

Pregnancy



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PLANNING A BABY SHOWER

Baby showers are a lot of fun, especially for pregnant mom-to-be. Not only is this something for the baby, but now she doesn't have to go out and buy. Before you throw a baby shower for someone there are a few things you should do to prepare. The first thing is figure out if this will be a surprise shower or not. There are benefits to both, the first one being if she knows she can help you with a list of people that she would like to be there. However, if it is a surprise she'll be touched that you cared enough to throw her a baby shower, but be careful you don't want to give her too much of surprise and put her in labor.

Making the Guest List

When it comes to making the guest list things can get a little tricky. Find out if there is anyone that would be upset if they weren't invited. Never leave out close family or friends, at least give them the option of showing up.

Games

Planning games for a shower can be a bit difficult when you have so many fun games and have a few gifts to pass out as prizes. Baby shower games are a lot of fun, here is a quick list.

Mommy's belly- The mom-to-be stand in the center of the room and each guests get to decide how big her belly is using a string or a toilet paper sheets. Find out who guessed the closest.

Guess the nursery rhyme- Give each guest a sheet of nursery rhymes and have them guess the nursery rhyme or finish it. This will help everyone remember them and see who reads those bedtime stories.

Did you say Baby Game?- Each guest is giving small clothespins to wear around their neck on a necklace or on their shirt. Every time someone says "Baby" if someone catches them they get to take one pin. At the end of the party the guest with the most pins wins a prize.

Memory- Using a plastic tin of some sort place a bunch of baby items in it such as, bib, thermometer, baby spoon, diaper rash crème, etc. Anything you'd use on a baby. Let each guest get a chance to look in the bin for a few seconds and take it away. Once everyone is finished have them write down everything that was in the box. The person with the most correct answers wins.

Baby Food Tasting - Have a variety of baby food in jars, take off the outside wrapper and place a number at the bottom of the jar, on a separate piece of paper write the name of each jar. Each guest is dished out a spoonful of baby food to try. Have them write down what they think each one is. The one with the most correct answers wins a prize.

Have a great baby shower and don't forget to bring a gift.

BELLY HANDS

All Hands on Baby

Everyone wants to touch the baby, especially during the pregnancy but no one every asks. If you haven't noticed yet, the minute you start to show a tummy everyone else will gladly show you. The tummy becomes this magnet for hands and everyone wants to handle it. It doesn't matter if you are walking around in a store, sitting down in a restaurant or walking on your own street, someone is bound to start rubbing all over it.

You aren't the only one that is being driven nuts by this either, take a look at your husband. Sure he seems like a trooper but deep inside he's probably ready to put someone's lights out. Talk with your husband and see how he feels. Even if you don't mind, he might not like other men's hands on you. He may not care if it is a female touching your body but he can mind about a man. Think about how you would feel if you saw some woman rubbing her hands all over your husband's chest. Maybe the two of you can come to an agreement, after all do you have to let everyone touch the baby?

Your belly, clothed or not is a personal space, sure there is someone intruding inside you but that person is welcome. But to actually touch someone else's belly one should ask before they do it and respect your answer. If you don't want them to touch it, tell them. While some women don't mind all the attention, there

are other women that don't want their belly's touched, let alone them to be showing for the whole world to see. Maybe they've gained 10 pounds and feel conscious enough about it, or they could be a very private person.

Children may also want to touch the belly, normally it is because they know someone that has had a baby and they were able to do it. If you don't like it, let them know. If you don't mind, you may want to place their hand on your belly. Children tend to get excited and actually smack the belly when they are trying to reach for it.

Forget about the rubbing the belly for a moment, be careful that you don't get the person that likes to poke at it. That hurts more than anything and half the time they don't get it. Try explaining to them as nicely as you can that it hurts. They may only be doing it because they want to see the baby move and when you jump they just think it is part of the pregnancy reaction. They may think twice before doing it again to you or anyone else.

