterus (womb)

If your baby's back is lying at the front of your uterus, you may feel fewer movements than if his or her back is lying alongside your own back.

Should I use a chart to count my baby's movements?

There is not enough evidence to recommend the routine use of a movement chart. It is more important for you to be aware of your baby's individual pattern of movements throughout your pregnancy and you should seek immediate help if you feel that the movements are reduced.

What should I do if I feel my baby's movements are reduced or changed?

Always seek professional help immediately. Never go to sleep ignoring a reduction in your baby's movements.

IMPORTANT

If you are unsure whether or not your baby's movements are reduced, you should lie down on your left side and focus on your baby's movements for the next 2 hours. If you do not feel ten or more separate movements during these 2 hours, you should take action.

Certain drugs such as strong pain relief or sedatives can get into an unborn baby's circulation and can make your baby move less. Alcohol and smoking may also affect your baby's movements.

In some cases, a baby may move less because he or she is unwell. Rarely, a baby may have a condition affecting the muscles or nerves that causes him or her to move very little or not at all.



Less than 24 weeks pregnant Most women first become aware of their baby moving when they are 18–20 weeks pregnant. If by 24 weeks you have never felt your baby move, you should contact your doctor or go to the hospital.

Your baby's heart rate will be monitored, usually for at least 30 minutes - 1hour. This should give you reassurance about your baby's wellbeing. You should be able to see your baby's heart rate increase as he or she moves. You will usually be able to go home once you are reassured.

An ultrasound scan to check on the growth of your baby, as well as the amount of amniotic fluid around your baby may be arranged.

These investigations usually provide reassurance that all is well. Most women who experience one episode of reduction in their baby's movements have a straightforward pregnancy and go on to deliver a healthy baby.

If there are any concerns about your baby, your doctor will discuss this with you. Follow-up scans may be arranged. In some circumstances, you may be advised that it would be safer for your baby to be born as soon as possible. This would depend on your individual situation and how far you are in your pregnancy.

What should I do if I find my baby's movements are reduced again?

When you go home you will be advised to keep an eye on your baby's movements and, should your baby have another episode of reduced movements, you must again contact your doctor or hospital immediately. Never hesitate to contact your doctor or hospital for advice, no matter how many times this happens.



Heartburn During Pregnancy

Heartburn is a burning feeling in your chest after eating. It is common in the last months of pregnancy.

Heartburn is caused by acid reflux into the esophagus. Pregnancy can cause increased pressure within the abdominal cavity and this can lead to heartburn.

These are some things you can do, to decrease the chance to get heart burn:

The Do's

- *Eat 5 to 6 small meals a day.
- *Cut down on coffee and carbonated drinks (fizzy pop)
- *Sip on water, milk, or carbonated water, or eat a tablespoon of yogurt.
- *Wear clothing that is loose around your waist.
- *Sleep with your head elevated.

The don'ts

- *Do not eat greasy, fried, or spicy foods and caffeine.
- *Do not lie down after eating.
- *Do not take baking soda.
- *Do not smoke.

IMPORTANT

Use only medication advised or prescribed by your doctor.





CONSTIPATION

Constipation is when your bowels move less often and your stools are more firm. This can cause discomfort until your bowels get back to your regular schedule.

Causes of Constipation

- *A change in your regular eating habits.
- *If you are prescribed narcotic pain medicines, they may slow the process of digesting food.
- *A decrease in your daily activity also slows food digestion.

Increase the amount of liquids that you drink to keep your stools soft. Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water per day in addition to other liquids you would drink with your meals.

Signs that you are not drinking enough are:

- The amount that you urinate is less than normal.
- Your urine is dark colored.
- You feel dizzy when you stand up.

Eat a diet high in fiber. The best source of fiber is breakfast cereal with a fiber content of 5 grams or greater, such as All-Bran. Fiber content is listed with the nutrition information often found on the side of the cereal box. Other foods high in fiber include dry and unsalted peanuts, whole wheat bread, parsnips, white or red grapefruit, cantaloupe, cooked carrots, prunes, frozen peas, baked beans, kidney beans, and split peas.

Try to have meals at the same time each day. It helps to eat breakfast at the same time every day. This helps get your bowels back on a regular schedule.

If you are allowed to drink coffee, have some at breakfast. Decaf coffee will work, too. Coffee stimulates your bowels.

Drink prune juice or warm prune juice at breakfast.

