

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

For Pregnant and Post-Partum Women

Physical activity during pregnancy is good for your overall health and gives your baby a healthy start. Moderate-intensity physical activity during pregnancy is safe and does not increase the risk of low birth weight, preterm delivery, or early pregnancy loss. If you haven't been regularly active before becoming pregnant, talk with your health care provider about the type and amount of physical activity that is right for you. Below are *minimum suggested guidelines*.

Aerobic Activities (Exercise)



Talk with your health care provider about how to adjust your activity during your pregnancy and the post-partum period.

Aim for at least two and a half hours (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week.

- ◆ Identify your current activity level and **slowly build up** over time if you haven't been regularly active.
 - ◆ **Start with light- or moderate-intensity activity** for short periods of time (for example, 5-10 minutes of walking once a week).
 - ◆ Build up over 3-4 weeks and then **spread the sessions throughout the week.**
- ◆ You can add your minutes together throughout the day.
 - ◆ Once you've built up, **do at least 10 minutes at a time.**
 - ◆ Make sure you drink plenty of water.



Physical Activity During Pregnancy and the Post-partum Period

If you do vigorous-intensity activity or lots of strength training before you become pregnant, you can keep being active during pregnancy and after giving birth. You should not have to reduce your activity levels too much, as long as you stay healthy.

While pregnant, you should not do exercises where you lie on your back after the first trimester. Avoid activities that increase the risk of falling or trauma to your belly, including contact or collision sports, like soccer and basketball, horseback riding, or downhill skiing. Physical activity during pregnancy is great for your health and gives your baby a healthy start!

Examples of moderate-intensity activities

(I can talk while I do them, but I can't sing.)

- ♦ Walking Briskly
- ♦ Tai Chi & Qi Gong
- ♦ Water Aerobics
- ♦ Yoga
- ♦ Ballroom and line dancing
- ♦ Tennis (doubles)
- ♦ Biking on level ground
- ♦ General gardening (raking, trimming shrubs)



Examples of vigorous-intensity activities

(I can only say a few words without stopping to catch my breath.)

- ♦ Aerobic dance
- ♦ Fast dancing
- ♦ Hiking uphill
- ♦ Tennis (singles)
- ♦ Race walking, jogging or running
- ♦ Swimming fast or swimming laps
- ♦ Biking faster than 10 miles per hour

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Sources:
2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health.

SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH SYSTEM

