

Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby

The Ultimate Guide to Nutrition and Exercise During Pregnancy



*Separate
Workout's
Included for EACH
Trimester!*

Please
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other moms-to-be.

Jennifer Polimino

HEALTHY PREGNANCY, HEALTHY BABY©
The Ultimate Guide to Nutrition and Exercise During Pregnancy
 (Formerly *Slim Mom Secrets™*—Revised and Updated 2013)

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What You're Going to Discover in the Preface

- Who is Jennifer Polimino?
- *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Inspiring Story: A young woman facing common fears and challenges becomes an extraordinary example and mentor to other pregnant women and new moms!
- Why moms-to-be from around the globe are singing her praises!
- How Jen's personal commitment to **you** can permanently change your shape for the better.

Preface

Introducing Jennifer Polimino

It's my pleasure to introduce the author of the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* System, Jennifer Polimino, one of America's top pregnancy fitness experts. She has been a certified personal trainer for over 20 years, aerobics instructor, wife, and now a mother of two. She specializes in health, nutrition, and fitness for pregnant women—and she understands the challenges and needs of moms-to-be first-hand because she's been through it herself.

I'm confident you're going to be impressed with Jennifer—as I have been since 2005 and through both of her births that I was honored and privileged to attend—not only because of what she's accomplished, but also because of her dedication to helping others and the true joy that is evident in her heart.

Jen is one of those unique individuals that always seems happy and has boundless energy. She is extremely beautiful on the outside. That beauty is only surpassed by how truly beautiful she is on the inside. She is a rare example of a Proverbs 31 woman. Her adorable children are very well-behaved and genuinely nice, too. They are very thoughtful toward others, following in their mother's footsteps. They are also extremely smart, yet somehow humble. It's clear the Lord has answered many of her prayers. It's very evident that the healthy eating and regular exercise that Jen committed herself to both before and during her pregnancy made a tremendous difference in the physical and mental health of her children.

Like so many of us, Jennifer knows what it's like to struggle with having unwanted body fat. Back in the 1990's when she went away to college, she faced the typical challenge of weight gain. As a busy student concentrating on her

studies and campus life, she began feeding her emotions to deal with stress and hurt in her life. As a result, she ended up gaining 40 pounds of fat. On her petite 5'2" frame, that made a significant difference. (See photo below.)

Jennifer Faces the Challenge and Decides to Change

Jen was one of seven children in a close knit family growing up in Hawaii. When she went home to visit after being away for six months, her family couldn't help but notice the change in the way she looked.

"What the heck happened to *you*?" someone said. That's when she vowed she would do something about her weight problem and keep the pounds off for the rest of her life.

Making Good on a Promise

Unlike many of us, Jennifer kept her promise to herself. She went on a healthy eating program and hit the gym. She did aerobics, stretching, and resistance training. As a result, she got in the best shape of her life—losing 42 pounds *in the same time period that she gained it - just six months*. Later, she went on to study under some of the top fitness experts in the world and then developed her own program designed specifically to help women. She has since been featured in many fitness magazines.

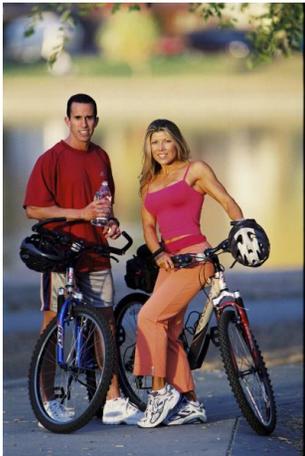


Jen, as a college freshman.



The new Jen today, age 42.

Her before and after photos are stunning! In fact, she looks like a different person. Jen is a shining example of what happens when you take charge of your life. You become different, both inside and out. Truly, Jennifer turned her life into an extraordinary success, both physically and professionally.



Jennifer married the love of her life, Dan Polimino, who has over twenty years' experience in fitness training. Together, they became known as "America's Healthiest Couple" and they were the fitness experts on Fox 31 News in Colorado for four years.

Moms Around the Globe are Singing Her Praises!

The *Denver Post*, the *Rocky Mountain News* and 17 other national newspapers and websites have featured Jennifer Polimino and her articles. Altogether, her writings have reached almost two million people each week. Now she speaks and writes about how to have a healthy pregnancy, as well as other Christian mommy-related topics. Clearly, this is one of her many passions, surpassed only by her dedication to her children.

Jennifer has spent over 20 years as a Certified Personal Trainer and aerobics instructor specializing in training for moms, before and after their pregnancy. She says her favorite part about what she does is just teaching people how to live healthy and showing them how much better they can feel about themselves when they're fit and in shape. Yet at the same time, she accepts you as you are and doesn't play the "shame game." She never makes degrading remarks, but rather only encourages you so you *want* to change.

Jennifer Polimino's Personal Commitment to YOU

Because you've made the commitment to learn how you can be your very best during your pregnancy, Jennifer is committed to helping you keep your goals. As you read through this eBook, you're going to discover all the information, help, and support you need to succeed. For additional support, Jen invites you to check out her other books:

[Praying Through Your Pregnancy](#)

[Praying Through Your Child's Early Years \(Age 0-5\)](#)

My own life is enriched because of knowing Jennifer Polimino, and I'm sure you're going to feel the same way. She and I are both from Hawaii. We're bonded for life! She is simply amazing, a genuinely wonderful and authentically kind person. I am a huge fan of hers! I know you will be, too.

For my dear sweet and lifelong friend, Jennifer.

I love you,

Your Birth Doula, your editor, and most importantly, your sister in Christ,
Janet Grabe, RN, BSN, ICCE, CD(DONA), BDT(DONA)

Jennifer and Dan Polimino's Charity

Because of Jennifer and Dan Polimino's commitment to health and fitness, and because they both have family members with cancer, they've started a non-profit organization called the Agape Ranch that teaches cancer patients about the health benefits of proper nutrition, supplementation, exercise, and faith in battling this disease.

Jen says, "Our goal is to someday bring men, women, and children from all over the world to a ranch in Hawaii for a week full of learning, support, relaxation, and healing. Once it's built, we will have experts in the field of new medical innovations to fight cancer—as well as alternative approaches—come to Hawaii to share their knowledge. This will include experts in proper eating and exercise to strengthen the immune system. This will also be an opportunity to tell them the Good News about Jesus. If we can save just one life for Jesus *and* from cancer, all of our efforts will be worth it."

If you would like to learn more about the Agape Ranch, please visit www.AgapeRanchHawaii.org.

If you know someone who is battling cancer, please click the link for a free eBook on how to help them fight this battle through proper nutrition. [New Beginnings](#)

Next, in the Introduction, Jennifer answers two important questions:

- 1) How do you go through your pregnancy without gaining unhealthy or excess weight so you can have the energy to take care of your baby?
- 2) How do you have a healthy pregnancy and dramatically improve your chances of having a good birth and a healthy baby?

She'll share some very personal (un-edited) photographs with you, as proof and encouragement that it is possible to have a healthy pregnancy and get back into your pre-pregnancy shape quickly afterward.

Welcome to the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* System.

What You're Going to Discover in the Introduction

- Infertility and Miscarriage – will living a healthy lifestyle help you to conceive and have a healthy pregnancy and baby?
- How to go through your pregnancy without gaining an excessive amount of unhealthy weight so you can look and feel your very best afterward and have the energy to take care of your baby.
- How to ease your worries by making sure you're doing everything possible to increase your chances of having a good birth and a healthy baby.
- Exclusive photos from my personal album prove it *is* possible to regain your pre-pregnancy shape quickly! You'll see me in my 41st week of pregnancy (yes, I was overdue!) and then less than one week later.

Introduction

Infertility and Miscarriage



After [Praying Through Your Pregnancy](#) came out, I began to receive letters and prayer requests from all over the world. It seemed that each day women were crying out and asking me to pray for them to conceive.

They either couldn't get pregnant or had experienced one or more miscarriages. These women badly wanted a baby. Many of these ladies also needed help in the nutrition and exercise department, so I decided to re-write my former Slim Mom Secrets eBook. Now it is titled: *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby*.

You may be one of these women who are still trying to get pregnant or you may be someone who has had a miscarriage. My heart goes out to you and I want you to know that God sees you and hears your cries for a baby. He understands what you are going through and I believe that if you've suffered a miscarriage, you will see your baby again someday in Heaven. 2 Samuel 12:22-23 He said, "What the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. For I said, "Who knows that the Lord will be gracious to me that the child may live?" But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

Unfortunately, miscarriage is all too common. About 1 in 4 pregnancies ends in miscarriage according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). In some of these cases, the woman may not even have realized she was pregnant. If the bleeding and miscarriage occurred around the time of her expected period, she may presume it was just that.

Most miscarriages occur early, before the 13th week of pregnancy. However, to a woman who tried for a long time to get pregnant or dreamed her whole life of having a baby, even these early losses can be very devastating. These women need our compassion and understanding, not our finger-wagging accusations about how they maybe didn't take the best care of themselves.

Many women want to know the cause. According to ACOG, most often it is a chromosomal abnormality. This typically means that something was wrong with the chromosomes in the egg or in the sperm. Sometimes, the cause will never be known until you get to Heaven and ask God. Some women seem to find their answer in this lifetime and some women may only find out in the blink of an eye after they pass into eternity and fall into the loving arms of Jesus.

Sometimes, the cause can be something related to hormones, infections, health issues with the mother, lifestyle (smoking, use of street drugs or even some legal medications, malnutrition, excessive caffeine consumption, or exposure to toxic substances or radiation), incorrect implantation after fertilization, maternal age, or maternal trauma.

I also believe that God, being the gentleman that He is, gave us guidelines to follow to the best of our ability: to eat healthy and take care of His "temple." 1 Corinthians 3:16: Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

Please don't get me wrong. *By no means* am I saying that you **will conceive or will not miscarry** if you eat perfectly and exercise regularly during your whole pregnancy. But I do believe that the healthier you are, the easier your pregnancy will be and the healthier your baby will be.

And if your temple is in top shape, you should have a much better chance of getting pregnant and carrying your baby to full term. However, your husband has a temple that he is responsible for, too. And that can certainly play a role both in the health of your baby and in your ability to avoid a miscarriage. In addition, he can be your enthusiastic cheerleader in your own quest to get and stay healthy. He can follow our guidelines in: [The Great Shape Up Program](#) and get his own temple into the best shape possible. After your baby arrives, the two of you could follow this bonding couples workout and together get back into the best shape of your lives. The Great Shape-Up Program is not for pregnant women. So, please about 6-8 weeks after you have you baby.

A recent study titled *A Good Beginning: Limiting Risks for Your Unborn Baby* by the Ohio State University confirmed that even too much caffeine may cause miscarriage and complications in birth. It also stated that drinking alcohol and even seemingly harmless drugs that are available over-the-counter may leave your baby with brain damage, mental retardation, and birth defects. **I am here to encourage you to live a healthy lifestyle free of alcohol, drugs or anything that will harm your baby.** From now on, for both you and your baby's sake, let's make a promise to live healthy for the rest of our lives!

If you are still trying to get pregnant, please don't give up hope. God knows the perfect time for your baby to be born. Give it to Him in prayer. I was in your boat. It took us almost six months before we finally got pregnant the first time. As a success-oriented woman, that was a challenging time. I personally believe that the stress that my husband was under was just too much for him at that time or it could have been related to the abortion I had when I was a teenage. Click [here](#) to read my testimony.

I want to add that the better shape you are in **before** you get pregnant, the easier it will be to bounce back. Remember, my goal is to help you live a healthy life, for both you and also for your baby.

Along with prayer and faith in our Almighty God, follow all of the nutritional advice given in the next chapters even before you conceive. You can also follow all of the exercises listed for women in their first trimester.

So if you are not yet pregnant, go ahead and jump to Chapter Two, *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Healthy Eating Program.

How to Be as Healthy as Possible for Both You and Your Baby

It is very important while you are pregnant not to gain a lot of unnecessary weight. I bet if you are like most of us ladies, you would like to get back into your pre-pregnancy shape quickly after your birth. Is that even possible? The answer is an enthusiastic *yes!* I'm living proof. And soon *you* will be, too. I'm going to show you exactly how to have a healthy pregnancy and be a healthy, fit mommy.

When I became pregnant, I was both excited and scared about becoming a mom. I was excited to meet my baby and scared about the unknown. I think many of us feel that way, but I have great news for you. God is still on His throne. You can give all your worries and cares to Him because He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7 Throw all your worry on Him because He cares about you.

You *can* get your pre-pregnancy body back soon after giving birth. You can even get yourself into better shape than ever before. Below, I share some

photographs from my personal photo album with you. By the way, these are completely real and unedited photos. As you'll see, I'm posing in the exact same position, even wearing the same outfit. I hope these photos give you hope that it is possible to go through pregnancy without gaining an unhealthy amount of excess fat and that it's not the beginning of the end for your body. I'll show you how to be fit and healthy for both you and your baby. 1 Corinthians 10:31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Often people ask how I managed to get back into shape so quickly after having a baby. I'm guessing you might be wondering the same thing. If so, you're in for some good news because what worked for me will work for you, too and I feel privileged to show you how.

From My Personal Photo Album (real and un-edited)



Here I am at 9 months pregnant – week 41



Here I am again, less than one week after giving birth to our son, Micah.

The #2 Most Important Question You'll Ever Ask

The #2 most important question you'll ever ask is, *"How can I have a healthy pregnancy and dramatically improve my chances of having a good birth and a healthy baby?"* Almost nothing could be more important than having a healthy child. It's such an awesome responsibility to bring a new life into the world. It truly is a gift from God! Psalm 127:3 Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb. The way you treat your own body during your pregnancy is the way you treat your baby growing inside you. **Everything you eat, drink, and breathe affects your baby, too.**

Making wise choices during your pregnancy has multiple benefits—for your health, for your weight control, for getting you ready to have the best birth experience you possibly can, and for the health of your baby. Proverbs 1:5 Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance.

The #1 Most Important Question You'll Ever Ask

Is there a God?

Yes, there is. And He loves you more than you could *possibly* imagine! After you have your first baby, you will feel as if your own heart is outside your body and now living in that little person. You will soon not even be able to remember what your life was like before your baby's arrival outside your womb.

You will wonder why anyone would choose *not* to have a baby with all the joy that your life now has. You'll finally understand what people meant when they said, "Your life won't feel complete until after you have your first baby." OK, now that I have your attention (which I hopefully do!), imagine the love that you have for your baby magnified 100 times, or 1,000 times, or a million times! God loves you more than you could *possibly* imagine!

He created YOU in *your* mother's womb. He is ready and waiting and indeed *calling* you into a personal relationship with Him. If you give it some thought, you'll realize the many ways and the many people and the many circumstances that He has used over the course of your life to call you into this personal relationship.

Why not answer that tug on your heart-strings now? Even as seemingly large and unattainable and infinite as He can seem at times, His call is really a very simple one: I created you. I loved you first. Now will you please love me back?

Even though there are many deep and mysterious things about Him, His call to you can be answered by saying a simple prayer something like this:

"Heavenly Father, I believe in You. I believe you are the only true God. I believe you sent Your only Son Jesus and that He died on a cross for my sins, past, present, and future. I believe He rose from the dead. I want to accept Him now as my personal Lord and Savior and ask Him to come and live in my heart. Thank you for answering my prayer!"

If you did pray that prayer for the first time, please write to me and let me know. I want to rejoice with you! After all, when you prayed it, the Bible tells us that all of the angels in heaven rejoiced, too! [Email me.](#)

After you have your baby, you will come to realize what a gift Jesus was. I would literally die for either of my children. So, I cannot begin to imagine what it must have been like for God to send His Son Jesus to die for me.

