

Toxoplasmosis: Cats, especially cats that roam outdoors, can carry a disease called toxoplasmosis. Exposure to toxoplasmosis during pregnancy can lead to birth defects. You can get this disease by ingesting particles from cat litter. Pregnant women should avoid having anything to do with cat litter boxes and from gardening in areas where cats are likely to have buried their stool. It is advised to wear waterproof gloves while gardening and wash your hands thoroughly afterward to prevent exposure. There is no danger in playing with, holding, or petting a cat.

Seatbelt use: It is important to always wear a seatbelt while in a moving car, even when you are pregnant. The safest type of seat belt is a shoulder/lap belt combination. The lap belt should be placed below your belly, touching your thighs, and low and snug on your hip bones. Never wear your seatbelt across your belly. Always wear the shoulder belt across your shoulder and chest and never tuck the shoulder belt under your arm or behind your back.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)

An STI can cause miscarriages, pre-term birth, birth defects and even death. A healthcare provider can screen for some of these infections including gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia and HIV. Some STIs can be cured with medication, while others cannot. However, steps can be taken to protect the baby.

UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Abuse is never okay. And it can often get worse during pregnancy. Living in an abusive relationship can harm you and your baby. You could miscarry or have pre-term labor. If you are being hurt or abused, please seek help using these helplines which are answered 24/7. Oklahoma SAFELINE, [1-800-522-SAFE](tel:1-800-522-SAFE) (7233) and RAINN, [1-800-656-4673](tel:1-800-656-4673).

DENTAL HEALTH

Pregnancy can make some dental conditions worse or create new ones. Regular checkups and good dental health habits can help keep you and your baby healthy. Some dental health risks associated with pregnancy include pregnancy gingivitis, increased risk of tooth decay and overgrowth of tissue in the gums. It is recommended you visit your dentist for a cleaning at least once during pregnancy. Contact your dentist if you have questions about changes to your gums or teeth.

I'M SICK TO MY STOMACH. WHAT CAN I DO?

Being sick to your stomach, often referred to as nausea and vomiting (morning sickness), can occur morning, day, or night. It is a completely normal change as your body grows a new baby and is caused by changes in your hormones. Things that can trigger nausea when pregnant are getting too hungry, smelling strong fragrances or odors, and feeling stressed. It generally occurs during the first part of pregnancy, becoming worse around 8-9 weeks, and subsiding by 12-13 weeks; however, some women experience it throughout the pregnancy.