

# LIFESTYLE

## LESSONS



## Prenatal Care Tips for Expectant Mothers

Expectant mothers often need to adjust aspects of their lives to care for themselves and their unborn babies. Use the following prenatal pointers to help you eat right and maintain good health throughout the course of your pregnancy.



- Within the first few weeks of discovering that you are pregnant, be sure to schedule an initial physical exam with a doctor.
- Schedule and attend regular doctor visits. As your pregnancy progresses, the frequency of these visits will need to increase from monthly to biweekly to weekly, or as indicated by your doctor.
- Eat a well-balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, protein, dairy, and whole grains to provide the proper nutrients for both you and your growing baby.
- Take a prenatal vitamin supplement to ensure that the baby is getting enough of the recommended daily allowance of essential vitamins and minerals, including folic acid, which is shown to prevent neural tube defects.
- Avoid drinking caffeinated beverages such as coffee, tea, and soda.
- Eat smaller meals on a more frequent basis throughout the day as opposed to eating three larger meals.
- Drink plenty of water to support increased blood volume and maintain the protective amniotic fluid surrounding the baby.
- Avoid raw fish, as mercury is not healthy for a growing baby.



### Don't Forget About the Doctor

One of the most important parts of prenatal care is regular doctor visits to check on your own health and the health of your unborn baby. The purpose of these appointments is to also identify and treat potential problems early on—such as anemia, preeclampsia, and gestational diabetes.