If you're not quite ready at this moment to say a prayer like that, please know that you can pray that prayer at any time in the future, maybe in the privacy of your bedroom late at night. Maybe it will be after you have been rocking your crying baby for a long time in the wee hours of the morning, feeling all alone and not knowing where to turn. Don't worry about getting all the words exactly right. It's the attitude of your heart that matters much more than any particular words.

Now that we have looked at the #1 most important question you will ever ask, I will share with you that you praying that little prayer is my #1 most desired

prayer for you. So, please be sure to let me know if and when you pray that for the first time.

My Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby System was created to help YOU and YOUR baby

That's right. I created this *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby System* because I believe with all my heart that it's extremely important. If you don't take care of yourself, how are you going to be the very best mother you can be?

Some people say you can't help stacking on the pounds when you become a mother. I think that is a bunch of nonsense. It is entirely possible to gain only the appropriate amount of weight for your body type and pregnancy. I have a chart in Chapter Three that shows how much healthy weight you should gain. Then after your baby is born, you will bounce back into your pre-pregnancy shape quickly, or even be in better shape than before!

So how can I believe in you without even knowing you? That's easy. I can say this with confidence, because I have an undeniable faith in the power of the human spirit and in an amazing God who will help you every step of the way, and because my experience has shown it to be true. As a personal trainer, I've seen the amazing difference that following a system like this can make. So-called "average" women can accomplish incredible things when they put their heart and mind into it. ***For me, prayer was the number one lifesaver while I was pregnant.*** Being pregnant gives us even more determination and inspiration than ever before. Now we are not just doing this for ourselves, we are also taking care of our bodies for our baby, too! Remember, this will be your baby's home for forty weeks, so let's make it a palace!

I also know that it's difficult to believe in yourself when you don't have the kind of support you need. So if you're feeling worried, scared, or confused, I'm here to lend a hand. We can walk through your pregnancy together, overcoming challenges along the way.

We have a wonderful praying community and you can know without a doubt that there are people all over this world who are praying for you when you leave a prayer request on our [Prayer Wall](#).

Remember, you truly do have the power to create the kind of healthy pregnancy that you want. With God all things are possible. Just ask God to help you and He will. Matthew 19:26 With man this is impossible, but *with God all things are possible*.

Remember, this is the beginning of an exciting new chapter of your life. You are going to be a mom! It's time to get really excited and to start taking care of yourself *now!*

Don't forget, I'm always at <http://www.PrayForYourBaby.com> to help you along with your pregnancy. Just leave me an [email](#). And don't forget, you can interact with other pregnant women from around the globe! We have a caring and supportive community on our [Prayer Wall](#). Please join us right away and let us know how we can pray for you.

OK, let's begin our journey together in Chapter One where I discuss some of the challenges of pregnancy, some of which I experienced myself. I'll first share a cute story about "women's intuition."

What You're Going to Discover in Chapter One

- Essential information to help you feel as good as possible during your pregnancy.
- Eleven tips to cure morning sickness and all-day nausea.
- The quick, easy way to settle your tummy when you experience indigestion or heartburn.
- Eliminate embarrassing gas and painful bloating.
- One easy exercise to stop leg cramps.
- Stop constipation by using these easy tips.
- How I got relief from back pain in my third trimester.
- Six tips for preventing hemorrhoids.
- How to say goodbye to the “blahs” and feel happier during your pregnancy.

Chapter 1

Feeling Great During Your Pregnancy

Introduction

A woman just knows. We can't always explain it in scientific terms, but we *know*. We have a feeling some call “Women's Intuition.” I believe that it's God speaking to me.

Like the night my husband and I found out I was pregnant. I looked at Dan and smiled.

“It's a boy,” I said.

He just laughed. You may have also experienced that look a man gives when he turns his head kind of sideways and laughs because he knows you can't prove what you're saying. But I knew and I was right. We had our little Micah at 41 ½ weeks. Whew! He was almost two weeks late. But, I'll tell you the rest of that story in Chapter Seven.

My husband and I waited until we'd been married for five years before we started our family. When I turned 34, we just knew that this was the right time for us. I had our son one month after my 35th birthday.

One of the reasons I think pregnancy is such a special time is because you start getting motherly instincts about things. This is something to feel good about, to celebrate. It's also a time of change and a time of ups and downs. The ups are the good times like announcing the news that you are expecting a baby to family and friends. The downs are the difficult times like not feeling well. But fortunately, there are things you can do to make yourself feel better.

During this magical time when the new life inside of you is growing into a fully developed baby, your body and your emotions go through a lot of changes. Some of these changes are fantastic and others are challenging. Like all expectant moms, I faced challenges—days when, for one reason or another, I didn't feel my best. The truth is that pregnancy isn't always a walk in the park.

But instead of getting down in the dumps, I found that I could meet these challenges head on. During these times, I sought out natural cures and solutions and I'm happy to share with you which ones worked best for me. Then at the end of this chapter, I'm going to reveal my *very best tips* for feeling good emotionally while pregnant. You can use these tips to feel great on your good days and okay even on your "bad" days. I want you to enjoy your pregnancy even more than I did because this special time only lasts for nine months...well, really ten months☺.

Nausea and Morning Sickness

One of the first (and most common) challenges women face is feeling nauseated. In fact, for some, this is the first clue that they're pregnant since it usually begins at about the same time as they start to miss their first period. Although it's been called "morning sickness," some women find it lasts pretty much all day during the first trimester. Morning sickness is caused by hormonal changes, and it does *not* affect your baby, so don't worry about that. You will need to make sure you eat as healthy as possible, though.

The good news is that the sick feeling usually disappears by the 14th week. In the meantime, you can do some things to minimize it.

Minimizing Morning Sickness

One morning I woke up feeling really sick. I thought, "Oh, this is so not fun." After throwing up, I scrambled fast to find a way to eliminate morning sickness. These remedies worked and I never vomited again. I'm happy to share with you what worked for me.

I put some whole wheat or spelt crackers or [pretzels](#) by my bed so I could have them with a glass of water first thing in the morning, even before I got up for the day. If you're sensitive or allergic to wheat, you could eat gluten free crackers instead, available at all natural foods stores. Another idea is to keep a little granola by your bedside. The key is having something handy that sits well with your tummy and doesn't spoil.

I also discovered that the first prenatal vitamin I took didn't agree with me at all. Then I found one that settled my tummy. The prenatal vitamin I recommend is formulated especially to be gentle on your tummy and to help ease nausea. These vitamins are complete and of the highest quality. They are gluten free, organic, and made from whole food. You can learn more about these vitamins [Here](#).

Like me, my sister found that she also needed to try a couple of different prenatal vitamins before she found one that helped to ease her nausea. When I took the supplements that agreed with me everyday, I never had that awful nauseous feeling again.

More Tips to Help Nausea

Here are the best tips that helped me to feel great throughout the day.

- Eat five small meals a day, spaced three hours apart and include protein in each one (more in Chapter Two)
- Avoid odors and foods with a strong odor
- Avoid rich, spicy, and fried foods
- Eat vital, live foods such as raw fruits and vegetables
- Keep your crackers or nuts with you always, so you never get overly hungry
- Keep hydrated by drinking ten 12-oz. glasses of water each day
- Make a natural tea out of hot water and grated ginger or try ginger ale made with real ginger and sweetened with honey
- Try an [Acupressure Wrist Band](#) used for seasickness
- Relax and breathe fresh air

- Distract yourself with a good book or a visit with a friend
- Take a prenatal vitamin that agrees with your stomach

If you find that you can't get past the nausea to the point where it is interfering with your meals and you're losing weight, ask your doctor about a medication that could help you. Some doctors think morning sickness is actually a good sign that the placenta is developing well. So don't be alarmed, realize it's a common occurrence, and that it will go away eventually.

Heartburn and Indigestion

In spite of its name, heartburn has nothing to do with your heart. Heartburn (also called acid reflux) is a burning sensation that starts in your stomach and rises up toward your throat. It's common for women to experience this for the first time during their pregnancy, because hormonal changes relax the muscles in your digestive tract and in the valve between your stomach and your esophagus. This enables food and acid to seep back up especially when you're lying down. Progesterone also slows digestion and your placenta is producing a *lot* of progesterone. Even though it's uncomfortable, it's not dangerous. And like most pregnancy ailments, it goes away after your baby is born.

I had heartburn near the end of my pregnancy, but some women experience it sooner. It's most common in the second and third trimesters when your body size is changing the most. I found the very best prevention for heartburn was chewing this natural [peppermint gum](#) right after eating. That really seemed to calm it down for me.

If you experience heartburn, you may also want to try the following:

- Wear loose, comfortable clothing
- Prop yourself up with pillows
- Don't eat big meals or extend your stomach with lots of fluid during meals
- Chew your food thoroughly
- Don't eat right before going to bed at night
- Avoid carbonated beverages, chocolate, citrus foods, processed meats, and fatty foods

TIP: Since your stomach simply won't hold as much food anymore, but your appetite may still be in full force in the second and third trimesters, here is a tip that may help. Make up your normal plate of food and eat half of it. You will typically feel full by then. An hour later, eat the other half.

Gas and Bloating

The same hormonal changes that cause heartburn and indigestion also cause gas and bloating for some women. Beans, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, onions, and brussel sprouts are common culprits. Some people have trouble with soda and fruit drinks containing fructose. I highly recommend eliminating these anyway because they're nothing but empty calories. Swallowing too much air can also cause gas and bloating, so take care to chew your food thoroughly. You could try [Beano](#), a natural food enzyme, but be sure to ask your doctor first. Other remedies that may help include avoiding large meals and getting proper exercise.

Leg Cramps

Leg cramps during pregnancy occur most often during the second and third trimesters. This is due to the weight of the baby and expanded uterus putting extra pressure on the blood vessel that return blood from your legs to your heart. Another contributing factor is the nerves leading from your trunk to your legs.

One night I woke up with such a ferocious leg cramp that my leg still hurt four days later.

To ward off leg cramps, keep hydrated with water and stretch your legs regularly using the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Stretching Routine in Chapter Three. Avoid getting too tired. Stretch your calves and rotate your ankles before going to bed at night. You can also try a warm bath to relax your muscles.

I recommend making sure you get enough calcium and potassium because working together, they are essential to maintain proper fluid balance, nerve impulse function, and muscle function. Bananas, apricots, watermelon, fresh orange juice, spinach, carrots, and lean meats are all good sources of potassium. You can find excellent sources of calcium under "Especially for Moms-to-be" in Chapter Two.

Constipation

It's not fun to talk about, and it's not fun to have constipation. But, fortunately, this challenge is fairly easy to cure. Drink lots of water all throughout the day and follow my *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Activity Program.

Remember, fiber is your friend. You need 25-35 grams of fiber daily. Here are some excellent sources of fiber (in grams):

Cereal

All Bran Breakfast Cereal, ½ cup	15g
Fiber One Breakfast Cereal, ½ cup	13g
Total Raisin Bran Cereal, 1 cup	6g

Vegetables

Pinto beans, ½ cup	10.3g
Kidney beans, ½ cup	8.2g
Corn, cooked, ½ cup	4.7g

Fruit

Apple with skin, medium	4.2g
Pear, Bartlett	4g
Prunes, 4 dried	3.1g

Water facilitates your body's absorption of fiber, so remember to drink water throughout the day. When you feel like you have to go to the bathroom, don't ignore it or put it off. And relax. Stress can cause a lot of different things and constipation is one of them. A probiotic or acidophilus might also help to balance out any intestinal issues.

Back Pain

In the last trimester, back pain happens to most of us, because we're carrying extra weight out in front of our bodies. This is why it's so important to strengthen your core muscles throughout your pregnancy. If you're tempted to skip the resistance exercises in this program, don't. Remember that having a strong body is going to serve you very well during your labor and with your new baby.

When I was in my ninth month, I had a lot of back pain so I treated myself to a prenatal massage. Betty, my massage therapist, came to my house with her massage table. Since I didn't want to have my tummy hanging down through one of those made-for-pregnancy tables, I used a regular massage table and laid on my side with a pillow between my knees for support.

Betty used a [Scent-Free Massage Oil](#). Anything without an irritating odor, such as a plain virgin olive oil is okay. It was wonderful to relax and let go of my stress and anxiety. Betty and I would also have the best conversations. If you can have a licensed massage therapist, I think that's the best antidote to back pain. If you have a husband or partner *who is trained* in massage, they can "do the honors." But if they haven't been educated on how to specifically massage a

pregnant woman, it's best that they don't try. You wouldn't want them to inadvertently cause injury or premature labor.

You can also try an all-natural [Hot and Cold Pack](#). Using this as a cold pack on my back really helped to ease my pain at night. If you prefer warmth, make sure it's only warm and never hot! And, never put it on your belly.

Hemorrhoids

Pregnant women are vulnerable to getting hemorrhoids because your growing uterus puts pressure on your veins. The best thing you can do to prevent hemorrhoids is to eat healthy foods, drink plenty of water, and get enough fiber. Fiber is the biggest secret to avoid hemorrhoids. Other tips:

- Don't strain when you go to the bathroom
- Use a cold compress followed by sitting in a warm bath for 15 minutes
- Drink ten 12-oz. glasses of water daily
- Do Kegel exercises (more on that later)
- Eat foods high in fiber, like lentils, black beans, pears, oranges, apple with its skin, blueberries, Bran Flakes and Old Fashioned Oatmeal

I got hemorrhoids *after* my son was born. If you go through hours and hours of natural labor like I did, that will greatly increase your chances of getting them. Or if you end up pushing for a long time. Pushing upright in the squatting position can sometimes bring them on, too. The hospital gave me [Tucks](#) which helped, but I also found this great natural cream called [Rhoid Balm](#). You can find it or at most natural grocery stores. It seemed to really help me a lot.

Here's a very unusual technique occasionally recommended by my Doula

Wash a potato VERY well with soap and water.

Rinse thoroughly.

Peel all of the skin off the potato.

If needed, wash thoroughly with soap and water again.

Rinse well again.

Grate the potato into a poultice.

Put 1-2 tablespoons of the poultice into some disposable cheesecloth.

Chill the cheesecloth/poultice in the refrigerator.

Apply directly to the hemorrhoids for 10-15 minutes, then toss in the trash.

Do this up to 3 times a day.

Seems to work miracles for some people, although I never tried it myself.

I Overcame My Biggest Challenge and Started Feeling Good

I found that the secret to feeling good and never having a really awful day was in my *outlook* about being pregnant. I confess that this was a big challenge for me at first. During my first trimester, my emotions were on a roller coaster ride. I'm normally a happy and outgoing person. But suddenly my hormones were going crazy and I actually felt depressed. It didn't help that it was the holiday season. It was our tradition to visit both my husband's family and my family during Christmas. But this particular year we weren't able to go to see my family in Hawaii. Instead, we went to visit my husband's family in California, which is usually a wonderful time. But since it was Christmas and a time for family traditions, it just made me miss my family all the more. That really set me off and I just cried and cried for days.

I was starting to gain weight, but still had body issues from the past. Since I had put on those 42 pounds in college over 15 years ago, I didn't want to slip back into being overweight again. I was truly worried and scared about that. I think the best thing you can do is to talk with someone and pray. Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

I ended up talking with a Christian counselor and she was wonderful. She helped me to see that gaining weight while pregnant and feeling different was truly an amazing miracle, the most beautiful thing in the world. So with her help, I embraced my pregnancy as a gift from God. I realized I had a choice to gain only the healthy amount of weight. I learned that I didn't have to fear becoming over-weight again. Please remember I had previous weight issues long before I was ever pregnant. You may not have these concerns, but many other women do. That's why I wanted to share this story with you.

