

"FRIDGE FACTS"

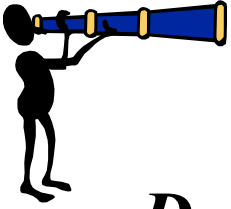


Stress and Pregnancy

Stress is defined as any emotional, mental or physical change that can cause a disruption in the normal routine. Stress comes from both external and internal sources. The following is a list of suggestions for helping you to relax which will reduce your stress.

- Relax for the health of your baby and yourself. Maternal stress can affect your developing baby.
- Recognize what your sources of stress are and evaluate what you can get rid of, and what you can change.
- Be aware that changes in hormones may change your moods and that is NORMAL.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.
- Give up being a perfectionist. While you should always expect your best, don't worry about the small things, especially housework!
- Pamper yourself (warm bubble baths, candles, massages)
- Exercise regularly (with health care provider's approval).





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Dealing with Stress While Pregnant

During your pregnancy you will notice physical and emotional changes in your body as well as your life. You may be finding this is a stressful time for you.

Stress is a part of everyone’s life. Some stress is actually good because it helps us meet the challenges in our life. Too much stress can be harmful and may result in having your baby too soon or having a baby that is too small.

Some signs of stress you may experience include: feeling you can’t control important things in your life, worry that you can’t handle your personal problems, feel like things aren’t going your way, feeling difficulties were getting bigger and you can’t overcome them, feeling nervous, experiencing sleep problems, difficulty concentrating, short temper and anxiety.

Here are a few things you can do:

- Talk to your friends, relatives, doctor or call Sentara’s Partners in Pregnancy Program OB Team.
- Write down what causes you stress and how it makes you feel. It may help you find ways to change stressful situations.
- Add laughter to your life. When we laugh, it makes us feel good and helps us to relax.
- Take a break. If you stand on your feet a lot, sit down for a few minutes every couple of hours.
- Take time for yourself. Plan time to exercise, read or anything else you find relaxing that is healthy for you and your baby.
- Listen to music.
- Don’t drink caffeine, smoke or take drugs. It can make the effect of stress worse.
- One of the easiest ways to relieve stress is deep breathing. Sit down or lie on your side and get comfortable. Slowly breathe in through your nose and exhale through your mouth. Say to yourself “I’m relaxed and calm”. Repeat several times until you feel relaxed and calm.