

Pregnancy



Healthy
Hormones

Pregnancy

- Pregnancy is a condition where the ship has basically sailed for awhile
- Many of the issues are due to pre-existing conditions of the mother
- Not a lot can be done
- This may be the state of the client when they come to see you
- There are a few things to consider and that the client can do



1st Trimester

- The fetus is most vulnerable to environmental factors at this time
- Because of the rapid growth, avoiding toxins as much as possible is critical
- Symptoms include fatigue, morning sickness, cravings, moods swings, headaches, heartburn, constipation, urination issues
- Women should gain 25-30 pounds and resolving cravings early can prevent excessive eating and extra weight gain



2nd Trimester

- Many of the symptoms of the first trimester are over
- The body is expanding and the baby is growing
- Symptoms during this time can include stretch marks, body aches, backaches, darkening of the skin on the forehead, nose, upper lip, nipples and other areas of the skin, swollen ankles, face and fingers, itching on the stomach and abdomen, palms and soles of the feet and the appearance of a line running from the belly button to the pubic hairline



3rd Trimester

- The baby is almost fully developed
- Many of the second trimester issues can persist into this trimester
- Heartburn and swelling of the ankles, face and fingers may return
- The belly button may protrude, breasts swell, there can be a shortness of breath, hemorrhoids and sleep issues
- Some of these issues due to the pressure that baby is putting on various parts of the body



Morning Sickness

- Possible causes are low blood sugar, increased T4 levels that affect the smooth muscle of the stomach, excess bile to remove toxins and B6 deficiency
- Severe morning sickness can lead to dehydration, weight loss, nutritional deficiencies and electrolyte issues and may require a stay in the hospital
- Balancing blood sugar and eating small meals with fibre and/or protein – keep appropriate snacks handy and have a snack before bedtime
- Too much fat in a meal will trigger more bile



BALANCED
BLOOD SUGAR



BLOOD SUGAR
ROLLERCOASTER

Morning Sickness

- Dry, whole grain crackers and ginger tea can help with nausea
- Peppermint, fennel, anise, spearmint, raspberry leaf and chamomile tea can also be helpful
- Both B6 (25 mg - 100 mg) and ginger root (250 mg) have been shown in studies to help nausea
- However, neither will be sufficient with severe nausea
- Acupressure and acupuncture can also be helpful



Preeclampsia

- Develops in the third trimester
- High blood pressure, headaches, edema, weight gain, vision problems and dizziness are symptoms
- Factors include insulin resistance, high glycemic food, being overweight, lack of exercise, increased homocysteine, stress, poor circulation especially to the organs, uterus and placenta, nutritional deficiencies (Cal/Mag, protein, Omega 3)



Preeclampsia

- Many women who develop this have pre-existing conditions such as HBP, diabetes or obesity
- Age, and genetic predisposition also factors
- The key is preventing:
 1. Eating a whole food diet and keeping blood sugar stable is key – avoid stress, sleep and get exercise
 2. Key nutrients: Vitamin C, E, B6, B12 and folic acid plus minerals calcium, magnesium zinc and selenium



Heartburn and Gas

- The esophagus valve can soften especially as the baby grows and presses on the stomach
- Steps to good digestion especially chewing – take small bites
- Anise, fennel and peppermint tea can help move gas
- Smoking irritates the stomach
- Avoids foods the clients knows can cause them reflux



Constipation

- Progesterone increases and softens the smooth muscle of the stomach – this slows the rate that food moves through the GI tract causing gas and constipation (also can cause heartburn)
- Slowing the eating process and taking small bites can help this process (along with other steps to good digestion), enzymes also helpful
- Probiotics and fermented foods help prevent constipation and digestive issues
- High fibre diet with plenty of grains, legumes, fresh fruits and vegetables
- Water is also needed



Hemorrhoids and Varicose Veins

- Again due to increase in progesterone, a softening of the walls of the veins (muscular) occurs plus there is extra pressure from blood increase and weight needed by the fetus
- Exercise can help especially yoga or walking – something that can strengthen muscles and gently increase circulation
- Support stockings if standing for long periods
- Avoid crossing legs or sitting for long periods of time
- Plenty of fruits, vegetables, fiber-foods especially if high in vitamin C
- Vitamin C with bioflavonoids supplement



Muscle Aches and Cramps

- Muscle contractions in the calves and feet often happening at night
- Can be caused by lactic acid build-up, low sodium, cal/mag deficiency, B6 deficiency
- To help prevent:
 - Dry skin brushing to improve circulation
 - Arnica gel or heat to the area can relieve the cramp
 - Vitamin C, E, B6 as well as Cal/Mag (glycinate or citrate)



Gestational Diabetes

- Due to a large release of hormones from the placenta, insulin resistance develops and leads to high blood sugar
- Pre-condition of mother is a key factor
- Exercise – walking, yoga, and swimming can lower blood sugar
- Low glycemic foods and small meals more often
- Avoid caffeine and lower stress as much as possible
- Schizandra or chromium in a prenatal multi can be helpful



Pregnancy Supplements



- A good prenatal multi – stick with these as they have been properly formulated
- Probiotics – a must – ones formulate for women usually have strains for the vagina
- Digestive enzymes – help with digestive symptoms plus ensures more nutrients for the mother and baby
- Fish oil or Chia/Flax – baby's nervous system need Omega 3, can prevent preeclampsia and pre-term birth, may prevent allergies and helps develop the baby's brain
- Cal/Mag – if needed and the diet is not supplying enough

Whole Food Diet

- Foods to stabilize blood sugar plus small meals more often
- Chewing – to get more value from the food and limit digestive issues
- Fermented foods and prebiotic foods
- Good protein sources
- EFA-rich foods especially Omega 3
- Vitamin C-rich foods
- Cal/Mag foods



And Finally...

- Working with pregnant women is more about what can't you do than what can you do
- Whatever hormone imbalances are present when they conceived are still playing a role
- All you can do is help clients mitigate some of the more unpleasant issues as best you can
- The good news is that many of the recommendations are similar and could easily be part of a good whole food menu plan
- You are also helping the mother and baby have a better outcome once the baby is born