I also took my counselor's advice and instead of saying to myself, "I feel awful," I'd say, "I'm having a challenge with this." Then I'd deal with it. I also started trying to find the humor in everything that I was stressing about. Laughter really is good medicine. It's almost impossible to feel depressed when you're smiling and laughing. So rent one of your favorite videos and just sit back and laugh! I love [Tim Hawkins](#). He's hilarious! He entertains with clean comedy and funny songs. The same is true for Anita Renfro. She's a Christian Comedienne and is married to a former pastor. She's so funny. She's the one who wrote and sings "The Mom Song." Don't pee your pants when you watch either of these people!

By keeping my mind focused on the positive, I found that I really did feel better. The reality of being pregnant is that you won't feel your best physically each and every day. But on the days when you aren't feeling good, you can still be happy on the inside. You don't have to sink down into depression because God gave us the ability to control our own thoughts. And if you can remember that this "too shall pass," before you know it, your baby will be here. Philippians 4:8-9 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.



My Five Best Tips For Emotional Well-Being

1. Pray and let go of your fear.
2. Keep a positive outlook.
3. Remember it's temporary.
4. Embrace your pregnancy as being a special time.
5. Talk with someone who can help you.

The best way for me to keep from falling into that dark abyss was to pray and focus on God's Word. I love [Jesus Calling](#), a great little daily devotional book. It reminds me that Jesus is right here, walking alongside me at all times, speaking right to me.

"It's Only Nine Months"

People may tell you, "It's only nine months." That may be true, but when I was pregnant, I felt like the nine months were *nine years!* As I now have the joy of watching my son grow, it

seems like the first nine months of his life in the womb just sped by. I can't believe that Micah's going to be seven this year and my little Malia just turned four!

Once you become a mommy, nine months really does go by fast. It helps to remind yourself that the discomforts are only for a little while. You don't have to be scared because they're a normal part of being pregnant. There are scientific and physiological reasons why you feel the way you do.

In Chapter Two, I'm going to show you how you can eat to have a healthy baby and only gain the amount of weight that's healthy for you. It worked for me and it will work for you, too. Then later on (in Chapter Six: *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Beauty Secrets*), I'll talk about concerns that affect your outward appearance such as stretch marks and varicose veins. Along with that, I'll offer some suggestions on the safest and most natural way to deal with these conditions.

What You're Going to Discover in Chapter Two

- How much weight should you gain during your pregnancy?
- The best way to add calories so you don't put on excess body fat—and how many calories you need to add for your growing baby.
- The complete *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Healthy Eating Program. Eliminates all the confusion and guesswork!
- 87 “pregnancy foods” that provide the nutrients you and your baby need for optimum health!
- One simple thing you can do to help prevent your child from having A.D.D.
- Six foods that endanger your unborn baby—you've got to read this!
- Sample daily meals & snacks—one for each trimester. See how I ate to keep my body in good shape and give my baby all the nutrition he needed.
- Five of my special *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Recipe Favorites you can whip up for your whole family to enjoy.
- Zap food cravings using the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Craving Busters.
- Why the old saying, “You're eating for two” is the worst advice you can ever follow!
- The Top Ten Tips to control food cravings and to have a happy, worry-free pregnancy.
- The *best* pregnancy grocery list you've ever seen! Print it, and shop with confidence. You'll want to keep using this even after your baby is born
- What is pica? You may not believe this!

Chapter 2

Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Healthy Eating Program

Introduction



What I've loved most about working as a personal trainer all these years is helping women achieve their own personal best. For example, I had a client who was already a mother of two. During the period of time that I trained her, she became pregnant with her third child. She told me she had a difficult time during her first two pregnancies, but this time was different. With my coaching, she ate healthy and worked out for her entire pregnancy. As a result, she said this last pregnancy was her easiest by far! She could hardly believe that this birth was much less difficult nor how quickly she bounced back and how healthy her baby was—all because she took proper care of her body. Hearing success stories like this is what inspires me. I love helping other women and seeing the difference it makes in their lives.

When you take care of yourself, you're going to look and feel your best. Of course, this is important *all* the time, but even more so when you're responsible for the new life inside you. If you haven't always made the healthiest choices or if you haven't cultivated all the right habits, **now** is the time to start a new chapter in your life. Even if you're heavier than you'd like to be right now or you're already into your second or third trimester, **it's never too late** to start on the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Healthy Eating Program*. In fact, this is the *perfect time* for you to jump on board.

In my experience, the number one reason most women don't fully gain control over their weight (pregnant or not) is because they don't have the information and support they need. That's what the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby System* is all about—empowering you to feel and to be your very best.

The first question a lot of moms-to-be have is about weight gain. They want to know the proper amount of weight to gain and how much is too much, along with where the pregnancy weight is going to be distributed. So let me answer those questions for you.

How Much Weight Should You Gain?

Society puts so much pressure on us as women to be thin. As a result, some women develop disorders of either extreme. Some worry constantly about their weight. Others become too thin. Therefore, it's important to ignore that type of thinking and to *only* concentrate on being healthy and on having a healthy baby.

After all, if you gain too little weight during your pregnancy, that could mean big trouble for your baby and you don't want that either. Gaining the proper amount of weight during your pregnancy is desirable and necessary. So how much weight should you gain? That depends on your pre-pregnancy weight, so let's first look at the chart below (provided by American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the National Academy of Sciences), and then take a look at the "Healthy Weight Gain Guide" right below it.

PRE-PREGNANCY WEIGHT RECOMMENDATION

Height	5'	5'2	5'4	5'6	5'8	5'10
Underweight	<102 lbs.	<107	<116	<123	<130	<138
Normal	102-132	107-141	116-152	123-161	130-171	138-181
Overweight	133-147	142-157	153-170	162-180	172-191	192-202
Obese	>148 lbs.	>158	>171	>181	>192	>203

HEALTHY WEIGHT GAIN GUIDE

Pre-Pregnancy Weight	How Much You Should Gain
Underweight	30 – 40 pounds
Average weight	25 – 35 pounds
Overweight	15 – 25 pounds
Obese	15 pounds
Having twins	35 – 45 pounds

Please Note: These are approximate weight guidelines for general information.

WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION DURING PREGNANCY

Baby:	6 – 10 pounds
Placenta:	1 ½ - 3 pounds
Amniotic fluid:	2 pounds
Uterus increase:	2 - 5 pounds
Maternal breast tissue:	1 – 3 pounds
Maternal blood supply:	3 – 4 pounds
Maternal retained water	4 pounds
Maternal fat stores for delivery and breastfeeding:	7 pounds

Sources: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and The March of Dimes

My Pregnancy Weight Gain

During my pregnancy, I gained about 24 pounds (I'm 5' 2"). The weight I gained was "baby weight" distributed mostly in my tummy. Although everybody's different, I gained my weight fairly evenly throughout my pregnancy—about eight pounds per trimester. Some women don't gain much in the beginning and then make up for it in the last trimester. Your body knows what it's doing, so you just have to listen to your own body while making healthy choices along the way. Obviously, no one wants to gain 20 pounds in the first trimester.

I weighed, photographed, and documented my progress throughout my pregnancy so that I could use it to help other expectant moms. Remember that I had already been a Certified Personal Trainer for many years by that time. However, you don't want to become obsessed with your weight or freak out when you put on healthy pounds.

Some women decide not to weigh themselves between doctor visits and that's perfectly fine. Some stand backward on their doctor's scale so they don't see their weight. If you want to do that, it's up to you. But please remember that gaining weight during your pregnancy is a beautiful and normal thing. It's nothing to feel insecure or ashamed about. It's a glorious experience—a blessing from God—that should be embraced and cherished. After all, you are giving the gift of life to your baby and your family! 1 Corinthians 19-20 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Ignore Bad Advice

You may have well-meaning friends who say things like, "Eat up! You're eating for two!" While it's true that you're eating for yourself and for your growing baby, it is absolutely *not* true that you should eat enough for two people. Your baby doesn't require a lot of calories right now!

If you go hog-wild eating anything and everything that strikes your fancy, you'll be sorry later when you're struggling to take off the weight. What's more, to increase the chances of having a healthy baby you need to make sure you get the correct amount of essential nutrients. You don't want to fill up on "empty calories" that don't properly nourish the new life growing inside of you. More research is coming out about the unhealthy and long-term consequences for babies whose mother's had unhealthy and high fat diets during their pregnancies.

How Much Extra Do You Need to Eat?

You need 300 extra calories a day when you're pregnant. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, a woman of normal weight usually consumes 1,800 – 2,200 calories a day, so you'd add 300 to that for your total of 2,100 – 2,500 calories a day during pregnancy. To give you an idea of what 300 calories looks like, here are some healthy samples of a 300-calorie snack:

- Pita stuffed with veggies, 30g low-fat cheese, and a sliced tomato
- Granola bar, 8 dried apricots, 1 cup of skim milk
- Three bean salad (250 ml)
- 6 oz. skinless grilled chicken
- 1 ½ oz. peanuts, about 38 peanuts
- 1 ½ oz. almonds, about 24 almonds
- A six-inch turkey sub with healthy vegetables

The Best Way to Add in Those Extra Calories

Have your extra 300 calories each day by adding in a healthy snack or you may also have one of the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Craving Busters*. This way you'll accomplish two things at once: You'll get the extra calories you and your baby need *and* control food cravings at the same time. I'll explain. Your daily meal plan consists of 3 healthy meals and 2 snacks. One of these snacks may be one of the Craving Busters. It will only be 300 calories and not enough to throw you completely off-track. It will help keep food cravings at bay. This will enable you to gain the appropriate amount of weight without going crazy by binge eating, especially on fatty foods which may risk your baby's long-term health.

First, I'll give you the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Healthy Eating Program*, and then I'll cover my Craving Busters. So you've got a lot to look forward to. Who knew being pregnant could be so much fun!

The Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Healthy Eating Program

The Daily Plan

You are what you eat—that's absolutely true—but now it's even more important because everything you eat goes into your baby as well. When you think about that, you realize how important it is to make the right food choices. Your baby will either benefit or suffer as a result!

Picture in your mind an expectant mother who constantly eats unhealthy, junk foods full of saturated fats, sodium, cholesterol, and preservatives. That actually describes a typical American fast-food diet. Are her muscles hidden under layers of body fat? Is she constantly tired? Does she get sick all the time or frequently feel "down in the dumps?" Very likely the answer to all those questions is "yes."

Now picture a healthy expectant mother who nourishes her body with precise amounts of quality proteins, fruits, vegetables, complex carbohydrates, and good fats. What's different about these two women? A lot! Inside *and* out!

Here's an analogy: Let's say you're going to build a house. But instead of using only top-notch supplies, you end up using inferior materials—rotten wood, cracked cement, faulty wiring, and leaky pipes. You'll end up with a run-down, falling apart house. Right?

Well, the same thing happens to your body (and to a degree, your baby's body) when you feed it *inferior* food. You get a *run-down* body—meaning you get a body that is unhealthy. If you eat like that, you also fail to nourish your baby properly which can affect their development and much more.

My point is this: **The way our bodies look on the outside and feel on the inside are *directly* related to what we eat.** This applies to your growing baby as well.

But here's the problem. Most people don't know how to properly feed their bodies. Most likely, this isn't something their own mothers have taught them. Fortunately, proper nutrition doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, it can be boiled down to a few very simple strategies that are easy to follow.

I'd like to share those with you now.

Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Top Recommended Foods

Let's start with the building blocks of your body.

Proteins

Proteins are *very* important for everyone. Why? Because protein, along with resistance exercise, actually helps your body become firm and toned. It strengthens your bones and muscles, and increases your metabolism. Protein is also one of the important building blocks in tissue healing.

Protein takes more energy for your body to digest and use than simpler foods like carbohydrates or sugars. By eating protein frequently, you speed up your metabolism due to something called the *thermic effect* of foods. The thermic effect of protein is the highest as compared to other food types.

This is exciting news for pregnant moms who are concerned about gaining more than the healthy amount of weight. After eating protein, your metabolic rate will increase by approximately 17 – 20 percent. In other words, if you eat 100

calories of protein, 17 to 20 calories will be used just to digest the protein! By comparison, the thermic effect of carbohydrates is typically around 10 percent while fat is just 5 percent.

For the mom-to-be, getting enough protein is absolutely essential. This is especially true in the second and third trimesters when your baby is growing the most. Also, you are nourishing your breasts, placenta, and amniotic fluid throughout pregnancy, but even more so as they increase in size in preparation for the birth.

During pregnancy, your blood volume increases by up to 50 percent, so you need extra protein to build those additional blood cells and to produce breast milk. Lack of protein can cause low birth weight and impair your baby's brain development.

You need about 70 grams of protein each day (about 4 servings of protein-rich foods), more if you're having twins or a multiple birth.

Here are some excellent protein-rich foods:

- Egg whites or egg substitutes
- Chicken breast
- Whole turkey breast
- Lean ground turkey breast
- Extra lean beef
- Low-fat cottage cheese
- Low-fat yogurt
- Shrimp
- Orange roughy
- Water-packed tuna
- Salmon
- Cod
- Perch
- Halibut
- Soy burger patty
- Veggie lunch meat

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates often get a bad rap. And it's a shame because carbs are your body's preferred source of fuel. We all need a lot of fuel, especially when we're pregnant! Some cells, like your brain and blood cells, are very limited in the types of energy they can use. They have a strong "preference" for carbohydrates. If you've ever been on a no-carb diet and experienced that light-headed, queasy, hit-the-wall feeling, you know what I mean.

The key is to eat the *right* carbohydrates. Yes, there are right carbs and wrong carbs. Simple carbs are definitely the *wrong* ones. They are highly processed and stripped of their nutrient content, except for some intense empty calories. Examples of simple carbohydrates include soda pop, candy bars, ice cream, donuts, and processed white bread and rolls. Even though they may be tempting, these foods are the ones that spike your blood sugar then send it

crashing, zapping your energy and creating a breeding ground for cravings and body fat. Limit your intake of these to very occasional splurge snacks.

On the other hand, complex carbohydrates have all the right stuff. These foods are the ones that feed your body the energy it needs in a steady fashion. So, they don't cause that awful blood-sugar roller coaster stuff. They also add fiber and important vitamins and minerals to your diet.

Complex carbohydrates can be further broken down into what I like to call "Energy Carbs" and "Color Carbs." Energy carbs are nutrient-dense turbo chargers. Whole grains and starchy foods are great examples of energy carbs. If you're looking for stamina and vitality, these little gems are your best bet.

Here are some of my energy carb selections:

- Whole-grain bread and muffins
- Whole-grain pasta
- Corn tortillas
- Yams
- Whole-grain oatmeal (not instant)
- Brown rice
- Wild rice
- Baked potatoes
- Sweet potatoes
- Long-cooking cream of wheat (not instant)

Color carbs are rich sources of fiber, but their real claim to fame is in providing phytonutrients. Phytonutrients are important chemicals found in plants that support a variety of health functions. A specific family of phytonutrients called anthocyanins are the compounds responsible for giving fruits and veggies their vibrant color.

