

# Healthy habits during pregnancy

Happy New Year to my readers, and may this year bring you and your families good health. Throughout my career I have found great fulfillment in treating pregnant women before, during, and after their pregnancies. They primarily are referred by their OBGYN's for treatment of low back pain and sciatica (pain down the leg). The other common problem is Sacroiliac (SI) pain. Treatment helps in almost all cases, and easing a women's pregnancy and working with an OBGYN is a great scenario for most women. Having four children of my own and treating my wife through her pregnancies gives me a real passion for rendering relief to a pregnant woman.

Of course it is always impor-

tant to eat healthy, but when you are pregnant it becomes even more so. It is not a time to focus on weight loss, but you can certainly clean up those poor eating habits. Here is some advice:

- During pregnancy you aren't eating for two, you're eating for "one plus," so you don't need to dramatically increase your calories. In general, you will need about 300 more calories a day with about a 30 percent increase in protein to cover your increased nutritional needs.

- Be sure to take a high quality prenatal vitamin that is high in folic acid, contains adequate amounts of calcium, magnesium and iron, and is low in vitamin A. You must avoid high doses of vitamin A during pregnancy as this could cause birth defects.

- Eat three meals and three snacks per day, and increase your snack size slightly to accommodate the additional calorie needs.

- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, artificial sweeteners, and any herbal formulas unless they have been approved by your physician.

- Choose from high response costs foods that are high in fiber to avoid constipation that can be problematic during pregnancy.

- Avoid fish due to the mercury content, but be sure to supplement with a high quality EPA/DHA Omega 3 fish oil supplement (make sure that it has been tested for heavy metals, PCBs and rancidity). Omega 3's are critical for brain development — a recent study in Pediatrics magazine reported higher IQs in children whose mothers supple-

mented with fish oils during pregnancy and lactation.

- Keep exercising (with your doctor's approval) but don't exercise for more than 30 minutes at a time and keep your heart rate at 140 or below. Be sure to stay well hydrated and avoid overheating. Focus on core strengthening and stability. At month five and beyond avoid overstretching, unstable environments, and any exercise that you need to do on your back.

To all my pregnant readers ... there is nothing greater than having a baby, and best wishes to you all. As always, if there is anything I can do, just ask. And remember...Health Literacy is the Key to Longevity.

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