If nothing else seems to work and you've been polite in letting people know that your belly is off limits, feel free to sick your husband on them or start swatting. You've already given fair warning. Don't feel bad if you smack a person that lifts up your shirt in broad daylight either. This is a normal reaction and people should really think twice before doing it. They wouldn't do it if you weren't pregnant.

BREAST FEED

Breastfeeding While Pregnant

Being pregnant doesn't mean you have to stop breastfeeding your child. Long ago doctors believed it actually took nutrients away from the baby inside you, however that is not the case. Even today we have people that believe this and they will argue with you the entire time. Only you can decide if you should stop breastfeeding your toddler or not. Don't let someone else make that decision for you.

Reasons to Stop

A few reasons you might want to stop breastfeeding may be if you are feeling constantly drained of energy. Or maybe your child has started to bite. Sometimes your milk will just dry up, this is your body's way of telling you that it has had enough and to take a break. Mastitis could play a big role in making you stop immediately as well. Mastitis is an infection in the breast when it isn't expressed enough and gets engorged.

Stopping or Weaning

If you do plan on stopping because you are pregnant, make sure it is for the right reasons. If your child has reached a certain age, it might be best. But never just yank it away from them. Your child could wonder why it is being taken away. Wonder if they had

done something or become discouraged about the new baby coming. Some children decide to wean themselves, which is a big help to you and you won't feel so guilty about it. You can choose to do it cold turkey, or slowly wean him/her off. Cold turkey can have some bad results. Try limiting his/her feeding times to certain hours and gradually as time passes take away more. Your child will quickly stop on his/her own and it won't be a traumatic event.

Continuing to Feed

If you do plan on continuing to breastfeed while you are pregnant, talk with your doctor about it. Not all the time will the doctor agree with your decision. Sometimes he/she may see something in your health that you don't. Listen carefully and find out if it is a health reason or simply his/her own belief. If it is the doctors belief, you can always seek out one that agrees with you. Being pregnant is hard enough at times, knowing you have someone in your corner will only relieve the stress. Don't be surprised if your family and friends want to say something about it and they will probably give you all kind of advice on how to stop and what they've read. Nicely explain to them it is your decision and you'll do what you think is best for your children. Try finding a support group in your area so you have someone to vent to or talk about these issues. Check out if there is a La Leche League near you or online that you can join.

Remember that as long as you take proper care of yourself and your body, you'll be able to safely breastfeed while pregnant.

EAT RIGHT

Eating Right During Your Pregnancy

You already know it is important to eat a well-balanced diet, but it is even more important when you are pregnant. Keep in mind now you are eating for two. Whatever you eat, the baby eats as well.

In fact the baby actually takes your nourishments so you must eat enough for both of you. The healthier you eat the better it is for the pregnancy and you.

Never miss a meal while you are pregnant, especially breakfast. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day and your baby has probably been waiting since he/she woke up in the middle of the night. You may learn that if you wait so long before eating you start to feel sick, this is your body telling you to eat. Do it!

Make sure you are getting enough of the food you need daily. It takes 4-6 servings of dairy a day for a healthy pregnancy, this can include some cheeses, milk, yogurt. This provides the baby with calcium which it'll need to develop healthy growing bones. Adding extra calcium to your diet wouldn't hurt you either, especially your teeth and bones.

Don't forget about your fruit and vegetable servings. Lots of green is always a good choice, so are sweet potatoes. Not only will you be giving your body what

it needs but you'll start to have more energy. Try laying off the sweets for a week and replace them with healthier items and see how alive you feel.

Foods to Avoid

Not all foods are safe during your pregnancy, there are a few things you should avoid eating:

- unpasteurized products- brie
- Certain fish- exotic, shark, swordfish, anything high in mercury
- Raw eggs
- Undercooked meats- lunch meats. If you are buying a deli sandwich you can ask for them to eat the meat up a little.
- Caffeine- soda, chocolate. If you find this difficult you can wean yourself off, but the less caffeine in your system the better it is for the baby.

If you are ever unsure of the foods you can eat you can ask your doctor for a list of items to avoid during pregnancy. They'll be more than happy to share this with you.