Here's the real kicker though—anthocyanins also pack a powerful antioxidant punch. Different color pigments carry different health benefits. For example, lutein, an important nutrient for eye health, is found in yellow-green vegetables such as corn and peas. Orange carotenoids found in carrots, pumpkins, and apricots have been found to enhance immune-system function. Sulphorapane gives broccoli and brussel sprouts their green color, but it also happens to be a potent weapon against cancer. And reddish-purple anthocyanins found in blueberries, blackberries, and plums pump up circulation and protect the brain.

Here are some great examples of my tasty and healthy color carbs:

- Dark lettuce
- Broccoli
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Zucchini
- Tomatoes
- Carrots
- Yellow squash

- Plums
- Spinach
- Red, orange, and yellow peppers
- Peas
- Pumpkin
- Brussel sprouts
- Tangerines
- Apricots
- Oranges
- Pineapples
- Corn
- Beets

Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Foods For You and Your Baby

Don't forget, I included the complete list of TOP 87 FOODS that will benefit both you and your baby in a big way on the download page. Make sure you print it out. These foods help your baby develop his or her mind and body, and they support your own health as well.

Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Favorite Healthy Snacks

While snacks may not be one of the primary food groups, they certainly are important. Healthy snacks can give you critical boosts in energy, keep your metabolism humming between meals, and combat the “craving monster.”

But stay away from typical snacks, like candy bars and fast food. Instead, keep a sampling close by of these pick-me-up healthy choices:

- 1/2 cup fresh raw vegetables & 1/4 cup low-fat yogurt dip
- 1 cupped handful of whole-grain crackers & 1 tablespoon of organic peanut butter or almond butter (occasionally)
- 8 ounces of low-fat yogurt & 1/4 cup low-fat granola
- 1 fruit smoothie using egg or rice protein (more on these in a minute)
- 1/2 cup of low-fat cottage cheese and fresh fruit
- Grilled chicken (or tuna) in a small salad with fat-free dressing
- 1/2 of a tuna, chicken or turkey sandwich with reduced-fat mayo

Now, of course, these aren't the only healthy low-fat foods you can have as a snack. There are many others, but these are the ones I most highly recommend.

Don't forget that food choices aren't the only important factor to consider. How the food is prepared is just as important. Avoid foods that are fried or drenched in fatty sauces. Opt instead for natural, healthful foods that are steamed, grilled, broiled, or baked. Once you've made a good choice of healthy foods, next you need to select the right amount. A mountain-high stack of healthy food can add up to a mountain of calories.

How Much Is the Right Amount?

Choosing the right amount of food to eat at each of your three meals is easy, and you don't have to tote around a scale. Just imagine an 8-inch plate divided into thirds. In one third is a protein portion, in another is an energy carb portion, and in the last third you will place a color carb portion. Simply combine one protein, one energy carbohydrate, and one color carb portion from the list of my recommended foods. Add seasoning for taste, and you've got a perfect meal!

How to Choose Your Portion Sizes

The whole concept of portions might seem complex at first, but I bet you know more than you think you do. Is one whole-wheat pancake serving really supposed to be the size of your Thanksgiving turkey platter? Is the *huge* bowl of pasta at that family-style Italian restaurant truly only *one* serving or portion? The answer to both questions is a resounding **no**. See, you already knew that, didn't you? You're smarter than you think you are!

The following describes how to determine a portion for protein, energy carbs, and color carbs at each of your three meals during the day.

- A portion of protein (like lean red meat, chicken, turkey, fish, or a soy burger) is the size of the palm of your hand and is as thick as a deck of playing cards.
- A portion of energy carbs (like whole wheat pasta or chicken breast) should be the size of your clenched fist.
- A portion of color carbs (like tomatoes, broccoli, carrots, or spinach) should also be the size of your clenched fist.
- A portion of snacks like small crackers or pretzels should be no larger than your cupped hand.

It's important to remember that you can eat any of my Recommended Food Choices you want (yes, I really said that!) with one hitch—do it in *moderation*. But do try to follow the plate-divided-into-thirds idea and how to determine the proper portion size. Have three of those meals plus two snacks a day. There's really no need to count calories if you don't have the time or desire. Counting portions is effective enough.

The Organic Debate

I like to shop at Whole Foods Market (a national organic food chain), because they sell mainly natural foods. While organic is sometimes more expensive, it's also healthier. So if it's affordable for you, this is the perfect time to try organic. Personally, I only wanted natural foods to nourish my baby. Many processed foods have all sorts of chemicals and additives (like pesticides, antibiotics, and growth hormones). I didn't feel comfortable exposing my body or baby to them. These days many regular grocery stores also carry all-natural and

organic products. This is good news because more demand will naturally cause prices to start coming down. Plus there is the added convenience of being able to find them just about anywhere.

If you can't find organic products easily, don't despair. Just make sure to avoid a lot of processed foods and be sure to thoroughly wash your fruits and vegetables. I recommend using the Fruit & Vegetable wash from Environne. It is proven to safely remove pesticides, waxes, and chemicals from food. You can find it [Here](#).

The important thing is to live as healthy a lifestyle as you can and to be sure you get all the nutrients you need as a mom-to-be.

Especially for Moms-to-Be

A couple of particularly important nutrients needed during pregnancy are iron and calcium. How much do you need? Pregnant women should have 27 mg of iron and 1,200 mg of calcium daily. Foods rich in iron include lean red meat, legumes, and dark green leafy vegetables. Good sources of calcium-rich foods include dairy products such as low-fat cottage cheese and low-fat yogurt. Calcium-fortified orange juice is another good source as is broccoli.

As I mentioned, calcium helps maintain healthy bones. But did you know that it also helps support the heart, nerves and muscles? Now you can see why it's so important for your baby, too! However, for optimum absorption of calcium, it's best to take it along with the mineral Magnesium. To see the best calcium and magnesium product I've found, [Click Here](#).

Folic Acid

One of the most important things you can do during your pregnancy is to make sure you're getting an adequate amount of folic acid. It is also called folate as well as vitamin B9. Folic acid plays a huge role in the development of cells and tissue formation. Being deficient in this vitamin can result in spinal cord and neural defects. How can you be sure you're getting enough? You need at least 400 mcg (micrograms) daily. Some experts believe 800 mcg daily is preferred.

Fortunately, the FDA made it mandatory to add folic acid to enriched grain products, such as cereal, bread, and pasta. Other good sources of folate are dried beans, peas, lentils, dark green leafy vegetables, avocados, broccoli, asparagus, oranges, and orange juice. Doctors recommend taking a prenatal vitamin supplement in addition to what you eat, just to be sure. To learn more about a product that contains the correct amount of folic acid and other vitamins and minerals, [Click Here](#).

Good Fats

Essential fats—often called good fats—are those our bodies can't make on their own. We need to get them from the foods we eat. The problem is most of the good fats naturally found in our food supply are destroyed during processing and cooking.

These special fats are important because they play a role in virtually every function in the body. They are found in every cell of both you and your baby. They help produce hormones, immune cells, muscles, and the list goes on and on. These good fats help prevent brittle hair, nails, and constipation. Furthermore, studies show they may decrease cancer and cardiovascular risks. They even help you cope with stress. What's more, good fats help your baby develop properly. There's even research that shows good fats (like DHA) can increase an unborn baby's I.Q. Following are the details.

You may have heard or read something about DHA. DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) is an omega-3 fatty acid that is an important structural element of the brain and retina. A baby's brain accumulates large amounts of DHA during the first two years of life.

A study involving 70 mothers and infants showed that the babies born to mothers who had higher blood levels of DHA scored two months ahead of the babies whose mothers had lower levels!

The babies also scored better on attention tests. Attention is considered to be an important part of intelligence in early life, according to John Colombo, PhD, Associate Director of Cognitive Neuroscience, University of Kansas.

Babies age 12-18 months also scored better on tests designed to measure visual learning when their mothers had higher blood levels of DHA.

"What we can say right now is that authorities are concerned that pregnant women are not getting enough omega-3 (good fats) in their diets. A number of observational studies suggest a link between DHA levels during pregnancy and a baby's behavioral performance," said colleague Susan E. Carlson, PhD.

You need a minimum of 25 mg of DHA daily during pregnancy, but few women are getting it. This is a shame, because their babies are suffering as a result. Some experts even recommend up to 240 mg daily.

Clearly, they got the nickname "good fats" for a reason. Quality sources of good fats include oils such as flax, canola, sunflower, pumpkin seed, and olive oils. Good fats are also found in seafood sources like salmon and tuna, as well as in avocados and in nuts like walnuts and almonds.

However, to make sure you're getting enough DHA and other essential fats in your diet, I recommend a great essential oil formula. You can learn more about it by [Clicking Here](#).

To make sure you're getting enough good fats in your diet, I also suggest adding a tablespoon of flax or olive oil to prepared foods each day, or have a serving of salmon or tuna. Alternatively, you may want to have a 1/4 cup of walnuts or almonds.

Another high-quality essential fat supplement choice is [Udo's Choice Oil 3-6-9 Blend](#). You will find this available at most health food stores in the refrigerated section. This oil can be mixed with fat-free salad dressing. It does wonders for the health and appearance of your hair and skin, too. Personally, to get my share of good fats, I ate one avocado almost every day during my pregnancy—on salads and in wraps mostly. I love avocados and they are so good for you!

Drink Lots of Water!

An essential part of a healthy eating program includes taking in enough fluids. They are absolutely vital to our bodies. The most fundamental liquid for life is water.

A very important part of this *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Healthy Eating Program is drinking **lots** of water. How much? Before each meal or snack, drink 12 ounces of water—that's the same amount of fluid found in an average soft drink can. Then a little while after your meal or snack, drink another 12 ounces of water. Since you'll be eating three meals and two snacks each day on my program, that's a minimum of 10 glasses of pure, fresh water each and every day. I recommend adding one additional glass of water for each hour you work out.

Many people mistakenly think that drinking water will make them feel and look bloated. But, I assure you, the exact opposite will occur. The fact is, most people are actually in a constant state of mild dehydration so their bodies "hoard" water like a squirrel stores acorns for winter. But, if you begin drinking an increased amount of water for a few days (about 10 glasses), your body "senses" this and will naturally release excess water weight—which makes you lighter and helps you feel better too, especially during pregnancy. Both you and your baby need water!

Water also helps to flush out toxins that can be released when fat is burned for energy. It is involved in every metabolic function in our bodies. Yet

another important thing to keep in mind about water—it makes up 75% of muscle tissue.

Did you know that being dehydrated by as little as 1% or 2% of your body weight can impair both mental and physical function? Fatigue and weakness can be symptoms of not drinking enough water. That's why I suggest carrying water with you while at work, play, or while exercising. Get in the habit of sipping it throughout the day. With so many fashionable water containers available, it's even fun to tote water when you're out and about. You can find a good variety [Here](#) in every price range, style, and color.

Even more important, water is absolutely vital during pregnancy. Water carries nutrients through your blood to your baby. Water is also great for helping prevent bladder infections (common during pregnancy), constipation, and hemorrhoids. During the third trimester, dehydration can even cause contractions that may trigger premature labor.

The key is to drink water even when you're not thirsty because by the time your body "signals" you that it's thirsty, you're already too low. So put away those soft drinks (including diet soft drinks), coffees, and sugar-filled juices. Sugar and caffeine are not good for your baby. In fact, research suggests ingesting these two substances during pregnancy may be a cause of A.D.D. symptoms in some children. Instead, replenish your body with lots of pure, filtered water!

If you're one of those people who don't like the taste of water, here's an idea for you: Add just a little bit of fruit or fruit juice, such as lemon, orange, apple, or berry and a touch of honey. You can add some thin-sliced oranges or lemons for a delightful attractive look. Those tips will help you enjoy your water and it will still be good for you.

Other Beverages

Moms-to-be usually ask me about coffee and other beverages during pregnancy. The first thing I always say is to remember that everything you take into your own body goes into your baby's body as well. That's why you want to drink as much pure, fresh, filtered water as possible. I prefer filtered water because it doesn't have chlorine, chrome, lead, or other contaminants that may be found in tap water.

TIP: You can purchase a good water purifier that fits on your home [Faucet](#) or a [Pitcher Style](#) that fits in your refrigerator for just \$20 or \$30.

Once you're getting all the water you need (10 glasses daily), you can also have other healthy beverages. During pregnancy, it's wise to avoid coffee, tea, or sodas that contain caffeine, because when you drink caffeine, you're also feeding

caffeine to your unborn baby. Caffeine stimulates the heart and brain, and is an addictive substance with drug-like qualities. It's no surprise that people get headaches when they suddenly quit a caffeinated beverage like coffee. Can you imagine how a newborn baby feels when it comes into the world already addicted to caffeine? Caffeine-withdrawal headaches may be one reason why a newborn "mysteriously" cries excessively! It's my observation that a woman who refrains from drinking coffee, tea, cola, and other caffeinated drinks has a baby who is calmer and more peaceful.

Make no mistake about it: Pure, filtered water really is the healthiest beverage. If you're getting 10 glasses of water daily, then having natural fruit juice or even the very occasional natural caffeine-free soda is okay.

Caffeine-free tea is okay to drink, too. Most health food stores have a tea called Pregnancy Tea. You can also get it online [Here](#). Herbal teas that contain ingredients that would be part of a normal diet (such as orange extracts, lemon, cinnamon, and mint) are fine to enjoy, but the FDA has issued a caution about herbal teas containing more unfamiliar ingredients such as ephedra, Ma Huang, cohosh, pennyroyal, and mugwort during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Personally, I avoided all caffeine and drank only the pregnancy teas to relax, add variety, and to calm my tummy.

Alcoholic beverages of any and all kinds (including an occasional glass of wine) are absolutely **not** to be consumed during pregnancy. If you have a drink, the alcohol passes through your bloodstream into the placenta, and your baby has a drink of equal strength to your own. But because the baby is so much smaller and still developing, the alcohol can have devastating effects. If you drink alcohol during pregnancy, your baby could be born with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) with mental and physical defects. For more information on FAS, see <http://www.americanpregnancy.org/pregnancyhealth/alcohol.html> and an article by the March of Dimes that says *no amount of alcohol during pregnancy is safe* <http://www.marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/alcohol.html>. The same is said on WebMD at <http://www.webmd.com/baby/features/drinking-alcohol-during-pregnancy>.

If you feel you need help to stop drinking alcohol, contact your doctor immediately and visit <http://www.aa.org/?Media=PlayFlash>.

What Not to Eat: Six Foods that Endanger Your Baby!

Nothing is more important than protecting your unborn child. You want to give yourself the very best chance of having a healthy baby. Therefore, you should not consume the following foods while you're pregnant or nursing.

- 1) Raw or undercooked beef, chicken, or seafood (including sushi)

—because of the risk of contamination with coliform bacteria, toxoplasmosis, and salmonella.

- 2) Raw eggs—because they may be contaminated with salmonella.
- 3) Avoid soft cheese such as blue cheese, feta, Brie, goat, and Camembert—because they may contain harmful bacteria.
- 4) Fish known to contain mercury in their fatty tissues such as shark, swordfish, king mackerel, fresh tuna, sea bass, and tilefish. Canned chunk light tuna contains less mercury, but should only be eaten in moderation. When a pregnant woman consumes large amounts of mercury, the baby may suffer brain damage.
- 5) For those who like to fish in local lakes and rivers, you need to be careful of fish that contain industrial pollutants called polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) in their fatty tissues. Examples are the bluefish and striped bass. Also, freshwater fish such as salmon, pike, trout, and walleye from contaminated lakes and rivers. Remember, this applies only to those who are fishing local waters not to those who are buying fish in their grocery store. You can check with your local Health Department to determine which fish in your area are safe to eat. According to the March of Dimes, consumption of large amounts of PCBs by pregnant women is linked to a decrease in attention, memory, and IQ in their babies.
- 6) Processed meats, hot dogs, pâté—because they may not be cooked thoroughly and cause the fetus to get an infection called listeria. Listeriosis can cause stillbirth, miscarriage, and fetal brain damage.

