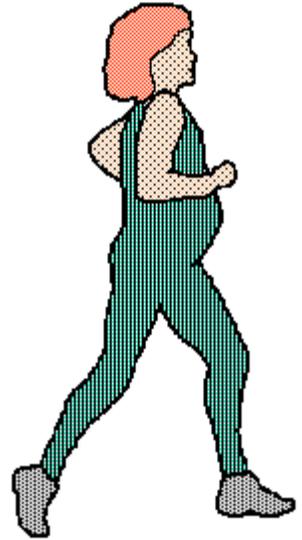


EXERCISE DURING PREGNANCY

Before starting any exercise program, discuss it with your doctor to find a program appropriate for you. If you are having problems with your pregnancy, it is generally best to avoid strenuous exercise. A baby that already has problems with getting enough oxygen may not tolerate even light exercise. You should not exercise to lose weight while you are pregnant. Regular exercise during pregnancy will help a woman be prepared for the physical challenges of childbirth. Benefits of exercise during pregnancy include strengthening the muscles to help with childbirth, reducing common backaches, alleviating constipation, improving posture, improving mood, and promoting better sleep. You will get the most benefit if you start exercising before pregnancy. If you have not been exercising regularly prior to your pregnancy, even light exercise may decrease the oxygen delivered to your baby. Again, make sure that you consult with your physician prior to initiating an exercise program during pregnancy. In addition to your heart, the three muscle groups you should concentrate on during pregnancy are the muscles of your back, pelvis, and abdomen.



◆ General Guidelines for Exercise During Pregnancy

- The type and intensity of your exercise depends upon your health and activity level prior to pregnancy. If you were sedentary before pregnancy, walking is a good form of exercise to begin with.
- Since center of gravity changes during pregnancy, be cautious about loss of balance and falls during exercise.
- Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration, which could reduce blood flow to your baby.
- Avoid vigorous sports (skiing, surfing, etc.) or contact sports.
- Warm-up before and cool-down after exercise.
- Check your pulse during exercise and avoid exceeding 140 beats per minute.
- Stop exercise and contact your physician if you have any symptoms such as pain, uterine contractions, chest pain, bleeding or fluid leakage from the vagina, dizziness, or shortness of breath.