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Holy Redeemer obstetrician answers the most commonly asked pregnancy questions

(MEADOWBROOK, PA) – Questions, questions, and more questions. That’s what most women find themselves asking when they are pregnant. According to Jeanine Devlin, M.D., an OB/GYN at Holy Redeemer Hospital and Medical Center, that is perfectly normal.

“It’s very common for women—and men—to have a lot of questions throughout their pregnancy, especially if it’s their first,” says Dr. Devlin. “I encourage all women to ask as many questions as they want. The old saying really is true, there are no stupid questions.”

The following are some of the most commonly asked questions Dr. Devlin gets in her practice:

What am I not allowed to eat or drink?

Pregnant women should eat a healthy, balanced diet low in fat and high in fruits and vegetables. To protect the baby from potentially harmful bacteria and parasites, women should avoid undercooked or raw meat, lunch meats, hot dogs, raw eggs, and certain types of fish and cheese. Caffeine should be avoided during pregnancy, as it has been associated with a slight increase in the risk for miscarriage. Women with questions should speak with their doctor.

How much weight will I gain?

Normal weight gain during pregnancy is 25 to 35 pounds. However, it’s not uncommon for some women to gain less and some to gain more. In general, a woman should gain two to four pounds during her first three months of pregnancy and one pound a week for the remainder of the pregnancy.

Do I need to “eat for two” while I’m pregnant?

No. It’s true that women need extra calories during pregnancy, but they generally need to consume only 100 to 300 more calories than they did before they became pregnant to

meet the needs of their growing baby. Dr. Devlin does suggest, however, that pregnant women “drink water for two” to ensure adequate hydration.

Is smoking or drinking alcohol during pregnancy really that bad?

There is no research that establishes a safe level of drinking during pregnancy. Therefore, the U.S. Surgeon General recommends that pregnant women abstain completely. The same goes for smoking, even second-hand smoke. Both alcohol and smoking have been shown to increase the risk for complications during pregnancy.

Do I need to be screened for problems during my pregnancy?

There are several screening options for women during pregnancy. Some involve simple blood tests, and others are more invasive. Most screenings are done to look for genetic disorders or chromosomal abnormalities in the fetus. The decision to undergo these screenings is entirely up to the parents and should be discussed in depth with a doctor.

Should I breastfeed my baby?

Yes! Breastfeeding is one of the most beneficial things a mother can do to ensure her baby’s good health. A mother’s milk has just the right amount of nutrients that are needed for a baby’s growth and development. The longer the baby can breastfeed, the better—six months is good; a year is best. Holy Redeemer offers a number of classes and a lactation consultant to help new mothers with breastfeeding.

Is it OK to exercise while I’m pregnant?

Unless a woman is advised otherwise by her doctor, it is safe and healthy to exercise in moderation while pregnant. Walking and swimming are excellent activities but heavy lifting should be avoided. Women with questions about exercising while pregnant should speak with their doctor.

Delivering about 3,000 babies each year, the Maternity Center at Holy Redeemer Hospital and Medical Center helps moms prepare for a healthy pregnancy and guides them through labor and delivery. We offer a highly trained, experienced staff of maternity specialists including board-certified obstetricians, anesthesiologists, maternal-fetal medicine specialists, pediatricians, neonatologists and maternal/newborn nurses. If needed, Holy Redeemer provides on-site perinatology, antenatal testing and neonatal intensive care units. And moms can sign up for an array of classes on pregnancy, childbirth preparation and infant care, as well as consult with a lactation specialist for assistance with breastfeeding. For more information or to make an appointment with a Holy Redeemer obstetrician, call 1-800-818-4747 or visit www.yourebeautifulbaby.com.

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