What is Pica?

During pregnancy, some women feel strong urges to eat non-food items such as clay, ice, laundry starch, dirt, or cornstarch. This condition is called **pica**. Pica can be harmful to your pregnancy. It can affect your intake of nutrients and can lead to constipation and anemia. Talk with your health care provider if you have any of these urges.

How I Ate to Be a Healthy Mom-to-Be

I'm going to share with you a sample of my own daily meals for each of my trimesters. I really tried to avoid sugar and any hydrogenated oils and trans fats. Honestly, I avoided all fast foods because I don't believe that's the way to build a healthy baby or healthy body for yourself either. There are so many good

alternatives that you don't need to visit those drive-through windows! Besides, it's so important to build good habits that you can pass on to your child later. If you're taking this time to start fresh and break old, bad habits, remember that it takes 21 days to establish a new pattern. Don't be discouraged and give up if it's not super easy to pass up the fast food you're used to. Once you get into the swing of making better choices, you won't even miss it.

When it comes to making food choices, one of the mottos I live by is "there's always the better choice." For example, my "weakness" is french fries—I love them. So when I really wanted french fries, I made a better choice than stopping in for fast food greasy fries. I go to an organic market or Costco and got their Alexia Foods frozen home fries. (www.AlexiaFoods.com) They come prepared with olive oil and herbs. They're so yummy. Or I'd make my own at home. The point is, when you really want something that's high in calories, you can always find a healthier recipe or a healthier alternative. Then enjoy your food and don't feel guilty.

Making a Better "Bad Choice"

One obstacle that many women stumble on when they're starting a new habit of healthier eating is the "all or nothing" mind set. They think if they're not perfect in all their choices, then they've "blown it." Then, they think they may as well forget the whole thing. They go completely off their new resolution to eat healthy and go back to junk food. You don't want to do that, so I'll share a good coping skill with you.

If you're in a situation where you really want a certain food (like me with my fries) or if you're with a group of people who are going out to eat, make the "better bad choice." For example, if you're craving ice cream, your body might be telling you it needs calcium. Instead of having a sugar-laden ice cream cone, put a non-fat yogurt in the freezer just until it's icy. Instead of eating chips fried in oil, eat baked chips or pretzels. Instead of a high-fat chocolate bar, eat a low-fat protein bar like the [Odwalla Super Protein Bars](#).

Or maybe have a Chocolate shake like these from [Mix 1 Protein Shake](#). They have Chocolate, Vanilla, Mango (my favorite), Peach, Strawberry-Banana, Acia-Pomegranate, Berry and more. They are so easy and convenient you can bring them just about anywhere.

If you have allergies to whey, you can try an [Egg White Protein](#) powder or a [Rice Protein](#) powder and make your own shakes by adding fresh fruit. I'll tell you more about those a bit later.

Remember, if you're going out to eat, most restaurants have healthy alternatives. If your family or friends are going to a fast food place, most of them

now offer salads. On your trip out with friends, make it about enjoying the company, not about getting bloated on the high-calorie cheeseburgers.

“There’s always a healthier choice.” So when you’re in a tempting situation, make the best of the “bad choices” available. That way you won’t feel deprived.

Another good habit is cultivating favorite healthy foods that are also delicious. That way you won’t get tired of eating bland and boring foods. I have included recipes for some at the end of this chapter.

Taking Baby Steps to Better Habits

It’s not easy sloughing off old habits and replacing them with new, better ones, I know. But remember this is for you *and* for your baby! If you’ve been used to eating fast food or sugary foods every day, you may feel like you’re going “cold turkey” and breaking an addiction by trying your best to eat healthy all the time. I understand this and I don’t want you to give up or quit just because you can’t “tow the line” eating healthy all the time. Rather than adopt the “perfection or nothing” attitude, take “baby steps” to better health instead. I’ll explain what I mean with this illustration.

Soon, you’ll have a new baby, and as your baby grows, he (or she) is going to try to sit up alone. He’ll fail and fall over. But he’ll keep working at it over and over again. Finally, he gets his balance and can sit perfectly. Later, he’ll try to walk. He’ll take steps and fall down. But he won’t quit. He’ll keep trying until one day he can walk and even run without a single fall.

That’s the spirit I’m talking about! You’re trying to start a new, healthy eating program. But if you’ve never done this before, there will be times when you fall. The important thing is that you don’t get discouraged and quit. Your baby is not going to quit, and neither should you. If you happen to have a restaurant hamburger or a slice of chocolate birthday cake, that doesn’t mean you’re “off the program” and may as well chuck it all. In fact, to help you banish that type of thinking, I’m officially allowing you to have one of the Craving Busters of your choice. This is *optional* and limited to only two or three times a week.

Here’s what I mean. If you feel like you really have to have a slice of chocolate cake, then have yourself a tiny, thin slice. Try to leave the frosting on the plate. Most of the calories in cake are in the frosting, which is made of sugar, butter, and a little milk. Plus the flavoring and food coloring in frosting can harm you and your baby. Then get right back to your healthy eating. You’ve enjoyed one of the Craving Busters and you’re still on the program.

Or have a slice of pizza. Take small bites and eat slowly. Savor and enjoy it. But make it one slice and not the whole pizza! Then get right back on track.

Please remember, this is *optional* for those times when you really need this indulgence in order to keep from giving up. You can start with 3-4 times a week and decrease to 1-2 times a week. It's not something you do every day—and certainly not several times a day! That would be a quick road to becoming overweight and would be very unhealthy for both you and your baby. This also leads to feelings of being overwhelmed and depressed when you try to take it off later. You certainly don't want to feel that way.

Personally, I was in the habit of eating healthy before I got pregnant, so I did not feel the need to have unhealthy snacks very often. I tell you this so you can be encouraged to know that when your new habits are firmly set, you won't have those old cravings for high-calorie foods either. And please, do not use this as a "loophole" to eat or drink things that are dangerous for your baby. At no time during your pregnancy should you consume alcohol or caffeine, for example.

In time, you will develop healthy habits and new favorite foods. My own favorite indulgence happens to be one that surprises some people.

My Favorite Food

My favorite food is avocados. I just love them! Some people think avocados are fattening, but that's not true. They're one of the best foods you can eat. During my pregnancy, I had an avocado 2-4 times a week and sometimes more. That took care of the essential fatty acids my baby and I needed to be healthy. Avocados are the fruit highest in both fiber and good fat. It's no wonder some women crave avocados during their pregnancy!

TIP: Research indicates that certain fatty acids can actually improve your child's IQ if eaten regularly while you're pregnant. So make sure you get enough!

My Fail-Safe Success Tip to Combat the Craving Monster

My best success tip to combat cravings, while still being healthy, is to enjoy a tall, cold smoothie or shake every day. I still enjoy at least one daily and now so do my kids.

By making your own with my super-quick and easy instructions, you'll have three distinct advantages:

- They are a fail-safe source of nutrition your body desperately needs
- They combat cravings
- They're less than 300 calories

I made a lot of smoothies, because for me, it was quick, convenient, and healthy. You can have a smoothie for breakfast if you're in a hurry to get to work or you can have a smoothie for one of your two between-meal snacks. They're great and they're delicious.

It's quick and easy to make your own smoothies by using one of these healthy, nutritious protein powders for the base. Then, just add the fruits you like. When you consume this high quality protein, it automatically boosts your metabolism by an amazing 17 – 20 percent!

I recommended my favorite brands in the section on *Making a Better "Bad Choice,"* but here they are again with a few additions.

1. The pre-made [Mix 1 Protein Shakes](#) are the quickest if you're on-the-go. They are made with whey protein and they have Chocolate, Vanilla, Mango (my favorite), Peach, Strawberry-Banana, Acia-Pomegranate, Berry and more.
2. Here's my favorite [Organic Whey Protein](#) powder.
3. My favorite [Egg White Protein](#) powder.
4. My favorite [Rice Protein](#) powder.
5. And my favorite [Pea Protein](#) powder.

Having different protein powders to use is very important. I like to switch them out every 2-3 days. This is because if we eat the same foods every day, we can develop allergies or food intolerances to that food and so can your baby. My mom ate eggs every day and I was highly allergic to them when I was born.

When I was in a rush to get out of the house or knew I would be gone for quite awhile, I'd grab a chilled Mix 1 Shake to take with me. I like to have a couple of different flavors in the fridge to choose from. They're filled with nutrition and are delicious just as they are.

Or if you like to blend your own and pour them into a sports bottle, I recommend that you go to your grocery store, Whole Foods Market or maybe a store like Costco. Get the bags of fresh, frozen mangoes, strawberries, papaya, blueberries, peaches, or whatever fruit you like. I froze bananas myself because I couldn't find them pre-packaged. If you decide to do this, make sure you peel and half them first. Add 1-2 cups fruit to 1-2 scoops of the recommended protein powders that I listed above. Add 1-2 cups of rice, almond or skim milk. It's so good!

My kids now call the protein shakes "ice cream" because I make them so thick that you can mold it like ice cream. I can only do this because last year my Christmas present from my husband was the [Vitamix](#). This is by far *the best and*

most powerful blender you will ever get in your life. It even cooks soup and is great for making baby food later on. I can say that over the past 20 years, I tried lots of different blenders and nothing can beat this one!

Another ingredient that I like to add to our shakes is ground [Flaxseed](#). There are virtues to consuming ground flax seed. Many people don't realize that you can't get any nutritional benefit from eating the seeds whole—they would simply pass through your system. You could grind the flax seeds yourself or you can buy a great product like this one by Spectrum. Ground flax is a wonderful addition to your diet. Just 2 tablespoons adds protein (3g), fiber (3g), and healthy fats. Plus, flax has a delicious nutty taste that is perfect on cereal, yogurt, salads, or even as a filler in things like meatloaf. I also use it in muffins and pancakes. Finally, if you store it in the freezer, it will keep for months. I highly recommended it!

If you're one of those women who complain about having a slower-than-molasses metabolism, then you're going to love these shakes. Or if you're worried about gaining too much weight while you're pregnant or not losing it afterwards, then you'll love these shakes, too.

If you crave something sweet, these shakes could be one of your Craving Busters that's nutritious and good for both you and your baby.

Enjoying these shakes is like taking precise amounts of all the "good stuff" from real food—the proteins, good carbs, good fats, fiber, and essential vitamins and minerals—and leaving out all the bad. This way you feed your hunger and cravings, while keeping to your commitment to good health! And, just in case you are tempted to try one of the cheap "nutrition shakes" from a discount center or grocery store, *please read the labels!* Some of them are chock full of refined sugar, corn syrup solids, trans fats, and hydrogenated oils—all of which are huge causes of fat gain and ill health.

Science Supports Eating Five Times a Day

The importance of eating three meals and two snacks has been *proven* (in prestigious scientific journals like the *Journal of the American Medical Association*) to be one of the *single* most important factors when you're trying to maintain muscle tone, keep up your energy, and ward off cravings—all the things you need when you're pregnant!

By spreading your meals over five mini-meals (or three meals and two snacks), rather than two or three large meals, you stabilize your blood sugar levels (which stops fat storage), you jump start your energy levels (instead of feeling sluggish and tired), and you actually boost your metabolism by up to 20%

after each meal. This is a great way to keep healthy and stop worrying about gaining excessive body fat as a mom-to-be!

A lot of women start out thinking that preparing five mini-meals a day can be very time-consuming and confusing. After all, getting the correct amounts of proteins, carbohydrates, good fats, fiber, vitamins, and minerals you need for optimum health benefits for yourself and your baby can be downright difficult. This can be especially true if you're busy working outside the home or if you're busy taking care of other children. When I was pregnant, I was working full-time, so I know what it's like to be on-the-go all day everyday. That's why I recommend the Slim Body Matrix Shakes to use in place of one or two of these meals each day. They're super convenient and economical.

With that in mind, here's a sample of what I ate during each of my three trimesters.

First Trimester: My Sample Day

Note that I ate more carbohydrates during my first trimester to ward off nausea and morning sickness.

- Breakfast:** Rice flour or whole wheat toast with almond butter and sliced banana on top. Two scrambled eggs.
- Snack:** Whole wheat crackers with tuna
- Lunch:** Turkey wrap made with a whole-wheat tortilla, spinach, avocado, cucumber and mustard. Accompanied by a side (about a handful) of natural blue corn chips.
- Snack:** Smoothie. I love the Vanilla shake combined with ½ banana and peaches, fresh or frozen.
- Dinner:** Spaghetti made of rice pasta with ground turkey in spaghetti sauce. A side salad made of romaine and other lettuces, tomato and avocado (my all-time favorite food!).

Second Trimester: My Sample Day

- Breakfast:** Egg white omelet made with spinach and mushrooms. A side of oatmeal.
- Snack:** Apple slices with 2 tablespoons of natural peanut butter.
- Lunch:** Large green salad topped with grilled tuna, avocado, and mango

dressing.

Snack: Smoothie. Again the Vanilla Cake Batter Slim Body Matrix shake combined with ½ banana and peaches, fresh or frozen.

Dinner: Grilled chicken breast with sautéed vegetables (onion, broccoli, zucchini, carrots, cauliflower, and bean sprouts).

Third Trimester: My Sample Day

Breakfast: Smoothie with granola sprinkled on top. I recommend a Chocolate shake.

Snack: Celery with almond butter.

Lunch: Brown rice, chicken, and veggies steamed with teriyaki sauce.

Snack: Home-made potato wedges with organic ketchup.

Dinner: Burrito bowl made of lettuce, black beans, Mexican-style chicken, guacamole, non-fat cheese, topped with some organic salsa. A few natural corn chips.

Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Craving Busters

One of the best ways to ward off cravings and maintain control is to avoid getting too hungry by enjoying a snack in the mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Here are snacks that are appetizing, healthy, and nutritious.

Directions: Choose two snacks each day. All snacks have 300 calories or less.

1. Easy Open-Faced Sandwich, two suggestions.

3 oz. lean chicken or turkey on a slice of toasted wheat bread with mustard and tomato slice

Toasted whole wheat English muffin with 2 tablespoons of natural peanut butter and 1 teaspoon of 100% fruit jam

If you crave sweets:

2. Fage Plain Greek Yogurt with Fresh Berries and a little honey. I like this because it's low in processed sugar and low in calories. One of these containers is just 90 calories and 7 grams of sugar.

3. **Home-Made Peanut Butter Ice Cream**
One of my favorites while I was pregnant! Put one cup of almond, rice, or skim milk in a blender. Add one scoop of the Chocolate Cream Slim Body Matrix shake mix. Add one frozen banana and one tablespoon of peanut butter. Freeze for a half an hour and enjoy!
4. **Strawberries and Cream Milk Shake**
Put 1-½ cups of almond, rice, or skim milk in a blender. Add one scoop of vanilla protein powder and blend. Add ½ frozen banana and 4 strawberries. Blend until smooth.
5. **Mango Yogurt Parfait**
Very quick and easy to make. Just take one small yogurt (Fage) and put 1/3 in a cup (or to be fancy, use a tall glass). Slice some slice fresh mango on top and sprinkle with toasted walnuts or cashews. Repeat twice more.
6. **Dried Fruit, Half Cup Only**
Consider dried apricots, bananas, mango, or raisins.

