



What you need to know about...

Maternal Infections

Infections can be harmful to a pregnant woman & her unborn baby. They can cause serious birth defects, illness, early onset labor, low birth weight and even death of the baby. Some infections are easy to avoid with certain precautions. Most infections can easily be treated and cured if detected early.

Contact your prenatal care provider immediately if you have any symptoms such as fever, diarrhea, or flu-like symptoms, bleeding gums, vaginal discharge or odor, pain during urination or cuts that don't heal.

ORAL (DENTAL) HEALTH

Poor oral health may lead to premature delivery. Prematurity is the leading cause of infant death.

During pregnancy, hormonal changes increase your chances of gum disease. Signs of gum disease are red, swollen or bleeding gums, and gum and teeth pain.

- Brush your teeth 2 times a day & floss every day to reduce bacteria in your mouth.
- See a dentist at least once during your pregnancy.
- Eat a healthy diet, get enough calcium, and limit sugars and starchy foods
- Contact your dentist or prenatal care provider at the first sign of gum disease.



PETS & PESTS



Certain germs & parasites found in animals can be harmful to a pregnant woman. You could get an infection (such as toxoplasmosis or psittacosis) which can cause birth defects. Even inhaling tiny particles of an infected animal's urine or feces can lead to exposure.

- Let someone else empty your pet's cage or litter box. Pets that could have infections are cats, hamsters, mice, reptiles and birds.
- If you must clean the cage or box, wear gloves & a mask. Wash your hands afterwards.
- Make sure your home is free of mouse & rodent feces.

FOODS

- Do not eat raw or undercooked animal products such as beef, pork, or chicken.
- Keep raw meat away from other foods. Wash hands after handling.
- After handling uncooked meat, wash counters, knives and cutting boards with diluted household bleach solution.
- Cook hot dogs thoroughly. Do not eat luncheon meat, which may contain listeria.
- Do not eat soft cheeses like feta, Brie, Camembert, or blue-veined Mexican styled cheese.
- Avoid raw (unpasteurized) milk and foods made from raw milk.
- Always wear gloves when gardening & wash hands after.
- Thoroughly wash raw vegetables from the store or garden before eating.
- **Fish:** Some fish are high in mercury, which will harm your unborn baby. Do not eat Shark, Swordfish, King Mackerel, or Tilefish. Do not eat more than 6 ounces of albacore “white” tuna weekly. Salmon, shrimp, catfish, and canned light tuna are safer.



SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)

Pregnancy does not provide protection against STDs such as genital herpes, HPV, bacterial vaginosis or Chlamydia.

STIs can cause serious health problems for babies including serious birth defects, early onset labor, premature rupture of membranes, low birth weight & even stillbirth.

STIs can be passed to the baby before and during the baby’s birth.

Do *not* douche. Douching alters the “good” vaginal bacteria that helps fight infections.

Many STIs have no symptoms & some doctors do not routinely perform these tests. Most STIs are easily treatable especially when

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detected in early pregnancy.

Get tested the first time you see a doctor after you find out that you are pregnant.

Ask your doctor or healthcare provider for these tests.

URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS (UTIs)



UTIs & bladder infections are much more common in women who are pregnant. Pregnancy hormones cause changes in the urinary tract.

As the uterus grows the bladder may not empty all of the way. The urine staying in the bladder can be a source of infection. UTIs can be also be caused by sex without a condom, or not urinating after sex.

Make sure to wipe from front to back after using the bathroom.

Symptoms of UTIs include burning or pain during urination, and fever.

Untreated, UTIs can lead to complications including kidney problems and preterm labor.

If you think you have a UTI, tell your doctor as soon as possible.