You may also learn that your stomach won't handle certain foods that it would before. Some of those foods may include foods that contain grease, fast foods, meat, and certain foods that have a strong odor.

WAYS TO ANNOUNCE PREGNANCY

Eating healthy doesn't mean you have to cut out all the fun in your life, you can still treat yourself from time to time. Go out and get a frozen yogurt or a smoothie.

While you are making sure you get enough to eat throughout the day, that doesn't mean neglect your fluid intake. You'll need lots of water and juices from here on out. The baby will thank you later. Who knows, you may discover that you really enjoy eating healthier and continue it even after the pregnancy.

Fun Ways to Announce Your Pregnancy

Whether you just found out you're pregnant or you've known for a few months, announcing your pregnancy to family and friends can be a lot of fun. Some may want to wait until a certain time during their pregnancy, while others want to call everyone immediately after finding out themselves.

Telling The Father

Have a romantic dinner for two with candle lights, it may be your last time for a while, between morning sickness and raising your little one. Serve up baby carrots, baby back ribs and anything else you can think as baby. At the end, pour apple juice instead of wine and hand him a present. Inside you can have a tiny baby bib that says, "I heart My Daddy" or a pair of baby booties.

If you can't tell the father right away because he's away on business, or deployed try sending him a care package. Inside the box place a few baby items, everything in blue and pink and a baby naming book in the center. Place a note on top of the book with, "I need a name soon, I'll be here by June." Or whenever the baby is due.

You can also see how long it takes him to figure it out. Go to the dollar store and pick up a bunch of small baby items, a bib, rattle, bottle, booties, etc. For a week, leave an item laying around the house where he is bound to find them. At the end of the week if he hasn't figured it out yet, prepare the big gift. Have a large teddy bear sitting at the dinner table in the seat beside him, make sure there is a bib wrapped around him and maybe a sign that says Hi Daddy.

Telling Family and Friends

Show up to a family gathering wearing a shirt that announces your state. These days there are a ton of shirts out there with clever sayings, "Baby on Board," "A Bun in the Oven," or something related

GUIDE TO PREGNANCY

to the pregnancy. The moment you walk in or take off your jacket everyone will figure it out without you ever having to say a word. Now, get ready for the tears and excitement. You'll be answering a ton of questions.

If you already have children you may want to call the grandparents up and tell them that the next Christmas they may want to add one more to the list.

If this is the first grandchild, you may want to get a bracelet link for your mom that reads, "#1 Grandma" or grandparent t-shirts. This will not only be a great present for them but something they will cherish and love forever.

No matter when you spread the news it can be a lot of fun, just think creative and let the pieces fall. You may even want to try catching all of it on video, so think ahead and prepare for the BIG moment, and I'm not meaning the birth.

A Guide To Your Pregnancy

The first step of your pregnancy, after seeing the little positive stick should to have it confirmed. Call immediately to have a pregnancy test done with your local doctor, you may be in luck and get in that same day

or have to wait about a week or two. Patience will become your best friend during this time or your worst enemy, waiting can become a very hard thing when you want to know for sure whether you are or aren't pregnant. More than likely you'll get a phone call a few days later to confirm it.

Set up an appointment to see your OB/GYN or midwife as soon as possible, chances are you'll be meeting his/her staff before you ever meet them. This is the first appointment where your doctor/midwife will want to know all your medical history. If you've been pregnant, what types of sicknesses run in your family, etc. If you can, try making sure you know all of this ahead of time, maybe even have it all down on paper so when he/she asks you are prepared. During the days or weeks leading up to this meeting you may have concerns, write them down and ask them. Believe it or not doctors are there to help you, and they've been asked every question you can possibly think of. Before leaving your doctor may even give you a bag full of goodies all about being pregnant. Read these, they may prove beneficial and not to mention they've got coupons. Your doctor will either give you another appointment or have you set one up before leaving. There are some great books out there if you are really worried about what will happen next or how birth is going to be, check them out at your local library.