If you crave crunchy, salty snacks:

8. **Blue Corn Chips with Chunky Guacamole**

Ingredients for Guacamole:

2 avocados
1 medium tomato, seeded and diced
1/4 cup onion, peeled and diced
1/8 cup cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped
1 tablespoons lime juice
1/4 teaspoon cumin
Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

Mash the avocados with the back of a fork or other mashing utensil.
Add the cumin, onion and cilantro.
Add lime juice.
Add salt and pepper to taste.
Fold the avocado and tomato together.
Serve immediately with natural blue corn chips.

9. **Pretzels with Honey-Mustard**
Quick and simple. Get the “Grab Bag” size of whole-wheat pretzels and

some natural honey-mustard and enjoy!

10. **The Baker Pecan Granola**
I like this particular granola because it's wheat-free and salt-free. Plus, there's no prep work. I just eat it right out of the bag. It needs nothing added to it! Handy for taking to work, too. Half a cup is plenty.
11. **Trail Mix**
Go to your local natural food store like Trader Joe's. Pick out a nutritious sugar-free, nutty trail mix. Only eat half a cup. Don't get the ones with candy in them or the ones cooked in oil.
12. **Homemade Potato Wedges**
Wash and cut 1 lb. baby red potatoes into wedges.
Mix them with 1/2 cup olive oil, 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, and 1 tablespoon of Mrs. Dash seasoning.
Add salt and pepper to taste.
Bake approx. 45 min at 350 degrees.

TIP: You can look up the calorie count and nutritional content for menu items of over 90 restaurants at www.ChowBaby.com. You may be surprised to find that some healthy-sounding choices are actually outrageously high in calories and bad fats. Looking up the nutrition facts of the foods you eat will help you make smart decisions about your own eating and prevent yourself from consuming thousands of extra empty calories with little to no nutrition value. Most restaurants now offer healthy choices on their menus. You also have the option of asking the chef to prepare your meal without added butter. Many people now order sauces on the side. Most restaurants still serve gigantic portions, so eating half there and taking the other half home is another smart idea.

My Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Recipe Favorites

Whip up these scrumptious dishes for your whole family to enjoy.

Breakfast: Spinach Mushroom Omelet with Oatmeal

Ingredients:

Spray olive oil
1/2 cup sliced mushrooms
4 egg whites
6-8 fresh spinach leaves

Spray pan with olive oil spray and add 1/2 cup mushrooms.
Sauté on medium heat.

Add 4 egg whites and scramble until done.
Lay 6-8 spinach leaves inside and fold over into omelet.
Let sit 2 minutes.
In the mean-time, prepare the filling.

Filling Ingredients:

1/2 cup raw whole oats
1 cup water
1 Tablespoon raisins
1 Tablespoon toasted walnuts

Put 1/2 cup of whole, raw oats into a deep bowl.
Add 1 cup of water.
Cook in microwave on high for 2 minutes.
Add the raisins toasted walnuts.

Snack: Strawberries and Cream Milk Shake

Ingredients and directions:

Pour 1 cup almond, soy or skim milk in blender.
Add 1 scoop of Slim Body Matrix Vanilla Cake Batter and blend.
Add 1 frozen banana and 4-5 strawberries.
Blend again until smooth.
Enjoy!

Lunch: Honey-Mustard Roasted Chicken

This flavorful honey mustard chicken dish can be served with carrots, summer squash and potatoes.

Ingredients:

1 lb. potatoes cut into wedges
2 lbs. white meat chicken breasts
2 medium summer squash, sliced
5 medium carrots, sliced
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
2 heads garlic
1 teaspoon rosemary
1-1/2 tablespoons honey
3 tablespoons mustard

1. Preheat oven to 425° F. In a shallow pan, toss potatoes, carrots and summer squash with oil, salt and pepper. Peel the garlic heads and nestle them amongst the vegetables. Scatter the rosemary on top. Arrange the chicken pieces among the vegetables and bake uncovered for 30 minutes.
2. Stir together the mustard and honey. Remove pan from oven and remove chicken to a plate. Carefully spread Honey-Mustard over the chicken. Stir the vegetables and return the chicken to the pan. Place pan back into the oven and bake 10-20 minutes more until chicken is cooked and vegetables are tender. If desired, scatter any remaining garlic over the vegetables. Makes 4 servings.

Snack: Fresh Tropical Fruit with Maple-Vanilla Yogurt Dip

Ingredients:

2 cups vanilla low-fat yogurt
 1/2 cup maple syrup plus a little extra
 1 tablespoon crushed macadamia nuts
 1 mango
 1 papaya
 Juice of ½ lime
 1 pineapple

1. Combine the yogurt and maple syrup and chill.
2. Slice mango and papaya. Sprinkle with lime juice for flavor.
3. Place the yogurt in a bowl in the center of a large platter and drizzle the yogurt with a few drops of extra maple syrup and sprinkle with the mac nuts. Arrange the Mango, papaya and pineapple on the platter and serve.

Serving Size: 3 tablespoons yogurt with fruit slices. Makes 8 servings.

Dinner: Rice Pasta with Turkey Meat Sauce

Using nonstick olive-oil cooking spray, ground turkey, and no added salt helps to make this classic dish heart-healthy and tasty.

Ingredients:

As needed nonstick Olive oil cooking spray
 1 lb. ground turkey
 1 can (28 oz.) tomatoes, cut up
 1 cup sliced mushrooms
 1 cup finely chopped onion

- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano, crushed
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 lb. Tinkyada Rice Pasta uncooked
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese

1. Spray a large skillet with nonstick spray coating. Preheat over high heat.
2. Sauté mushrooms and add turkey, stirring occasionally for 5 minutes. Drain fat and discard.
3. Stir in tomatoes with their juice, onion, garlic, oregano, and black pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat. Simmer covered for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove cover, then simmer for 15 more minutes. If you like a creamier sauce, give the sauce a whirl in your blender or food processor.
4. Meanwhile, cook rice pasta as specified on box. Drain well.
5. Serve sauce over whole wheat or rice spaghetti. Sprinkle with cheese.

Yield: 6 servings. Serving Size: 5 oz. sauce and 6-8 oz. spaghetti

Grocery List

To help you shop for these recipes and all your meals, here is the best grocery list I've ever seen. You can use it as a handy serving guide and as a convenient way to plan your weekly shopping. (I also included this page in your downloads for you to print out.)

Below, I'll sum up this chapter with my Ten Tips to Control Food Cravings.

TIP: 100% Organic, free-range, non-antibiotic, hormone-free & non GMO foods are best!

DAIRY – Low-Fat or Non-Fat (Proteins) – 1-2 servings per day

Soy, Rice or Almond Preferred

- Egg whites
- Milk – skim or 2%
- Light margarine
- Sour cream
- Tofu – hard is better
- Yogurt – plain is best
- Cottage cheese

- Ricotta cheese
- Hard cheese
- Goat milk or cheese

MEAT, FISH, OR POULTRY (Proteins) – 4-6 servings per day

- Chicken breasts
- Turkey breasts
- Lean ground beef or buffalo
- Sliced beef pot roast
- Sirloin steak
- Fresh fish – salmon, red snapper, orange roughy, halibut, tuna, cod, haddock, grouper, swordfish, trout, snapper, mackerel
- Shellfish – lobster, scallops, shrimp
- Crab – Alaskan, blue
- Elk or ostrich
- Whey, soy, rice or egg protein powder

FRUIT (Healthy Carbs) – 2-3 servings per day

- Apples
- Bananas
- Berries
- Grapefruit
- Grapes
- Lemons & limes
- Melon
- Oranges & tangerines
- Pears
- Papaya
- Mango
- Apricots
- Nectarines
- Kiwi
- Plums
- Cantaloupe

VEGETABLES (Healthy Carbs) – 7-9 servings per day

- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Cucumbers
- Garlic and onions
- Lettuce (no iceberg)

- Mushrooms
- Peppers
- Potatoes
- Radishes
- Tomatoes
- Asparagus
- Artichokes
- Bell Peppers
- Brussel sprouts
- Collard greens, spinach
- Eggplant
- Sweet or white potatoes
- Zucchini and yellow squash
- Peas
- Beets

BREADS (Carbs) – 1-2 servings per day

- Tortillas- whole-wheat, corn or spelt
- 12 grain bread
- Whole-wheat bread
- Whole-wheat pita bread
- Spelt, oat or rice bread

DRY GOODS (Carbs or Fats) – 1 serving per day

- Cereal – 3 grams of fiber minimum and low sugar
- Oatmeal – whole oats
- Whole-wheat, soy, or rice pasta
- Beans/lentils/peas
- Quinoa
- Wheat germ
- Whole-wheat flour
- Whole-wheat crackers
- Baked blue corn chips
- Rice crackers
- Whole-wheat couscous
- Dried fruit – raisins, etc.
- Brown rice – basmati or jasmine or wild
- Peanut butter- natural
- Almonds (raw, dry roasted, or almond butter)
- Walnuts
- Flaxseeds or oil
- Canola oil
- Olive oil
- Cooking spray –olive or canola

BEVERAGES

- Herbal tea – 3 or 4 cups per day, decaf
- 100% Fresh fruit or vegetable juice – 8 oz per day
- Bottled water – 1 gallon per day

CANNED GOODS (Only if fresh is not available)

- Unsweetened applesauce
- Soups
- Marinara sauce
- Tomato sauce
- Tuna
- Peas, spinach, green beans, lima beans
- Garbanzo beans
- Black, pinto and lentil beans
- Salmon
- Chicken or vegetable broth – low-sodium

CONDIMENTS AND SPICES

- Mustard-dijon
- Salad dressings
- Salsa
- Vinegars
- Different spices
- Hummus
- Mayonnaise, canola or soy

FROZEN FOODS (Back-up foods and for shakes)

- Fruit – berries, bananas
- Broccoli, spinach
- Soybeans
- Cooked or raw shrimp, fish or chicken
- Vegetables
- Healthy frozen dinners

From My Notebook: Ten Tips to Control Food Cravings

1. Eat natural, unprocessed foods, because they're healthier, take more time to digest, and keep you feeling full longer.
2. Eat 5 times a day—three meals and two snacks spaced three hours apart. This way you don't get so hungry you lose control and go to the office vending machine or grab other unhealthy snacks.

3. Always eat breakfast early in your day, because it gets your metabolism going right away. People who skip breakfast have a sluggish metabolism for hours until they finally give their body fuel. You don't want that feeling.
4. Drink water throughout the day, 10 glasses.
5. Take your prenatal vitamins faithfully. Getting the vitamins you need nourishes your baby, yourself, and helps keep cravings away.
6. When you're done eating, get busy doing something else so you get your mind off eating.
7. Read a good book. It's better than mindlessly wandering into the kitchen.
8. Do yoga or other stretching exercises, explained in Chapter Three.
9. Drink a shake from the above list for one of your snacks or meals. Always carry a shake with you so you don't get tempted to eat junk food when you're at work or out and about. Having a shake ready is your best defense against giving into your former bad eating habits.
10. Don't feed your negative emotions. Spend time in the Word each day or a daily devotional like "Jesus Calling" or Beth Moore's "Breaking Free Day By Day."

Already you've heard me talk a lot about the importance of getting your body moving. In the next chapter, I'll show you my *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Activity Program with photos of me working out during my pregnancy. And I'm going to answer some important questions, such as, "What exercises are safe to do in each trimester?" and "Which exercises should I avoid while pregnant?" Don't worry, because you're going to get a plan for each trimester, so the activities will be appropriate no matter how far along you are in your pregnancy.

What You're Going to Discover in Chapter Three

- My quick and easy exercise secrets for having a healthy pregnancy. You can do them anywhere and at anytime!
- Get *better* results *faster* by using these “Ten Tips to Maximize Your Exercise Effectiveness.”
- Six enormously beneficial exercises that help moms-to-be increase their flexibility and endurance, and have an easier birth. Research shows that by doing these exercises, you decrease the chances of having a premature birth or C-section.
- Completely safe activity routines for each trimester of your pregnancy. Plus, I share step-by-step photos of me doing all the exercises during my 8th month.
- Nine warnings you *must not miss* to ensure the safety and health of your baby and yourself, including which sports are dangerous to engage in while pregnant.
- The “secret” exercise that strengthens your pelvic floor and promotes easier labor and birth. Backed by a medical journal.

Chapter 3

Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Activity Program

Introduction

You're in for a treat! The *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Activity Program* is easy, convenient, and effective—meeting all the requirements of busy women. You can do this program even if you're at home in a small apartment with a toddler. You can do this program if you work full-time. No matter what your situation is, I've designed the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Activity Program* so no one will be left out because your health and the health of your baby are of supreme importance.

Maintaining a consistent exercise program throughout pregnancy has been shown to contribute to an easier labor and birth, as well as lessen the chances of having a premature birth or a Cesarean section. Exercise also speeds up post-birth weight loss and recovery time. Exercise also helps

decrease your stress levels which can have a positive effect on the health of your baby. All of that adds up to some major motivation!

Science Proves That Exercise Makes Labor Easier

Multiple studies prove that regular exercise during pregnancy helps prevent physical ailments and makes labor easier! The results from several scientific studies on exercise and pregnancy are astounding! This is vital information every mom-to-be needs—whether this is her first pregnancy or her tenth—because the findings answer questions women have been thinking about for a long time.

I'm often asked if it's safe to exercise during pregnancy, especially by women who were not accustomed to exercising before they became pregnant. Science says, yes it is.

In a case-control study conducted at Swedish Medical Center in Seattle, women reported on activities of varying intensity. One woman even ran a 3-hour marathon, unaware that she was four months pregnant! The study results showed that moderate exercise during pregnancy is not only desirable, but that it is also necessary for optimal emotional health.

Another study reported in the *Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetric and Gynecology* states that women who exercised regularly during their pregnancies reported less depression and less stress in the first and second trimesters. In addition, regular exercise reduced the risk of gestational diabetes and toxemia.

More great news for moms who develop gestational diabetes comes from a study by Lois Jovanovic-Peterson. She found that just 20-30 minutes of aerobic exercise done three times a week lowered blood sugar levels to the point where the women who had developed gestational diabetes no longer needed insulin shots!

The sooner you begin the good habit of physical activity, the better the benefits will be. In a study involving 584 women, those who engaged in recreational physical activity in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy had a 34% lower risk of developing toxemia, also called preeclampsia.

“Exercise during pregnancy appears to reduce the risk of preeclampsia,” according to the findings of Dr. Tanya K. Sorensen as reported to the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine.

An estimated 7 out of 100 pregnant women will get toxemia while pregnant. Toxemia, or preeclampsia, is hypertension or high blood pressure that

develops during pregnancy. The cause is unknown, but most cases occur with the first pregnancy unless the woman becomes pregnant from a new man.

Mild toxemia is usually no cause for alarm, but more severe toxemia can cause serious problems. Therefore, it's important to keep your scheduled appointments with your doctor during pregnancy. Toxemia can cause maternal liver and kidney damage, eyesight problems, and when left untreated, even convulsions and coma resulting in death. As you can see, toxemia is not something to be ignored or glossed over. Therefore, it's great news that exercise—especially during the first two trimesters of pregnancy—has a positive effect on preventing toxemia.

“Physical activity has profound effects on a multitude of physiologic functions, and these effects could mediate the risk of preeclampsia via several different biologic pathways,” said Dr. Sorenson at a meeting co-sponsored by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. “Our study adds to the existing literature by showing that physical activity performed during pregnancy, even routine activity like stair climbing, is associated with a substantial reduction in preeclampsia risk.”

