

Self-Care

You are one of the most important people in your child's life. Your health, well-being and behaviors directly affect the health and well-being of your child. Living a healthy and positive lifestyle will help ensure that your baby develops healthy habits and attitudes that will last a lifetime. Your healthy habits will also encourage and inspire your partner to adopt those habits if she hasn't already.

Eating for a Healthy Baby – Eating well is important for your partner to give your baby the best start possible. Practicing your own good eating habits sets a great example for your growing family. It will also help you have the strength and health to participate in your child's life to the fullest. A well-balanced diet includes a variety of foods like fruits and vegetables, whole grains, protein and dairy. Making healthy meals at home is a great way to bond with your partner and talk about your hopes, plans and dreams for your baby. Visit www.texaswic.org for helpful tips on cooking and recommended foods and recipes.

Exercise – Staying active is important for your family. It can help your partner have more energy and make having a baby easier. Exercise can help with body aches and pains, and will make losing weight after delivery easier. Activity can also lower the risk of high blood pressure and diabetes during pregnancy. Exercising regularly also helps you maintain healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Something as simple as an evening walk for 20 to 30 minutes has heart health benefits for both of you and can help manage stress. This can lower the likelihood of bigger health issues later, such as heart attacks, heart disease and diabetes.





Drinking Alcohol - Alcohol use can cloud your judgement and change the way you make decisions. Severe alcohol use can lead to other serious health risks that can reduce your bond and involvement with your new baby. Women should not drink any type of alcohol during their pregnancy. Even a small amount of alcohol can hurt your baby's brain, heart, kidneys and other organs. Babies can get Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) if a woman drinks alcohol while pregnant. FASD can cause life-long problems, including intellectual disabilities and learning problems. You can support your partner by not drinking. Staying away from alcohol and other harmful substances is a healthy choice you can make for yourself and your family.

Smoking - Babies should never be around secondhand smoke.

Smoke can cause breathing problems for babies putting them at risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). In fact, babies are twice as likely to die of SIDS if they are around smoke. Babies of smokers have more lung problems, allergies and ear and nose infections than babies in smoke-free homes. Ask your guests who smoke to move outside, away from doors and windows.

If you still smoke, you may want to consider quitting for your health and for the health of your family. Even if you do not smoke directly around your baby, the smell and residue will still be on your clothes, under your nails and on your breath.

Dad's Guide to Fatherhood

Reference:

Texas Office of the Attorney General. (2019). Dad's guide to fatherhood. Texas Health and Human Services. <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/child-support/Publications/13-06-15131DadsGuidetoFatherhood-ACC.pdf>