Make sure that you get your prenatal vitamins, they are very important during pregnancy. If for some reason you can't take them, talk with your doctor he/she may be able to prescribe a lower dosage or

HALLOWEEN COSTUMES

something else. You'll get your first ultrasound, also known as US around week 20, this is normally when you find out what sex the baby is. However some doctors like to call it safe and give you an ultrasound around 10-12 weeks just to make sure the baby is in the proper location and all is going well. You will also be asked to take an orange drink that you must drink in five minutes. You'll wait around for an hour to three hours, at which point your blood gets drawn and you can go home. The test determines if you have or have a chance of getting gestational diabetes.

At first your appointments will be about 4 weeks apart until you hit the 36 week and at that point it'll be two weeks later and a week later after that until the baby is born. By now you should be preparing to have the baby. Yes, I'm sure you'll have some anxiety towards the end of your pregnancy. You've went this far, it's time you see your reward.

Halloween Pregnancy Ideas

The minute you begin your pregnancy everything is changing, your body, your clothes sizes, even your looks. But that doesn't mean you have to skip out on your favorite holidays, like Halloween. Being pregnant doesn't mean you can't dress up. Whether

you are buying your costume or making them yourself, you can have fun. There are many costumes you can buy for couples or just for yourself. The Pregnancy couple may want to go as a baker and an oven, or an egg and bacon bit. Both outfits are really cute and creative, you can even make them at home if you chose too.

If you want to get really creative you can make your own costumes, here are a few costumes that you can make just using your belly and normal clothes are:

The eyeball- This is something my husband created, all you need is a little facial paint and black clothes. This is something even a person that can't draw can have a little bit of fun with. Wear all black clothes on Halloween and paint your belly white, make the center of the eye whatever color you desire and don't forget the red veins. Make it scary or cute, whatever fits your desire. Have a bit of fun and show off that tummy by keeping the shirt up or wear a shirt that shows your tummy. My husband got a kick out of this one and was so excited that he got to do the artwork.

If you want to dress up completely but not stand out, try going as a human pumpkin. Wear a tiny green cap or make one out of felt and all orange, if you can cut a slit in your shirt for your belly to stick out. Now, paint it orange and decorate your pumpkin.

A pea is another simple costume you can make and stay warm. Go find some green jeans or sweats and a green sweatshirt. Keep the shirt up or cut a hole in it to make your little pod stick out and paint it all green.

HOLIDAY PREGNANCY

If you aren't feeling up to having a full body costume, you could always just paint the belly and proudly show it off. After all, how often will you be pregnant? Think of anything that is round: basketball, volleyball, soccer ball, a bowling ball, etc

Don't forget witches were mothers too, so if you've always dressed as a witch for Halloween you don't have to stop the tradition. This year go as a pregnant witch or maybe a witch holding a pumpkin. Use that belly!

A Bun in the oven- Get a medium or small box, cut it out so that you can wear it over your shoulders. Make room for your head to slide through. Decorate it with paints like an oven. Cut open the front of the box so that it will open and close. On the outside of the box write, "Bun in the Oven." Paint your belly a light beige for all to see the little baby bun.

Stress Free Holidays During Your Pregnancy

Holidays can already be a stressful time, and mix that with pregnancy and hormones and you can be asking for trouble. I'm not meaning for just the pregnant woman either, anyone and everyone in her path. Women already feel the pressure of having that perfect holiday for her family, which is probably why she decides to do 100 things at a time...stressing herself out in the end. However, she doesn't have to have a stressful holiday. There are five ways to make your holidays something to remember.

Mark the Dates

Go out and buy yourself a calendar for the holidays. Post it up on the wall and start marking dates. You won't need to stress out because you won't be double booking yourself. This can also help you in preplanning, mark the day you should send out the holiday cards or buy certain items.

Choosing Your Activities

During the holiday season you are sure to be invited to a couple of parties. It isn't necessary to attend

MORNING SICKNESS

every one of them. Decide which ones you'll enjoy the most, maybe two or three and explain to the rest you'll miss going but need some rest.