She went on to say their study supports the recommendation for active women to remain physically active during pregnancy. But the good news doesn't end there. The exercise you do now also helps your baby!

Exercise During Pregnancy Aids the Baby, Too!

When moms-to-be exercise during their pregnancies, it has a marvelous effect on their babies. Maureen C. Hatch and her co-workers at Columbia University found that women who exercised had babies who were better equipped to handle illnesses. According to the study, a fit mom passes on fitness to her child.

Even more impressive was the finding that exercise also improved their babies' mental capacity! A report in the *Journal of Pediatrics* stated that the children of women who exercised faithfully throughout their pregnancies all had *significantly higher* scores on oral language tests and on general intelligence tests.

This then brings up the question, “Are there long-term effects on the child when the pregnant woman exercises regularly?”

The answer is yes! In another study, Dr. James Clapp III found that by age five, the babies of mothers who exercised for at least 30 minutes three times a week during pregnancy showed superiority in four ways:

- They scored higher on intelligence tests
- They scored higher on oral language tests
- They demonstrated better coordination
- They had lower levels of body fat and were therefore more fit

As if all that wasn't motivation enough, exercise even helps you have a shorter labor and lowers the risk of complications during birth. While no one can predict or guarantee you what your labor will be like, studies on groups of women were conclusive enough to draw some definite conclusions.

A report in the *Journal of Pediatrics* says women who exercise had an average time of two hours shorter in active labor. Believe me, when your contractions are coming strong and close together, two hours is a very big chunk of time! Furthermore, Cesarean births were significantly reduced!

So all in all, exercise during pregnancy has a positive influence on so many important things—the risk of premature birth, length of labor, birth complications, the baby's birth weight, and even the APGAR score. Originally named by Dr. Virginia Apgar, it has come to be an acronym for the five physical assessments done to a newborn baby at one-minute after birth and again at five-minutes after birth:

- **A**ctivity – indicates muscle tone
- **P**ulse – the baby's heart rate
- **G**rimace response – also known as reflex irritability
- **A**pppearance – normal/pink versus blue/gray skin coloration
- **R**espiration – the baby's breathing effort

I think you can see why I'm so enthusiastic about the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Activity Program and how important it is.

Resistance, aerobic, and stretching routines have tremendous physical and emotional benefits. The *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Activity Program includes all three. But in my opinion, resistance training is the *single* best form of exercise for moms-to-be who want to ensure they don't put on excessive body fat during their pregnancy. Through resistance training, you not only tone your body, but you also increase your metabolism. This means you can burn more fat and calories 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! This means it will be easier to take off the weight after you have your baby, too.

Studies confirm that resistance training strengthens the heart, increases bone density (which protects against osteoporosis), lowers cholesterol, lowers stress hormones, and even improves mood. I'm sure we can all use that last benefit during the ups and downs of pregnancy!

There's really no two ways about it—if you want to look better, feel better, live longer, and have the healthiest pregnancy—resistance training is the key. Don't be worried about lifting weights during your pregnancy because the activity program I've designed is *extremely safe*. There are appropriate exercises for each trimester so you'll get the workout you need without over-doing it.

In fact, I'll share photos of myself doing all of these exercises while I was eight months pregnant. Let's dive into this tried-and-true program so you can see what it's all about!

Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Resistance Routine

(You can print these worksheets on the download page.)

First of all, I want to make something crystal clear—you do *not* need a membership to a gym or recreation center to do this workout. Many women perform this same program using basic dumbbells in the comfort and privacy of their own homes. *You don't need fancy equipment*. For moms-to-be who cannot go to a gym, you're going to be able to use the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Activity Program right at home.

I'm not trying to say gym memberships aren't good. If you already have a membership you enjoy, then by all means use it. The point is, you can work out wherever it is most convenient for you—at home, at the gym, or outdoors.

While I was pregnant, my husband decided to have our basement finished. This is where my home gym was located. So during the remodeling, I went to the recreation center and worked out there instead. Both worked fine for me. At the end of my pregnancy, it was summer and absolutely beautiful, so I exercised outdoors. I love the scenery and the fresh air, and it's a good break from the TV and four walls.

If you do go to a club or recreation center, then access to different exercise machines can be a lot of fun and add variety to your workout. But I'm going to assume that most of you will be doing this routine at home (whenever you can steal a few minutes), so here's a quick equipment list. Just visit a local sporting goods store, or go online to pick up everything you'll need.

- One set each of two 3-lb., 5-lb., 8-lb., and 10-lb., dumbbells. If you're not used to working out, you'll use the 3-lb. weights at first.
- Towel
- An exercise ball to use with many exercises. You can pick up a ball for around \$20
- A yoga mat. I found one at Ross.

That's it. It's pretty simple. While you're waiting for the dumbbells to arrive, grab anything you have around the house like a can of soup and get moving. I want you to start right away, at whatever stage you are in now with your pregnancy. Don't procrastinate—start *today!*

A lot of people ask me which is better—dumbbells (free weights) or machines. My general answer is dumbbells. Resistance training with dumbbells allows for the greatest range of motion and can help you gain coordination and balance while strengthening muscles that help stabilize joints. There's a reason why they've been around for so many years.

By the way, don't worry about not having hours each day to devote to exercise. Just 30 minutes two times a week is all you need for the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Resistance Routine. Everyone can make time for two 30-minute sessions per week. That really is enough to be effective. Our focus is on quality not quantity. It's about making the most of the time you have.

One great way to make the time go by faster and double your fun is to work out while you watch a favorite television show. What would you be watching even if you weren't working out? A daytime drama? A comedy? A reality show? The news? Whatever it is, you can position yourself in front of the TV and do your resistance exercises while you watch your show. Before you know it, you've completed the routine! When I did this, I discovered that I worked out for more minutes than I'd originally planned, so it was a fun way to do two things at once.

If you're new to resistance training and aren't familiar with these exercises, be sure to pay special attention to the step-by-step photos and instructions I've provided. It's better to start with weights that are lighter than you think you can handle. You'll easily get the hang of this in no time. So please don't get discouraged if it takes some practice for you to catch on to some of the moves.

By the way, making a commitment to exercise with a partner (like your husband or a girlfriend) is one of the best ways to stay motivated and on track. Inevitably, there *will be* days when you just don't feel like exercising. But a training partner will hold you accountable to your goals and vice-versa. Multiple studies have shown this to be true. What a great experience to share!

For some, the best time of day to exercise is in the morning before the rest of your life gets in the way. But if morning doesn't work for you, don't worry. It's more important that you exercise when it's most convenient for you *and* that you're *consistent*, whether it's morning, noon, or night.

TIP: Studies show that exercising in the morning before you eat breakfast can burn twice as much fat as if you exercise after you've eaten.

Don't get in the habit of telling yourself that you'll exercise later and then never end up getting around to it. In a matter of months, you'll be giving birth to your baby, so you need to make everyday count between now and then. If you're already in your second or third trimester, you can start with the exercises designed for that trimester. *It's never too late to start making a difference.*

Before I unveil the specific details of this program, here's a sample general outline. I picked Monday and Thursday for resistance training, but you could pick Tuesday and Friday or Wednesday and Saturday. It doesn't matter, as long as you *DO IT!* Each week you'll do two 30-minute sessions of resistance training and three 30-minute sessions of aerobic activity.

In addition to these five days, you'll have one day to do an alternate activity of your own choosing. You can do prenatal yoga or a variety of others. I strongly favor the prenatal yoga because it's excellent for your growing body and for your baby. More about that when we get to the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Aerobic Routine in the next couple of pages.

The benefits you'll get from doing *all* of the exercises in this program will help you throughout your pregnancy, during childbirth, and beyond. Each day you exercise, think of it as making a deposit in your bank account for good health—and for your baby's good health.

At the end of each of these six days of exercise, you'll do stretching exercises, which I'll explain in detail later. Then, be sure to take one day off to give your body a chance to rest and recover. That day off is important to allow yourself and your muscles time for recuperation and repair. At first, you may need more than one day off.

Sample Weekly Schedule

Monday:	30 minutes of resistance training
Tuesday:	30 minutes of aerobic activity
Wednesday:	30 minutes of aerobic activity
Thursday:	30 minutes of resistance training
Friday:	30 minutes of aerobic activity
Saturday:	30 minutes of an alternate activity of your choice
Sunday:	Rest, recuperation, recovery, and repair

There are lots of ways to structure your exercise program. The important part is that you perform two sessions of resistance training, three sessions of aerobic activity, and one day of an activity of your choice each week. You may

arrange the days any way you like, but it's best to have at least a two-day break between the resistance training days.

Ten Tips to Maximize Your Effectiveness

1. Consult your doctor for a physical examination before beginning this or any other fitness program.
2. The resistance training is designed as a circuit program, which simply means that you move as quickly as possible from one exercise to the next. Rest only long enough to get set up for the next movement.
3. Select the right weight each week. You will do 15 reps. of each exercise, and the last 3-4 reps. should be challenging. If you can do 20 reps easily, then it's time to increase your dumbbell weight. At no time should you sacrifice the proper form for a heavier weight.
4. Keep each movement slow and controlled. The positive or lifting part of each exercise as well as the negative or lowering phase should each take two seconds (one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two), and there is also a pause for one second at the top. So you'll lift for two counts, hold for one, lower for two counts.
5. Don't hold your breath during the exercises. Your muscles need the oxygen now more than ever, so breathe deeply.
6. If you're new to fitness, one set per exercise may be enough at the beginning. But add another as soon as you can, and work up to three sets.
7. Be sure to warm up for three to five minutes before your weight workout. Something simple like marching in place or walking up and down stairs will do. Then do the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Stretching Routine afterward.
8. Strive for at least eight hours of sleep each night to ensure recuperation.
9. Nourish your body with healthful foods and prenatal vitamins by following the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Healthy Eating Program in Chapter Two.
10. Track progress using the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Worksheets at the end of this section.

Let's talk about a few terms. Lifting a weight up and lowering it down once is called a "repetition" or "rep." The program includes 15 repetitions for each exercise. So you'll need to select a weight for each *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Resistance Routine movement that you can do no more than 15 times. If you're still cranking away at 20 repetitions, it's time to go up in weight. The last 3-4 reps. should be challenging. Each group of repetitions is called a "set."

So here's your goal: Complete three sets of 15 repetitions for each exercise. All the sets together make one circuit.

Not sure how much weight to use? Just pick up a 3 or 5-pound dumbbell and see what it feels like. Then go up or down from there. You'll most likely use more weight for compound movements (exercises that involve many muscle groups) than you will for simple (isolated muscle group) movements. As you get farther along in your pregnancy, you may need to decrease your weight to suit your comfort level.

Okay. Now we're ready to go!

The first thing to do is to do is to print out the worksheets I've put together to help explain the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Resistance Routine. The chart will also help you stay on track. ([These worksheets are on the download page.](#))

Next, you will see a description of how to do each exercise, and you'll also see step-by-step pictures (over 100 of them!) of me doing each exercise during my eight month of pregnancy.

The Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Aerobic Routine

Good news—the aerobic activity component of the program is even easier. Three times a week you'll perform 30 minutes of aerobic exercise such as walking, swimming, riding stationary bike, using an elliptical machine, etc.

During your first trimester, you can continue doing whatever aerobic exercise you were previously doing. If you're just now starting to exercise, then you can choose from the activities I've listed below. For instance, this is not the time to take up running for the first time. Be sure to choose exercises you enjoy, so you'll stick with them. And don't be afraid to cross-train (which means to do several different activities) so you don't get bored. For example, I chose prenatal yoga, swimming, and walking. You can switch it up from time to time. As your pregnancy progresses, you'll simply choose less strenuous activities or moderate what you're doing.

How Hard Should You Work Out?

It's important to use moderation when exercising during pregnancy. The first 14 weeks are when you're at greatest risk for miscarriage, so check with your doctor and don't over-do it. If you get dizzy or nauseated, you may be experiencing low blood sugar. Stop immediately if that happens and call your doctor. He or she may just ask you to take in a few healthy calories and rest for several minutes. Keep water and/or water mixed with fruit juice handy so you don't get dehydrated. Wear comfortable clothing and avoid getting overheated. Pregnant women do get overheated more easily, so be careful.

Don't work out so hard that you cannot talk during your activity. Another test of your exertion level is how hard you think you're working out. Studies have shown that your perception is usually an accurate measure of how hard your heart is working. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being super easy and 10 being very difficult, you want to aim for 6-7. This would be in between "moderate" and "labored." Again, listen to your body, let common sense and moderation guide you, and by all means follow the advice of your doctor.

A good exercise to choose is one that allows you to adjust the intensity to your fitness level and stage of pregnancy. Avoid exercises that involve jumping, twisting and turning, stomach contact, or pose a risk of falling. These would be activities like volleyball, rollerblading, racquetball, and kickboxing. You can save those for later when you're no longer pregnant. There are plenty of effective, *safe* exercises you can enjoy in the meantime.

Six Beneficial Exercises for Moms-to-Be

1) Yoga or Stretch Class

In the last couple of years, yoga has become popular and many different types of yoga studios have opened up. Some of these yoga studios are now offering prenatal yoga. So is yoga right for you?

During labor and birth of your baby, you will have to concentrate, breathe, relax, contract and focus. Since you'll do all of those things in a yoga class, you could say yoga is the perfect preparation for childbirth.

The first benefit of yoga is that it teaches you the art of relaxation, a skill that is important during labor. Yoga also promotes focus and body strength—all of which are vitally important during labor. What's more, yoga also teaches you how to breathe during a strenuous activity. Let me tell you, this will come in very handy during contractions. Talk about strenuous!

I did prenatal yoga during my entire pregnancy. I really loved being around the other expectant moms in class, and it was a great workout—harder than you'd think, so check out your local gyms.

2) Swimming

Another great exercise to do during pregnancy is swimming laps because you work all of your muscle groups, your heart, and your lungs. Because of the buoyancy of the water, you might even forget you're pregnant!

3) Riding a Stationary Bicycle

Riding a stationary bike (as opposed to a riding a regular bicycle) is safer during the latter half of your pregnancy when balance may be an issue. If you do bike outdoors, do it in the beginning of your pregnancy and wear the appropriate protective gear.

4) Walking on a Treadmill

When the weather is not that great, walking on a treadmill is a good alternate. Plus, you can walk and keep your mind entertained with a television show or good book at the same time.

5) Walking Outdoors

If you already have a toddler, it's great to put him or her in a stroller and get outdoors for a brisk walk. Since this was my first pregnancy, I'll share a funny story with you. My friends gave me a jogging stroller for a shower gift. Since I was still pregnant and didn't yet have a baby to put in the seat, for added resistance I put a 15-pound bag of birdseed in it. Then I pushed it up and down the hills around my home for a great workout. One day a senior couple was out for a walk and they got all excited when they saw me coming. They wanted to stop and take a peek of the newborn baby, which they thought was in my stroller. Well, you should have seen their faces when they saw the birdseed! They were both very confused until I told them why it was in there and that I was still pregnant. We all had a good laugh!

6) Elliptical Trainer

Another wonderful cardio exercise that's easy on your joints is the Elliptical trainer. It's a cross between running and stair climbing, but without the impact. You can move at your own pace and even adjust the resistance to get a great workout.

Nine Warnings You *Must Not* Miss

It's imperative to use caution when exercising, especially during the second and third trimesters. Here are some warnings to heed:

- 1) Use smooth motions and avoid sudden jerky movements. Also remember it's easy to overstretch or strain the joints in your pelvis, lower back, and knees because of a hormone your body releases when you're pregnant. So use caution and go at your own pace.
- 2) Do not get overheated. If you feel yourself getting too hot, slow down and cool off. Listen to your body. During your last couple of months, you won't be able to keep the pace you're used to. Just respect that and slow

down.

