

Gestational Diabetes and Exercise



Safety Tips on Walking and Exercise for Gestational Diabetes

If you have gestational diabetes (diabetes that occurs during your pregnancy), it is important to know what forms of exercise will be safe for you and your baby. There are many that you can do on your own or with your family that will give you the health benefits of exercise that is safe and easy to avoid any potential risks for you and your baby.

Walking

As always, it is important to speak with your doctor or healthcare team before starting any type of exercise routine. They can tell you what exercises are safe for you. One of the best exercises for pregnant women is walking.

You should try walking at least once a day, and more if you can. Your goal should be to walk at least twenty minutes after each meal. Walking after a meal helps to lower your blood sugar level. Walking with your family or a friend can also be fun and healthy for everyone.



Tips to Remember While Walking

- Wear comfortable shoes and clothing
- Walk at a speed that is comfortable for you
- Stop if you notice any pressure, tightness, or contraction of your uterus
- Notice your baby's movement before and after exercise
- Follow your doctor's advice about safety

Health Benefits of Walking

- Lowers your blood sugar
- Controls your appetite
- Controls weight gain
- Makes your heart stronger
- Reduces your stress
- Makes you feel good about yourself
- Helps you prepare for labor and delivery

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Other Forms of Exercise

Here are some recommendations for exercise success and safety:

- Know the signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)
- Carry a source of carbohydrates (fruit, crackers, half of a sandwich, etc.)
- Go slow in the beginning as exercising too hard or too fast may result in injury
- Inform family members and friends of your whereabouts
- Wear supportive clothing and comfortable shoes
- Check blood sugar prior to any exercise
- Drink plenty of water
- Set realistic goals
- Never hold your breath
- Stop at any signs of discomfort
- Avoid exercise in hot or humid weather. If you feel decreased movement, do not panic!

As part of your healthcare team, we want to make sure that you have the best health possible during your pregnancy.

Following your doctor's advice and keeping safe while pregnant will help ensure you are happy, healthy and better prepared for welcoming your baby.

If you have any questions, please speak with your doctor or a member of your healthcare team.

Knowledge Is Power

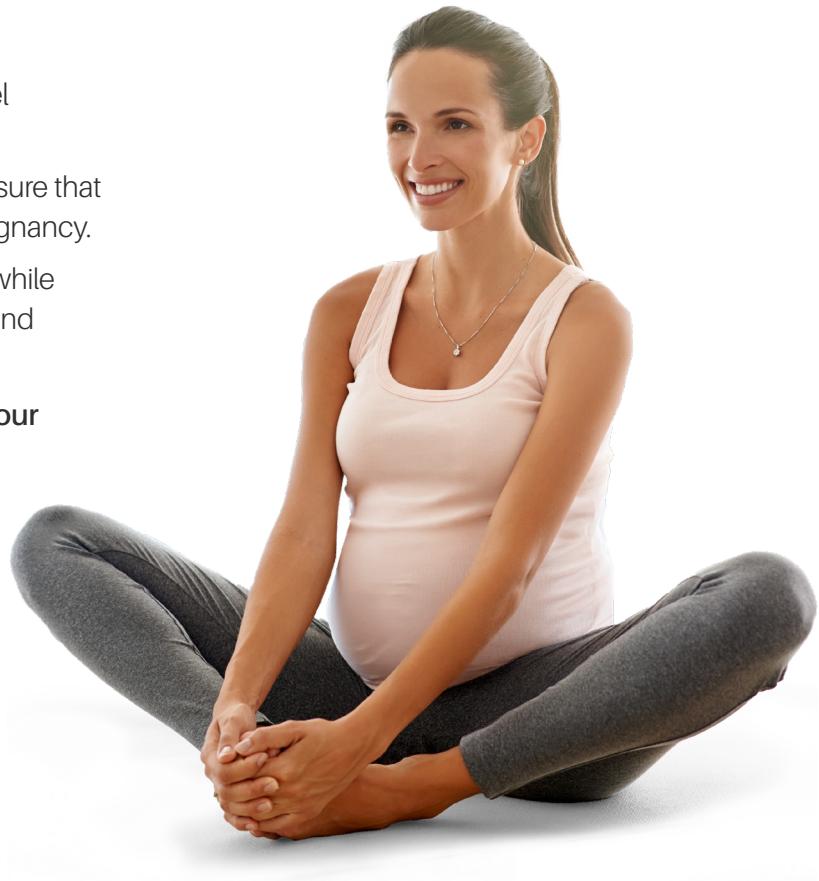
If you have questions about your pregnancy, ask your doctor. You can also visit the following websites:

March of Dimes: www.marchofdimes.org

First 5 California: www.first5california.com

In addition to walking, there are many other forms of safe exercises:

- Low impact aerobics
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Yoga
- Water aerobics
- Light, weight training. The size of the weights should be by mother's level of fitness. Beginners should use 1-3 pound weights.



Remember: If you have any questions or concerns at any time, make sure you contact your doctor right away.