Choose Where You'll Go

Whether you want to stay home for the holidays with your own family or go across country to be with the entire family the decision should be yours. Don't feel guilty telling them you won't be making it this year, explain you need rest and traveling isn't very helpful. You may even want to extend an invitation for the family to come to your house instead.

Designating Jobs

If you've decided to have the holidays at your house you can still have a good time. Don't forget that asking for help is okay. No one expects you to do it all on your own. Do you really have to cook the ham, bake the potatoes, make a cake, clean the house and set up the tree all by yourself? Designate others to help, they'll feel happy you've given them something to do instead of sit around waiting while they watch you do it all.

Shopping Time

Shopping during the holiday season can be a nightmare that you don't need to attempt while pregnant. It's safer to just stay home during some of those sales. Instead you may want to try shopping online, not only will you be home but you can relax. The only thing you'll need is a credit card and let your fingers do the work. You can even do all your holiday

shopping early and have it delivered right to your front door. All you need to do is wrap it up and hide it in the closet.

Remember the holiday season is all about making memories that'll last. You may be pregnant but you don't have to sit at home the whole time stressed out, instead you can actually enjoy yourself with these helpful tips. Don't forget to take a little time off to do something just for you, after all you deserve it.

Morning Sickness During Pregnancy

Morning sickness can be one of your first signs that you are pregnant. This doesn't always mean that you'll get sick only in the morning. This can happen, morning, noon or night. It will normally occur in the first trimester or your pregnancy and end by the second, this isn't the case in all pregnancies though. Some women will continue with it until the very end of term.

Nausea can happen immediately or you may get lucky and have no morning sickness at all. No one is for certain what causes morning sickness, it is a change in the body that happens during pregnancy. Many women seem to get sick after taking the prenatal pill,

PICKING NAMES

try taking it later in the day. Your doctor may even advise you to take some other form of vitamin instead of the pill. Always find out first with your doctor before taking anything new or taking yourself off medication, even prenatal pills.

There are a few ways to minimize the sickness, but they don't work for everyone. Try keeping crackers on hand, I prefer saltines for some reason. Try drinking some ginger ale, it calms the stomach down. Dry cereal is another good thing to eat, your stomach may just be a little bit hungry and trying to tell you. Remember to take small portions, this way you know if it is all going to come up or not. Sleeping is another good way to avoid it, however it will wake you up. Keep yourself hydrated, not only can this make your sickness come but you can become dehydrated and need to go to the emergency room if you aren't careful.

Smells is another thing that seems to cause morning sickness. Imagine walking into a restaurant and the first thing you smell is grease. Yes, this can easily set it off. Bad smells and even certain tastes, get the feel for your body during the pregnancy and figure out just what sets it off. Knowing how to avoid it, can make a world of difference.

A few reasons you should go to your doctor would be if you begin losing weight because you are constantly sick. If you become dehydrated, faint, look pale, confused or throw up more than four times in a day. Your doctor may be able to prescribe something that will stop it.

Try slowing down a bit, sometimes your body is just exhausted from all the errands you are running and it tries to give you a break. Listen to your body, take a nap, relax and watch a television show... take some time off. If you are looking for remedies for your morning sickness, you may try buying some pregnancy pops. Or if you'd prefer to stay away from the sweets you can wear a bracelet designed to stop morning sickness, they are just like the motion sickness bracelets. They don't work for everyone but they could work for you.

Picking a Name Before Your Pregnancy Ends

Choosing a name is one of the most important things you'll have to decide on during your pregnancy. Pick a name that your child is going to love, not something he/she will hate or be made fun of. There are a lot of things to consider when naming your child.

PICKING NAMES

Origin

The origin of a name can help you pick out what name you like best, this also adds a piece of history to your child. Giving your son/daughter an Italian name because their great grandfather originally came over from Sicily will mean a lot to the family. Not to mention your child will always know they're Italian. This doesn't mean you can only choose names that go with your heritage, there may be a name out there that belongs to your child that isn't.