Take the stool softener medicine that was prescribed

Exercise/walking after breakfast will increase the movement of food through your intestines.

Most people feel the urge to have a bowel movement about 20 minutes after a meal. If you feel the urge, try and go. Do not just sit on the toilet and read a book. Sitting on the toilet for a long time can cause painful swelling or hemorrhoids. Wait until you feel the urge to have a bowel movement, and then go and sit on the toilet.

TIPS

Increase the amount of liquids

Eat a high fiber diet

Try to have meals at the same time each day

If you are allowed to drink coffee, have some at breakfast

Drink prune juice

Exercise/walking after breakfast



Call Your Doctor If:

- You had a Cesarean birth and trying these tips for 3 days has not helped you to have a bowel movement.
- You are sick to your stomach and throwing up.
- You feel dizzy or lightheaded when you stand up.



NUTRITION IN PREGNANCY

Weight Gain and Nutrition

A weight gain of 11-16 kg by the end of pregnancy is best for producing a healthy baby.

Eat the proper foods during your entire pregnancy, including all 5 food groups and take your prenatal vitamins.

The five food groups are:

Grains - bread, pasta, oatmeal, cereal, tortillas

Fruits - fresh, canned, frozen or dried (100% fruit juice counts)

Vegetables - raw, cooked, frozen, canned, dried (100% vegetable juice)

Protein - meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs processed soy products, nuts and seeds.

Dairy - milk and products made of milk (cheese, yogurt, ice cream)

Your protein needs *increase* during pregnancy. Protein foods include meat, fish, poultry, eggs, tofu, peanut butter, cheese, and yogurt. Meat should be thoroughly cooked

These nutrients are of special importance in pregnancy:

Calcium for strong bones – found in milk, cheese, yogurt, broccoli, kale, cabbage, seafood, tofu, sesame seeds, blackstrap molasses, white beans, almonds, and brazil nuts. If you cannot tolerate milk products (due to nausea or feeling sick), try other sources such as enriched soy or rice milk. You may need a calcium supplement. Discuss this with your doctor.

Iron for healthy blood – found in red meats, spinach, enriched breads and cereals (such as Cream of Wheat), beans, dried fruit, and peanut butter.

Folic acid for blood and new cells – found in dark green vegetables, liver, yeast, nuts, legumes, and whole grains.

IMPORTANT

The five Food Groups:

Eat them all during your pregnancy, your baby needs them!

It is important to drink plenty of water during your pregnancy. Drink 8 to 12 glasses of water daily.

Iron and calcium “compete” for absorption. Therefore, it is best to eat these foods or take these supplements separately for best absorption (about 1½ hours apart).

Have a vitamin C source, such as juice or fruit, along with your iron to improve absorption.



Listeriosis

Listeriosis is an infection that results from eating contaminated foods. Pregnant women are about 20 times more likely than other adults to get listeriosis. Listeriosis can be transmitted to the fetus through the placenta even if the mother is not showing signs of illness.

Because the symptoms of listeriosis can take days or weeks to show, may be mild or even absent, it is very important to take appropriate food safety precautions during pregnancy:

Do not eat hot dogs, luncheon meats, or deli meats unless reheated until steaming hot.

Do not eat soft cheeses such as feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined cheeses, and Mexican-style cheeses.

Do not eat refrigerated smoked seafood **unless** it is an ingredient in a **cooked** dish such as a casserole.

Do not eat pate and meat spreads

Avoid salad bars, deli counters, buffets, and sidewalk Vendors.

Bio toxins in Shellfish

Before eating fish, shellfish, or crab, check to make sure the waters it came from are safe. Eating contaminated shellfish can cause serious illness or death.

IMPORTANT

Mercury and Chemicals in Fish

Most fresh or canned fish can be eaten 1-2 times a week. Fish that should be avoided by pregnant women & nursing mothers:

- Mackerel (King)
- Marlin
- Shark
- Swordfish
- Tilefish
- Tuna steak





COMMON PREGNANCY PROBLEMS

Feeling Tired

Why: Changing hormones, increased metabolism, and possibly anemia can make you feel tired.

This might help:

- *Get more sleep than usual.
- *Listen to your body and take naps.

Breast Discomfort

Why: The milk glands are developing and expanding.

This might help:

- *Wear a larger, more supportive bra, or a nursing bra.
- *Use cold compresses (for example, a washcloth dipped in cold water) on your breasts as needed.

