

## **Adventist Healthcare: Health Tip of the Week**

### **Exercise & Diet for Pregnant Women**

About 42 percent of pregnant women in the United State exercise. Current evidence indicates that exercise may make pregnancy more comfortable, shorten labor, and reduce the need for obstetric intervention.

- \* Pregnant women should exercise moderately (50 to 60 percent of maximal heart rate) for twenty to thirty minutes three times per week.
- \* Women who exercise during pregnancy may require a higher energy intake than the extra 150 to 300 calories per day that are recommended for non-exercising women.
- \* Drink up to one pint of liquid before exercising and one cup of liquid every 20 minutes during exercise to maintain hydration. Also, water carries nutrients to your baby.
- \* Exercise may not be advised for women who fail to gain weight or suffer from hypertension, heart disease, preterm labor and second/third trimester bleeding.
- \* Excessive levels of physical activity in pregnancy can reduce fetal growth and increase the risk of preterm delivery. A sign that your exercise level is too high is a low rate of weight gain.

According to the American Dietetic Association, pregnant women should increase their usual servings from the four basic food groups for a total of 2,500-2,700 calories daily.

- \* Fruits & Vegetables - seven or more servings. They help you and your baby with healthy gums. Also, fruits and vegetables are important for your body to heal wounds and absorb iron.
- \* Whole Grains or Enriched Breads/Cereals - nine or more servings. They help with energy and also contain iron, B vitamins and protein.
- \* Dairy Products - four or more servings of low-fat or non-fat milk, yogurt and cheese. They help you and your baby with strong bones and teeth. Dairy products also provide calcium, Vitamin A, Vitamin D, protein and B vitamins.
- \* Proteins - two or more servings of cooked, lean meat, poultry (without the skin) or fish. They build muscle, enzymes, hormones and antibodies for you and your baby. Also, proteins have B vitamins and iron. Some fish contain high doses of mercury which can hurt your baby's growing brain and nervous system. Don't eat any shark, swordfish, king mackerel or golden/white snapper. It is important not to consume more than six ounces of white/albacore tuna each week.
- \* Folic Acid is the most vital nutrient pregnant women need. It is a B vitamin that helps prevent neural tube defects (the spine, brain or their coverings), cleft lip and congenital heart disease.

Sources: American Family Physician, The National Women's Health Information Center, American Dietetic Association, WebMD and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals. The Health Tip of the Week is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician. Please feel free to copy and distribute this health resource.