The Sound of the Name:

Names can be hard to pronounce sometimes, not just for other people but for your child as well. Don't choose a name you have a hard enough time saying, imagine how hard it'll be for your own child to learn. The spelling can also be a cause for concern. Your child must learn how to spell his/her name, you don't want a name that has over 20 letters long. Do you think you'd be able to learn to spell that in kindergarten? Think about your child first, sure the name might sound great but make sure it isn't something that is going to be really hard. This doesn't mean don't choose a name that is unique, that is what makes your child stand out. But make sure that is what you really want.

Meaning

Meaning can be another factor when choosing a name, learn what that name means before you pick it. You might want something that means something dear to you. My daughter's name means pure hope, I thought

it was a lovely gesture and it sounded beautiful. Think about choosing a positive meaning for your child, this is the first thing that will be associated with him/her the moment he/she is born.

Gender names

Gender naming is another important issue. Think about if the name sounds like a boy's name or a girl's name. There are names that can go either way such as Sam, Erin or Angel.

Nicknames

When picking out a name, don't forget that your child may end up being called by a nickname because of the name you have chosen. If this is something you don't want, try picking a name that can't be shortened. But don't be surprised if it happens anyways. If you don't mind, try picking out a name that'll have a nickname you enjoy.

Last but certainly not least, remember children can be cruel think about the initials your child will have. You don't want something that it's initials mean something else. You want your child to be proud of his/her name. Not everyone is going to like the name you have chosen for your child, but as long as it is something you like, your child will like it too.

PREGNANCY CONCERNS

Concerns During Pregnancy

There is nothing more stressful than to have something go wrong during pregnancy. It doesn't matter if it is your first time being pregnant or your fourth. There are many things to be concerned about during your pregnancy and it is easier when you know what they are.

Vaginal bleeding- This may also known as spotting, but make sure that is what is going on. There is a difference between actively bleeding and spotting. Spotting is lightly bleeding kind of like your period, the blood can be red, pink or even brown. If you are bleeding actively with any pain call your doctor, if you can't get a hold of him go immediately to the emergency room. Bleeding can be a number of things from implantation, ectopic pregnancy, labor, infection or even miscarriage. Always let your doctor know, so everything can be ruled out, you'll feel better too.

Stomach pain or cramping- During the pregnancy it may be hard to decipher the difference between a growing pain and an actual stomach pain/cramping. However, if you do get a pain of any sort rest. After a few minutes if it doesn't subside, call your doctor and describe the pain to him. Don't worry about it if you find out you only had gas or were having Braxton hicks contractions, at least you know everything is okay with pregnancy.

Gush of liquid- This could mean you are in labor and that your water broke, however if it isn't close to the time of birth it can be something else. Call your doctor immediately and head for the emergency room.

Dehydration- While you are pregnant it is easy to become dehydrated, especially if you have morning sickness or just don't drink those 8 glasses of water. If you find yourself pale, dry mouth or dizzy, you could be dehydrated and should be seen by a doctor. Dehydration can cause premature labor and/or distress on the pregnancy.

Painful urination - Could be a urinary tract infection, also known as UTI. This can be easily treated with medication or by drinking lots of fluids and cranberry juice. A urinary tract infection isn't something to be embarrassed about, it is very common amongst pregnant women. The growing belly pushes against your ureters and makes it harder for it to flow through. Which of course can cause infection. Another way to find out if you have it is if you have a foul odor when you pee.

Pregnancies can be scary enough, there's no reason to add to it. If you are ever in doubt or have a concern talk with your doctor. It is common that first time moms are worried about many pains that they feel. Never fear calling because you are afraid of waking the doctor up or because you feel silly. Being silly might just save the baby. While you are worrying, you are only causing stress on you and the baby, find out what's wrong and relieve your anxiety.

PREGNANCY FITNESS

Staying Fit During Your Pregnancy

Keeping fit during your pregnancy is great for you, not only will it help you keep your body toned but it also can help when it comes time to push that baby out. Every pregnant woman wants to be able to go back to her pre-pregnancy weight after the baby is born, but the only way to do that is to make sure you can. By exercising or working out every day you are making sure you don't add fat to your body. During labor it'll be much easier to push the baby if you've been strengthening your leg and stomach muscles. Who knows, it may even make labor a little bit shorter. Isn't that what we all want?