Urinating Often

Why: The expanding uterus puts pressure on your bladder, and your kidneys are working more efficiently. This symptom occurs most often in the first and third trimesters.

This might help:

- *Avoid liquids close to bedtime.
- *Accept that you will be getting up at least once a night to urinate.

Headaches and Vision Changes

Why: These are caused by nasal congestion, fatigue, eyestrain, anxiety, and tension. Check with your doctor before taking any medicines. Vision changes are often related to increased water retention and are temporary. However, because they may be an early symptom of pregnancy induced high blood pressure, tell your health care provider if you have vision changes.

This might help:

- *Drink more water and eat something. Headaches, nose and head stuffiness, and nausea often are better with water, juice, and a snack.
- *Relax and rest.
- *Use a hot, moist towel over your eyes and forehead.

CONTENT

As your body is changing during pregnancy, problems can occur. You may have none, only a few, or you may have many of them. We hope these tips help make you feel more comfortable.





Nausea and Vomiting

Why: These are caused by changing hormones.

This might help:

- *Eat small, frequent meals (about every 2 hours) so your stomach is never empty.
- *Eat a few crackers (or any other food you can tolerate) before getting out of bed in the morning, and even during the night, if you wake up.
- *Eat a protein snack such as cheese, eggs, meat, fish, nuts, or peanut butter at bedtime.
- *Eat crystallized ginger or drink ginger tea, which may help to settle your stomach.

If you have diabetes, consult with your provider on how to manage nausea and vomiting

Heartburn

Why: Caused by hormonal and physical changes.

This might help:

- *Avoid foods that cause stomach distress and a burning sensation. Some of these may be carbonated beverages, caffeine, chocolate, high-acid foods like citrus fruits and juices, tomatoes, mustard, vinegar, and spicy, highly seasoned, fried, and fatty foods.
- *Don't eat big meals. Eat several small meals throughout the day.
- *Drink liquids between meals, instead of "washing down" food at mealtime.
- *Don't eat close to your bedtime. Give yourself 2 to 3 hours to digest before lying down.
- *Sleep propped up with pillows or a wedge.
- *Try an over-the-counter antacid as approved by your doctor

Back Pain

Why: Usually caused by strain on the back muscles, weakness of the abdominal muscles can also cause back pain. Pregnancy hormones can contribute to back pain.

Preventing back pain:

Be aware of how you stand, sit or move:

- *Wear low-heeled shoes with good arch support
- *Ask for help when lifting heavy objects
- *Place one foot on a stool or box when you are standing for a long period
- *Do not bend over from the waist to pick things up - squat down, bend your knees and keep your back straight
- *Use chairs with good back support, or place a small pillow in the lower part of your back
- *Try to sleep on your side with pillows between your legs for support.

This might help:

Heat or cold applied to the area, Massage, Back exercises.

Stay active during pregnancy, water exercise and walking is safe during pregnancy.

If the back pain becomes severe, or persists for 2 weeks, contact your doctor

GOOD TO KNOW

When Riding in the Car

Always wear your seat belt – both the lap belt, low on your abdomen, and the shoulder harness.

On long car trips, try to stop every hour and take a short walk to enhance circulation.

Dental Health

Make sure your dentist and hygienist (as well as other health care providers) know you are pregnant.

Visit your dentist early in your pregnancy. Gum tenderness and swelling are common in pregnancy due to increased blood volume and circulation. Mothers with chronic gum disease may be at risk for preterm or low birthweight infants.



OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Exercise

The benefits of being active and exercising at least 30 minutes most days of the week includes:

- Helps reduce backaches, constipation, bloating and swelling
- May prevent or treat gestational diabetes
- Increase energy
- Improves your posture
- Promotes muscle tone, strength and endurance
- Helps you sleep better

Swimming and walking are always good choices in a normal, healthy pregnancy.

Don't exercise to the point of being out of breath. You should be able to have a conversation while exercising.

Cycling provides a good aerobic workout.

Wear comfortable clothing and wear a bra that fits well and gives lots of support to protect your breasts.

Drink plenty of water - will keep you from overheating and dehydrating. Make sure you consume the daily calories you need during pregnancy.

You may want to do Kegel exercises, which strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. After starting to urinate, stop the flow by contracting those muscles hard. Hold as long as you can, then release, and tighten again for as long as you can. After you have learned which muscles to tighten and release, try to do Kegel exercises several times a day.

