

We understand that you may have many questions during this exciting time. This letter will provide you with some general information about pregnancy and the care you will receive. Please feel free to bring your questions with you to your physician and nurse visits.

You will be scheduled with each of our physicians at least once during your pregnancy because we cannot predict which doctor will be “on-call” the day your baby is born. This requirement enables you to get comfortable with the doctors and gives the doctors a chance to get to know you. However, you will usually see the same doctor at the first and second office visits.

All of our patients deliver at Piedmont Hospital. Most of our patients have their babies in the labor and delivery rooms, which are specially designed for labor, birth, and immediate recovery after your delivery. Tours of the Maternity Center at Piedmont Hospital are available please call 404-605-5000 for the tour schedule. We have included hospital pre-registration forms in your New OB folder. You may fill them out online at <http://www.piedmont.org>, mail them or take them directly to the hospital admissions department. For education classes please contact 404-605-2113.

The use of seatbelts in your automobile is strongly recommended during pregnancy.

The taking of medication, except prenatal vitamins, during your pregnancy is discouraged unless under the direct supervision of your physician. This is especially important during the first twelve weeks of pregnancy, when all of the baby’s major organs are forming. If you are not sure if a medication is ok, call us! The following medications may be taken as necessary:

You should drink approximately 8 glasses or 64 ounces of liquid per day. It is important to maintain adequate hydration during pregnancy for many reasons. Drinking sufficient water helps support your increasing blood volume as well as the baby’s amniotic fluid volume. Caffeine should be limited to no more than one beverage per day, although caffeine free alternatives are a better choice.

It is important to make healthy food choices during pregnancy for both you and your baby. On average, you should consume approximately 2100 to 2500 calories per day. These calories should come from a variety of sources including fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, dairy products, protein foods, and some fat. Empty calories from foods such as desserts, snack foods, chips, candy, and soft drinks should be avoided.

In addition to a healthy diet, prenatal vitamins are an important part of a healthy pregnancy and are important in reducing the risk of birth defects, such as neural tube defects like spina bifida. Your prenatal vitamin should contain between 0.4mg and 1mg of folic acid. Please refer to the handout in your New OB Folder for more information.

There are two important handouts included in your New OB Folder. One discusses the risk of mercury in seafood and the other outlines precautions against listeriosis. In summary, while seafood is a good source of protein, and is low in fat, certain fish should be avoided during pregnancy due to high levels of mercury (shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish). Other types of seafood (shellfish, small ocean fish, tuna) can be eaten safely, provided they are cooked thoroughly and you limit the amount you consume to no more than 12 ounces per week. To avoid risk of listeriosis, all non-pasteurized dairy should be avoided; most commonly, feta, brie, blue and Mexican queso cheeses. Thoroughly cook all foods, reheat deli meats, and avoid raw meats and sushi.

Toxoplasmosis is an infection most commonly contracted through contact with cat feces (the litter box). While you may have previously developed immunity if you have had cats for a long period of time, it is best to avoid exposure by having someone else change the litter box throughout your pregnancy. You can also acquire this infection by eating raw or undercooked meats, sushi, or unwashed vegetables.

Exercise during pregnancy is generally safe and provides many benefits including strengthening and preparing important muscles for labor, easing some common discomforts of pregnancy, and increasing circulation. If you were active before your pregnancy you may continue exercising, with modifications in intensity, throughout your pregnancy. Your heart rate should not exceed 140 beats per minute. Weight lifting should be limited to 30 pounds. Low impact exercise for 30 minutes at least 2-3 times per week is recommended to maintain good physical condition during pregnancy. Even if you were not active prior to your pregnancy, activities such as walking, swimming, and pregnancy specific classes like yoga and aerobics are good choices. Do not begin any new strenuous activities during your pregnancy and avoid any activities that will put you at risk for abdominal trauma such as outdoor cycling, skiing, tennis, etc. Scuba diving is not safe at any time during pregnancy. Additionally, long-term heat exposure, hot tubs, and saunas should be avoided. Remember to maintain adequate fluid intake when exercising.

Sexual activity is safe during pregnancy unless otherwise specified by your doctor. It is not uncommon to notice some vaginal spotting (bleeding) after sexual activity, as well as after a cervical exam. Spotting may be light pink or brown in color. If you notice this type of bleeding, avoid further sexual activity for at least 48 hours, rest, avoid strenuous activities, and monitor the amount. Bright red bleeding, like a period, or any bleeding that does not stop should be reported immediately.

Travel during pregnancy is allowed up to 35 weeks (the end of your 8th month) unless you are being followed closely for conditions such as pre-term labor, high blood pressure, or any other conditions requiring bedrest. Whether you are traveling by car or airline, make sure to take frequent “stretch” breaks (at least every 2 hours) to avoid circulation problems. As always, take care to maintain adequate water intake. If you are traveling by airline be sure to check and see if any special documentation is required and notify the OB nurse in advance.

We look forward to sharing this exciting experience with you! Please feel free to call the Obstetric Nurse at 404-352-3616 extension 5004 with any additional questions.

If you need assistance after normal business hours, please call the main line at 404-352-3616. The Answering Service will assist you and the on-call physician will be contacted if necessary.