

Foods to avoid include:

- Soft, unpasteurized cheeses
- Unpasteurized milk, juices and cider
- Raw eggs and foods with raw eggs
- Raw or under cooked meats or fish

Processed meats, such as hot dogs and lunch meats, should be fully heated prior to eating.

Although fish is very healthy, you should avoid eating:

- Shark
- Swordfish
- King Mackerel
- Tilefish

These types of fish may contain high levels of mercury. It can cause damage to your baby's growing brain. When eating fish, eat a variety and limit the intake to about 12 ounces per week.

Caffeine

High intake of caffeine may increase the risk of miscarriage. It is best to avoid or limit the intake of caffeine. Caffeine can be found in drinks such as regular coffee, teas, cola and soft drinks.

Water

Drink plenty of fluids, such as water, every day. A woman's blood volume increases greatly

while pregnant. Drinking enough water will help prevent dehydration and constipation.

Changing the Cat Litter Box

If you own a cat, this is a good time to let someone else clean the litter box. An infection called toxoplasmosis can be spread through dirty litter boxes. Often infected pregnant women do not have symptoms, but can still pass it on to her unborn baby. It can cause pre-maturity, poor growth, and eye and brain damage.

Exercise

Most pregnant women will benefit greatly from exercising. The level of exercise you do will depend mostly on your prior fitness level. So be sure to discuss your exercise plans with your doctor early in the pregnancy.

Do not wait until late in your pregnancy to seek medical care. Any problems are best caught early. Early and ongoing prenatal care is the best way to have a healthy pregnancy. You and your doctor should work together in making this happen.

Molina Healthcare's Motherhood Matters pregnancy program provides education and guidance to pregnant members. For more information please contact us at:

1-877-665-4628.

Member Services Department

1-888-665-4621

Monday through Friday

7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

If you are hearing impaired

1-800-479-3310.



Your Extended Family.

Prenatal Care for a Healthy Pregnancy



Your Extended Family.

The Importance of Prenatal Care

Congratulations! You are going to have a baby. Now that you are pregnant, taking care of yourself has never been more important. Your baby's health begins long before it is born.

Prenatal care includes the care a pregnant woman gives to herself and receives from her doctor before giving birth. Prenatal care can help reduce the risk of preterm birth and pregnancy related health problems.

You should see your doctor:

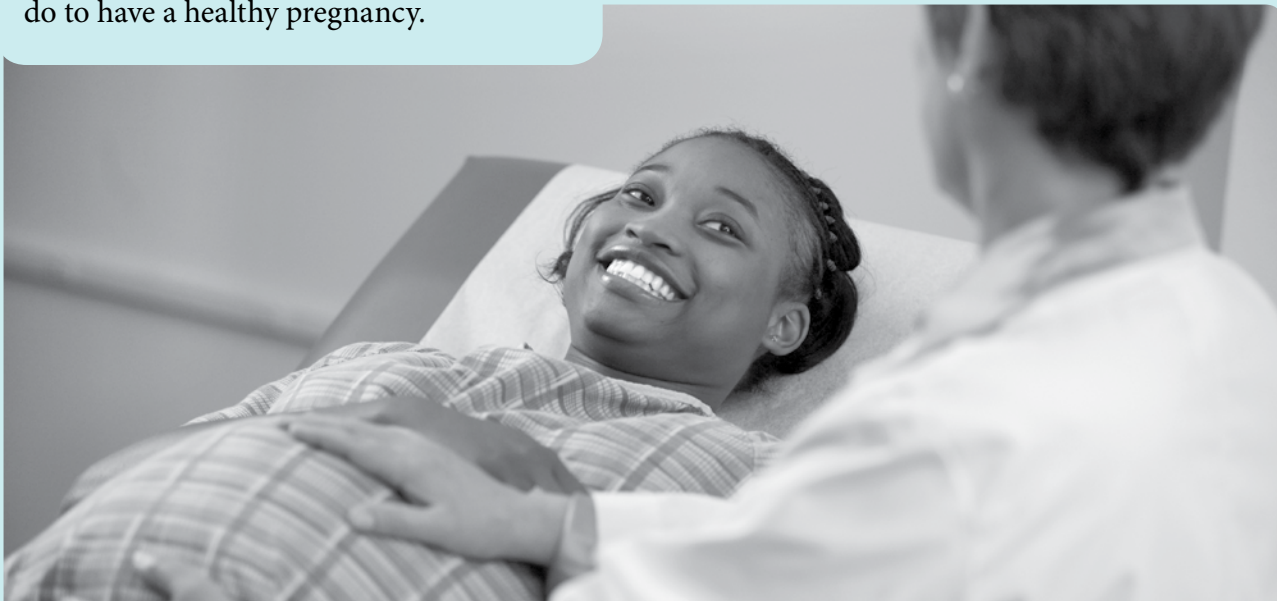
- As soon as possible during the first three months of your pregnancy
- Or within six weeks of becoming a Molina member

Keeping all your appointments with your doctor is the most important thing you can do to have a healthy pregnancy.

Prenatal care consists of checking your overall health, diet, weight gain and the health of the unborn baby. At your visits, your doctor will check your weight and blood pressure. The doctor will also monitor the growth of your unborn baby. He or she will listen to your baby's heartbeat and measure your growing abdomen. You can also expect to have tests such as blood and urine, and at least one ultrasound. Be sure to notify your doctor about any current health problems you may have early in the pregnancy.

Taking Care of Yourself

For the health of your baby, don't smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs. Make sure to get enough rest and eat a healthy diet. When you smoke, your baby smokes too. The smoking mother passes nicotine and carbon monoxide to her growing baby.



The risks of smoking to the baby include:

- Stillbirth
- Premature birth
- Low birth weight
- Sudden infant death syndrome
- Asthma and other lung problems

Drinking alcohol and/or using drugs while pregnant can cause mental and physical birth defects in newborns. Any alcohol you drink enters both yours and your baby's blood. It is best to not drink any alcohol while pregnant. Babies of mothers who use drugs while pregnant may also be born addicted to those drugs themselves.

Sleep

Make sure to get enough sleep. It is normal to feel more tired than usual as your body is busy building a new life. Some doctors suggest that pregnant women sleep on their left side. Sleeping on the left side allows for better blood flow to the baby. Ask your doctor what they would suggest.

Diet

You should add about 300 calories to your daily diet. These extra calories provide food to your growing baby. They will help you to gain the proper amount of weight.

The average weight gain while pregnant is about 25 to 35 pounds:

- The amount of weight gain can vary
- You should gain less if you start out heavier
- You should gain more if you were underweight before becoming pregnant or are having multiple births.

Make sure to discuss your weight gain needs with your doctor early on in your pregnancy.

Vitamins

You should eat a well balanced diet. It should include meats, fresh fruits, whole grains, vegetables and plenty of water.

- Folic acid will protect your baby from being born with problems of the brain and spinal cord.
- Extra iron is needed for all the new red blood cells.
- Your baby's calcium needs are high. Be sure to increase your calcium intake to prevent the loss of calcium from your own bones.

Foods to Avoid and Limit

While pregnant it is crucial to avoid food borne illnesses. They can be a threat to an unborn baby. They may cause birth defects or miscarriage.