Plus when you are tired and just feeling a little blue, just by exercising you actually increase your energy.

Here are a few quick things you can do to stay fit during pregnancy, without really having to break out a sweat. I'm sure by now you've heard of yoga, this is a very good thing for you to practice, especially if you haven't always been in the best of shape. Not to worry, there are beginning levels here, you don't have to jump into the human pretzel right away. Try purchasing a set of small weights that you can use throughout the house, like hand weights or wrist weights that can use while walking. Instead of just laying on the couch while you rest you can be lifting small weights.

Get a chair and try doing a couple crunches, 5 to 10 in the beginning to make sure you don't pull anything. Don't worry you can always add to it as the weeks go on.

Try running, walking or jogging outside. Not only will this boost up your energy but it'll also help get your spirits up, especially if you've been inside all day. Remember, if you are going for a walk to always bring a drink with you. You don't want to dehydrate out there. Always make sure that you are wearing comfortable shoes, before you leave the house. If you didn't always run, ask your doctor if you can. Sometimes a doctor may suggest you walk around the block at first and increase it from there, if you didn't always do it before you were pregnant.

If you can you may want to try going for a swim or try bicycling. However, if you find that you are accident prone you may want to stay away from the bike. A bike accident is something that can easily happen, even when you've always road a bike. Swimming can help you relax and stay cool. Take a dip in the pool near you, they may even have a swim class for pregnant women in your area. This would be a great way to meet other moms.

Whenever you are doing exercises, make sure you aren't overdoing it. If you believe you could be stop immediately and take a break. You never want to do anything that'll harm the pregnancy.

PREGNANCY SIBLINGS

Preparing the kids for Pregnancy

The moment you find out your pregnant you want to tell everyone, including your kids. The way you tell your child depends on their age, an older child will understand what it means when you tell them you are pregnant or that they are going to be a brother or sister soon. However, a toddler is a little bit harder to explain this too.

Think about your child's personality when it comes time to tell them. You know your child best. They may enjoy being sent little clues like you did with daddy, or they may just want you to tell them straight out. You could get lucky and have them walk in the room while you are announcing it. This happened to me when I was expecting child number four. I had just walked out of the bathroom waving the wand in the air to show my husband. I had no clue that my kids had walked into the room until I heard them screeching I was pregnant. Oops.

Their Reactions

Don't be shocked if at first your child acts distant, many children will respond to the news in their own way. One of your children may even start to pretend to be pregnant right along with you, mimicking everything you do. While another child may tell you they don't want you to bring home a new baby. These are all

common reactions to the news, the way you handle it will determine the outcome.

If your child seems reluctant to want another child in the home you may want to find out why. The only way to find out what's bugging him/her is to ask. Maybe they are just scared that you are going to stop loving them, or that everyone will forget about him/her when the baby is born.

Showing them They are Important too

A good way to do this is to make sure they get something the moment the baby is born, some have had the doctors give the sibling their own baby doll when their sibling was born. Try reading children's books with them to show them that it'll be a good thing. Dad can always spend some one on one time with them.

Involving Your Child in the Pregnancy

This is their baby too, have your children accompany you to a few of the doctor visits. Let them hear the heartbeat of their little sister or brother. Watch their faces light up when they see the baby for the first time on the screen. There are many ways you can involve them, you can encourage them to help you decide on a name. Try letting them feel the baby kick for the first time by placing their hand on your swollen belly.

It's easy to prepare the siblings for your new arrival

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as long as you involve them in the pregnancy along the way. They'll be happy to be part of it and feel more of a connection to the baby when he/she is born.

Pregnancy's Beautiful Stretch Marks

The minute you find out you are pregnant you know things are going to be changing, from your waist size to those little stretch marks that pop up. Stretch marks are exactly that, red or purple marks left in your skin because it has stretched. The most common areas for it to appear is the buttocks, thighs, stomach, breasts and even arms. 90 percent of all pregnant women will get them, whether they get a lot or a few depends on the body and how they are preventing them.

