



University of North Carolina Wilmington  
Abrons Student Health Center

## INSTRUCTION SHEET: PREGNANCY

The Student Health Provider has determined that you are pregnant. Pregnancy means that you are responsible for another life as well as your own.

Brief recommendations on caring for yourself during pregnancy follow. These guidelines will help until you receive prenatal (pre-birth) counseling. Prenatal care is *essential* to insure a safe and healthy pregnancy.

Realize that whole-body changes are taking place, even early in pregnancy. Common symptoms in early pregnancy include: fatigue, indigestion, nausea/vomiting, breast changes, and emotional swings.

### MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO ENSURE A SAFE & HEALTHY PREGNANCY:

1. Eat a balanced diet.
2. **Do not smoke.** Smoking can harm the fetus (as well as you). Smoking increases the chances of stillbirth, low birth weight, and infant death after birth.
3. Avoid alcoholic beverages; do not use illegal drugs. Alcohol and other drugs can harm your baby.
4. Take no medications, prescription or over-the-counter, unless okayed by a doctor who has discussed the risks and benefits of the medicine with you. In general, acetaminophen (Tylenol) is a safe medication to take for mild pain during pregnancy.
5. Avoid cleaning cat litter (risk of toxoplasmosis infection).
6. Cook meat thoroughly, including poultry, pork, and beef. Avoid lunch meat/deli meat that has been stored more than two to three days. Do not eat raw eggs. Wash fruits and vegetables under running water (listeriosis infection).
7. Avoid hot tubs, saunas, and over-exercising in hot, humid weather.
8. Do not eat portions of large ocean fish such as swordfish, shark, tilefish, or king mackerel (high mercury levels).
9. Take a prenatal vitamin daily. A vitamin with folate can prevent birth defects. Do not take other vitamins, extra vitamins, or herbal medicines before talking to your doctor.
10. The book, *What to Expect When You are Expecting*, provides an excellent overall view of pregnancy. Read other books on pregnancy. Seek information on the internet.
11. Make a follow-up appointment *as soon as possible* with your personal/ referral Ob-Gyn Doctor. The Ob-Gyn doctor can provide you with further information, answer questions, and work with you to *prevent* complications of pregnancy.
12. Mild abdominal discomfort and light spotting can be normal in pregnancy. Such symptoms should be reported to your doctor, however. Significant pain, bleeding more than spotting, or persistent cramping should all be evaluated by your Ob-Gyn doctor *promptly*. If you are unable to obtain prompt treatment with your Ob-Gyn doctor, go to the closest emergency department for evaluation.