Warning signs to stop exercise:

- Vaginal bleeding
- Dizziness or feeling faint
- Chest pain
- Headache
- Muscle weakness
- Calf pain or swelling
- Uterine contractions
- Decreased fetal movements
- Fluid leaking from the vagina

BE CAREFUL

Avoid:

- *Activities with a high risk of falling
- *Contact sports
- *Scuba diving
- *Downhill snow skiing

General guidelines when exercising:

- *Avoid doing exercises on your back after your first trimester
- *Avoid exercise when you have a fever, or in hot humid weather



Douching:

- Avoid douching at all times, as it can change the pH (acid/alkaline) balance of the vagina, making you more prone to vaginal infections.



Sexuality

You may notice increased or decreased desire for sexual activity during pregnancy. Some women become less interested in sex during the third trimester. Intercourse throughout pregnancy is safe. If your pregnancy is high-risk, talk with your health care provider about precautions related to sexual relations. It is OK to have an orgasm during pregnancy, as long as your pregnancy is not high-risk. An orgasm may feel like a contraction.

Alcohol

When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, it reaches the fetus quickly through the placenta. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders describe the different effects that can occur when a woman drinks during pregnancy, and includes physical, mental, behavioral and learning disabilities. Fetal alcohol syndrome is the most severe alcohol spectrum disorder and can cause growth problems, mental and behavioral problems and abnormal facial features.

Cigarettes

Smoking during pregnancy exposes your baby to harmful chemicals (tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide) Nicotine in cigarettes constricts your blood vessels, including those in the placenta. This decreases the oxygen, fluid, and nutrients passed by the placenta to your unborn baby. Carbon monoxide decreases the amount of oxygen the baby receives. There is more risk for problems related to the placental attachment to the uterus.

Babies whose mothers smoked during pregnancy are smaller, and are more likely to be premature and to have birth defects and learning disabilities after the birth than babies whose mothers stopped smoking during pregnancy. These babies are also more likely to have asthma, colic and childhood obesity.

Babies and children who are exposed to cigarette smoke are more likely to have asthma and respiratory infections.

Medication and drugs

The early stage of pregnancy is when the main body parts of the fetus form, and drug use/medication used during this time can cause birth defects.

Illegal drugs pass through the placenta to the baby and cause many problems, such as smaller babies, sicker babies, and premature birth, as well as other problems after birth, addicted babies. Talk to your doctor if you need help to stop using these drugs.

Hot Tubs

· Avoid water above 38°C (hot tub, sauna, etc.) throughout pregnancy, especially in the first three months. Hot tubs or saunas could increase your body temperature and cause problems with cell division, increasing the risk of birth defects or miscarriage.

DON'TS

Alcohol

There is no safe level of alcohol to use during pregnancy

Cigarettes

Stop smoking during pregnancy. Ask your doctor for help.

Babies whose mother smoked during pregnancy have an increased risk for **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome**. Smoking Sisha is as bad as smoking cigarettes.

Medication

Discuss all over-the-counter drugs and prescribed drugs with your doctor before you take them. All over-the-counter drugs may have dangerous side effects to you and your developing baby.



Toxoplasmosis

Toxoplasmosis is caused by a microscopic organism found in cat feces. It causes a flu-like illness that affects a pregnant woman only mildly, but can seriously affect a fetus. If you have cats, have someone else clean the cat litter box while you are pregnant.

Wear gloves when you garden. Wash your hands with warm water and soap after gardening. Toxoplasmosis may also be caused by eating raw or undercooked meats (especially pork, lamb, or venison) or unwashed root vegetables such as carrots. Be sure to cook meat thoroughly and wash or peel root vegetables.

Contact with Rodents

Rodents (rats, mice, squirrels, chipmunks) carry a virus called LCMV (Lymphocytic Choriomeningitis Virus) that can be very harmful to your unborn baby. Pregnant women should avoid contact with rodents, including pets such as hamsters and guinea pigs, and rodent droppings whenever possible.

IMPORTANT

Follow these instructions to reduce the risk of LCMV infection:

- If you suspect there are mice in your home, call a professional pest control company or have another member of the household remove them.

Avoid vacuuming or sweeping rodent urine, droppings, or nesting materials.

- Keep the pet rodent in a separate part of the home and have another family member or friend care for the pet and clean its cage.