There are a ton of lotions out there that claim to help prevent stretch marks, such as scar serum, cocoa butter or Maderma. Make sure your skin is always moist, this helps in stretching the skin and not tearing it. There are new discoveries every day, ask your doctor what he/she recommends. Try them out yourself first and see if they work for you. This isn't something you just put on one time during your pregnancy, you'll have to make this a daily effort in order for it to work. That's where most women fail, they just stop doing it.

During your pregnancy try to eat healthy and stay in

shape. This can help to keep off any excess weight. The recommended weight gain for the average, 25-35 healthy pregnancy is 25-35 pounds. Make sure you drink plenty of water, staying hydrated helps keep the skin healthy. The moment your skin dries out you can begin getting stretch marks.

If you've had one or more children your chances of getting more stretch marks will increase. Your skin has already been stretched out and you are about to do it again. Large babies and multiple babies can increase your chances of getting stretch marks too. Begin using preventing creams and lotions with vitamins A and E in them, as soon as you find out you are pregnant and try to lessen your chances of getting them.

After the pregnancy if you have any stretch marks you may still have a few stretch marks, even after all the care you took. These do fade over time, so don't worry about the way you look. If they are unbearable to you and you've waited a while, you can choose to have a tummy tuck or laser removal. Make an appointment with a dermatologist to see what he/she has to tell you. You may discover that you can live with them after all.

Besides caring for your skin daily and eating right, there isn't much you can do to prevent these beautiful pregnancy marks, however this doesn't mean you don't have to try. Take comfort in knowing that half the women you know that have been pregnant probably have a mark or two, they may even have a little road map. Think about it as you've just been initiated into the gang of motherhood. No woman should ever feel

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ashamed of her stretch marks, they may not be the prettiest thing in the world but they do represent one thing...your child. Remember that the next time you are getting disgusted by them.

Wives Tales and Pregnancy

It's all great to hear advice during your pregnancy, especially unwelcome advice. I'm sure you've been told by one person or another how to live. Am I right? It only gets worse the further along in your pregnancy you are. Someone will want to tell you that you shouldn't bend, or walk a certain way, not to pick up a baby in case you hurt the one in your stomach or put yourself in labor. As the pregnancy gets closer to the due date you'll be told many different home remedies of how to put yourself in labor. Got a headache? Someone can tell you exactly what to drink to get rid of it without any medication, remember it is important to ask a doctor before trying to take something you've never tried before doing it. But the most fun I have during the course of the 9-10 months stretch is hearing all the wives tales, also known as myths.

I'm pretty sure you aren't going to even care at this point what sex the baby is, all you want is for the morning sickness to stop. You may even be counting down the days until the first trimester is over. Chances are if you morning sickness someone is bound to tell you what sex of the baby is. One wives tale is if you are having severe morning sickness is a sign you are having a girl.

Here's a wives tale that is a lot of fun and you can test it on everyone in your household. Take a thin piece of string or your hair, slide your ring down it, hold it above your belly and let the ring dangle above it. If the rings spins in a circle it is a boy, but if it goes from one side to the other, it is a girl. Once you've tried it out on your tummy, get someone in your house and do it above their hand. Does the ring spin in a circle above your husband's hand? Hmm, is it really an old wives tale or is there really something to it?

Many women claim to suffer from bouts of heartburn during the pregnancy, according to the old wives tell this would mean your baby will be born with a head full of hair.

Right before the end of your first trimester your doctor will listen to your baby's heart rate, this is to make sure the baby is doing alright. The wives tale goes, if the heart rate is high it is a girl and a low one is a boy.

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Ever have someone tell you that you are carrying high or low and wonder what that really means? Basically if you are carrying your baby low it is closer to your abdomen, a high baby is closer to your chest. Look at yourself in the mirror. How is your baby sitting? The old tale says that if you are carrying high it is a girl, carrying low is a boy.

Wives tales can be a lot of fun but keep in mind these aren't fact. Don't go preparing your child's room just because one of these told you, you were going to have a girl.