- 3) Do not let your heart rate go over 120. Monitor your heart rate periodically while you exercise. I suggest taking your pulse for 30 seconds and then multiply that number times two. That will give you your heart rate.
- 4) If you feel faint, dizzy, or start having contractions, stop immediately and sit down even if you have to sit on the floor. Alert someone immediately. Then, call your doctor.
- 5) Avoid lying flat on your back for extended periods of time during your third trimester—this includes while you're working out. The weight of your baby could put too much pressure on a major blood vessel and decrease the blood flow to your baby while increasing your own blood pressure.
- 6) Avoid long periods of motionless standing, especially during your last trimester because you want to keep your circulation going.
- 7) Pass up high impact sports and sports that would put you in danger of falling, such as rock climbing, downhill skiing, and water skiing.
- 8) Don't engage in high-pressure water sports such as scuba diving.
- 9) Don't compare yourself and compete with the others. This is not the time for a contest. It's really all about taking good care of yourself.

I encourage you to consider each exercise session as a VICTORY in your quest to have the best pregnancy and birth experience you possibly can.

Remember all the benefits of exercise:

- Increases strength to prepare you for birth
- Improves energy and endurance
- Better circulation, which in turn helps prevent varicose veins, hemorrhoids, and fluid retention
- Relieves backaches and constipation
- Wards off depression and reduces stress
- Reduces the chances of diabetes and high blood pressure
- Improves sleep quality
- Greatly enhances beauty and the ability to recover your pre-pregnancy shape quickly after your birth

Have fun with the program—*and make it an empowering experience each and every time!* Ready to get started? Let's go! Make sure you keep a journal so you can track your daily food intake and activity program.

Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Stretching Routine

After you exercise, either by doing cardio or resistance training, it's important to do the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Stretching Routine everyday while you are pregnant. If you don't have the energy to do cardio or weights, then just do these stretches.

One of the best ways to relax your body, decrease stress, increase your flexibility, and get relief from your aches and pains is by stretching. Sometimes I did these stretches on our bedroom floor after my husband fell asleep. It was great and relaxed me right before bed. Go to the download page and print out the description and photos of the Stretching Routine. You can see step-by-step photos of me doing the stretches while I'm 8 months pregnant.

Here are your directions: Please follow them! And remember to ask your doctor if these are ok for you to do.

Note: For ALL stretches.

1. Check with your doctor before you begin
2. Hold each stretch for 10-20 seconds then move on to the next exercise
3. Keep your posture in mind as you sit or stand tall while holding in your tummy and keeping your shoulders down
4. Go slow and remember to breathe
5. If anything does not feel right, *stop*
6. Have your water bottle handy at all times
7. It's best to do these stretches in order and you should do them everyday

The "Secret" Exercise That No One Will Ever Know

Would you want to know about a secret exercise that strengthens your pelvic floor and promotes an easier labor and birth? I did! According to a study of 300 women cited in the *British Medical Journal*, those who strengthened their pelvic floor muscles had shorter, easier births. How do you strengthen your pelvic floor? By doing an exercise called the Kegel. The beauty of this exercise is that you can do it anywhere and at any time. No one will ever know! Simply tighten the muscles around your pelvis as if you were stopping the flow of urine. Hold as tight as you can for the count of five. Then relax. Do sets of ten, ten times a day. *Always do these with an empty bladder.*

Strong pelvic muscles shorten the time required to push which reduces the chances of tearing or needing an episiotomy.

I did Kegels while I was lying in bed, daydreaming about my little baby and praying that he was going to be healthy and happy. I did about 100 or so each night.

Getting into the habit of a regular exercise routine—both resistance and cardio—pays off in big ways after your baby is born, too. You'll have more strength to lift your baby. Believe me, that comes in handy as your little one grows!

With all this healthy exercise, you're going to sleep better, too. In the next chapter, I'll talk about how to have a good balance between sleep and energy. And I'll share my tips for handling the most common sleep complaints.

What You're Going to Discover in Chapter Four

- Five ways to handle that constantly tired feeling.
- How to get comfortable sleeping, including a specially-designed prop for the last two trimesters.
- The best position for sleeping in order to get the blood and nutrients flowing into your unborn baby.
- The sleep position you need to avoid during your third trimester.
- Get rid of nightmares and nighttime sweats!
- Lying awake? Three completely safe cures for insomnia.
- Answers about using sleep aids during pregnancy: what's safe and what you must avoid.

Chapter 4

The *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Sleep Program

Introduction

If your pillow has become your new best friend and there's nothing you want more in the middle of the afternoon than to take a nap, welcome to pregnancy. What you're feeling is completely normal.

Many moms-to-be are taken by surprise at how tired they are when they're first pregnant, because they don't look or feel any different—other than maybe not feeling as good. I was the same way. I couldn't believe how fatigued I was during those first three months! I was working full-time and I'd get so tired, I'd slip in the back room and lie down for a few minutes. I had to watch myself because I nearly fell asleep right there at work!

It's very important to find that perfect balance between getting the rest you need and giving your body exercise will help you have a healthy, happy pregnancy and a good birth. It helps to know you're not alone with those sleep challenges and that there are things you can do to ease your discomfort.

Five Most Common Sleep Complaints and How to Handle Them

1) "I'm tired all the time."

There's a very real physical reason why you have the urge to sleep more. In the first trimester, you have an increase in progesterone, a female hormone that has a sedative effect. So if you can, go ahead and catch a few winks in the middle of the day. Your hormones are changing and there's a new life growing inside of you, so don't feel guilty about needing more sleep. Your body is also growing a placenta, amniotic fluid, increasing your blood volume and a myriad of other things. All of those things in themselves are a full-time job! More than 50 percent of pregnant women say they take a nap at least once during the week. However, there are some things you can do to give yourself as much energy as possible.

- Drink 10 glasses of water daily because keeping hydrated helps your body function properly and a lack of water can cause exhaustion.

- Follow your *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Activity Program because those routines will get your metabolism humming. If you're too tired to do your normal cardio or resistance exercises, then just do the stretches. They won't wear you out. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Stretching and deep breathing revives an energy lull and is a mood-lifter. So don't use tiredness as an excuse to do nothing. You'll feel better afterward, and you'll be proud of yourself for staying on track.

- Eat healthy. Have an energy-boosting protein shake for one of your two snacks to give yourself a boost of protein and other essential nutrients. Remember, your body uses protein to build cells.

- Go out for some fresh air. A good walk outdoors is invigorating. I love sunsets, so I like to go out for a walk in the evening and watch the sun go down in a blaze of color.

- Refuse to worry. Fretting about not sleeping turns into a vicious cycle—you're not sleeping because you're worried about not sleeping which keeps you from sleeping! Resting with peaceful thoughts will usually lead to sleep. To help me fall asleep, I'd pray for my unborn baby and for a safe birth. It really worked. Psalm 4:8 I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Once you realize sleeping more during pregnancy is “par for the course,” you can treat yourself to more pillow time without feeling bad. Enjoy it now because after your baby is born, you'll be getting up in the middle of the night often enough to make up for it!

2) “I can't get into a comfortable position at night.”

In the third trimester, getting comfortable becomes more and more challenging. I was up a lot during my last trimester, and I believe it's God's way of getting us ready for the sleepless nights with a newborn. My son Micah nursed *very often* during the first six weeks!

Proper sleep position is important and if you get into the habit of sleeping on your side early in your pregnancy, it will help you in the latter part when it's the only position available to you. Sleeping on your *left* side helps the flow of blood and nutrients to your baby and uterus. That helps your kidneys get rid of waste and fluids. But some studies show that sleeping on your right side is just as beneficial.

You'll need several more pillows during your pregnancy. You might want to try slipping in an extra pillow to support your tummy when you lie on your side. Also, put one between your legs to help prevent lower backaches. You may need one for your top arm to keep it from falling asleep. Slipping one behind your back for support can be helpful, too. You can get a specially-designed pillow at most mom and baby stores or on Amazon. They have several that are made to use during pregnancy and afterward. You can even take some of your extra pillows to the hospital with you for greater comfort if you have to be in bed for a medical reason during labor, or for helping to support your baby for breastfeeding after you give birth. If you don't have to be in bed for labor, it's better for you, your baby, and your labor to be upright and moving.

Other ways you can help yourself feel more comfortable and get ready for sleep are:

- Taking a warm bath before bed
- Stretching
- Turning down the room temperature
- Thinking peaceful thoughts
- Playing relaxing music

Isaiah 26:3 You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You: because he trusts in You.

Studies have also shown that you should not have light coming into your eyes before trying to go to sleep, so consider reading with a light behind you rather than watching TV or working/playing on the computer. Try dimming your lights for an hour or two before you head for dream land.

3) “I have disturbing dreams and full-body sweats.”

You could be suffering from low blood sugar if you’re having bad dreams and night sweats. Try adding a high-protein food to your dinner such as three egg whites, two tablespoons of natural peanut butter, a chicken breast, a slice of turkey, or a Slim Body Matrix shake. The additional protein often takes care of this problem.

Another reason for having weird dreams could be anxiety. The more you know about pregnancy and childbirth, the less anxious you’ll feel. This is one reason why I started this *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby System*—to help moms-to-be cut stress and anxiety out of their lives. Feel free to join our online Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Prayer Community Website at www.PrayingForYourBaby.com. There you can get connected with other women going through the same things you are. These online discussions and friendships will help ease your mind. You may also consider enrolling in a local childbirth class.

4) “I wake up to go to the bathroom throughout the night.”

The farther along you get in your pregnancy, the more pressure is put on your bladder. You may feel like you have to run to the bathroom all the time. In addition, your kidneys are working harder to filter your increased blood volume and this filtering process results in more urine. So what you’re going through is completely normal.

All pregnant moms feel like they have to make additional trips to the bathroom, both day and night. If you’re out shopping a lot, you’ll soon learn the location of all public restrooms! If your baby is particularly active at night, you’ll find yourself waking up to make trips to the bathroom more often. Try to drink your ten glasses of water during the day, so you don’t drink a lot of water right before bedtime.

5) “I have trouble falling asleep.”

Many pregnant moms find themselves lying awake from time to time. I know I did. Here are three completely safe cures to try:

- Establish a regular routine. Going to bed and getting up at the same time every day will help your body know how it’s supposed to respond.

- Get a massage from a professional who is trained in massage for pregnant women. Make sure the massage therapist knows what he or she is doing and doesn't press on any pressure points that might cause premature labor or contractions. This is wonderfully relaxing. But if you cannot afford to spend the money, your partner can give you a foot or a hand massage, which are also wonderfully relaxing, especially when you play some soothing music in the background and dim the lights.

- Practice guided imagery. To do this relaxation technique, lie down, close your eyes, and imagine yourself in your favorite spot. Where in the world would you most like to be? On a sun-soaked white sandy beach in Hawaii? Lying in a slightly swaying hammock over a field of lush green grass and colorful wildflowers? Whatever it is, picture yourself there, smiling calmly, relaxing, and feeling great. See the sights in your mind. Smell the aromas. Hear the sounds of your special place. Feel the temperature of the air. As you practice concentrating on this image, you'll find yourself drifting off.

TIP: I like to download relaxing Christian music like Chris Tomlin and listen to it on my iPod.

What About Sleep Aids?

During pregnancy, avoid taking prescription or herbal sleep remedies because their effect on your unborn baby is unknown. Over-the-counter sleep aids are generally considered safe, but talk with your doctor before taking them because there can be other side effects to sleep aids. What goes into your body goes into your baby's body as well, so you need to be careful.

If you have a night when you just can't sleep, it's better to get up and do something rather than lie there and worry. Try reading a book (*not a thriller!*), stretch, or listen to music. I used to get up and read, clean or organize, and decorate the nursery. After a bit, you're usually able to go back to bed and fall asleep rather quickly. On the nights when you don't sleep as much, try to catch a nap during the day to make up for it.

Each trimester has its own unique sleep challenges. I'll sum up this chapter by giving you an overview of each one.

Overview of Sleep by Trimester

First Trimester

The first three months of pregnancy is known as the "sleepy time." New hormones have kicked in and your body is responding to the new life growing

inside you. Expect to sleep more during the first trimester. My normal routine was to stay up until midnight or later. But when I was first pregnant, I was wiped out and ready for bed at 7 o'clock. Don't worry about the extra pillow time. You'll be feeling more energetic soon.

Second Trimester

The fourth through sixth months of pregnancy are known as the "honeymoon months." This is the time when you're feeling best. You probably aren't as tired as you were and the baby hasn't grown large enough yet to make you really uncomfortable. Your friends know you're pregnant and you still look cute. You sleep best during this time. Enjoy the second trimester and maintain a faithful exercise schedule. You'll be glad you did as you enter your last trimester.

Third Trimester

The last three months are known as the "patience months," because you will need to dip into your reserves of patience and good humor. This is especially true in the ninth month—*and beyond*. If you're like me and go beyond your due date, you'll need an *extra* dose of patience and good humor! By this time, your baby has grown larger and this puts a greater strain on your back and other parts of your body.

A position to avoid especially in your third trimester is sleeping on your back. The weight of your uterus presses on the major artery that carries blood to and from the uterus and your lower extremities also. If this artery gets compressed, your body pumps harder to compensate, raising your blood pressure. This isn't good for you, especially if you already have high blood pressure. Being on your back in the third trimester also slightly decreases the amount of blood and oxygen to your placenta and baby.

Because we all turn and move about during sleep, you may wake up on your back. If you do, don't panic. You've probably awakened because your body is telling you that you need to turn on your side. Most women aren't comfortable on their backs because it makes it harder for them to breathe. I believe that God built this into pregnancy to keep us off our backs, especially in those later months.

Humor will be your best ally when facing the inevitable inconveniences and discomforts of pregnancy. But by eating healthy, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep, and keeping a positive point of view, you'll succeed in achieving that perfect balance of energy and sleep.

In the next chapter, I'll uncover myths, old wives' tales, and urban legends. Today's mom-to-be refuses to be tied up with silly stories, but she takes scientific facts very seriously. Let's see how much you already know! Please read on.

What You're Going to Discover in Chapter Five

- Have some fun! Take my Pregnancy IQ Quiz. Who will score higher—your baby's mother or your baby's father? Use this great tool to improve the communication between you and your husband.
- Today's mom-to-be is savvy to the real facts about pregnancy. Put the old myths and urban legends to rest. Learn how to separate fact from fiction.

Chapter 5

Fact or Fiction?

Introduction

What's your "Pregnancy I.Q.?" Do you know how to separate fact from fiction? Who's got more pregnancy knowledge and common sense? Just for fun, grab a couple of pencils and let's see who gets the higher score—will it be your baby's father or will it be your baby's mother? Or could it be that your baby's grandmother knows more?

My Pregnancy I.Q. Quiz – Take the Test

Directions:

Beside each statement, mark FACT or FICTION. Answers follow.

- _____ 1. It's okay to lift weights while you're pregnant.
- _____ 2. It's okay to swim while you're pregnant.
- _____ 3. It's okay to smoke while you're pregnant.
- _____ 4. You can hurt your baby by having sex while you're pregnant.
- _____ 5. You should expect to lose a tooth for every baby you have.
- _____ 6. Having an *occasional* beer or glass of wine while pregnant is okay.
- _____ 7. If you're used to drinking coffee, it's okay to continue while pregnant.
- _____ 8. You can have double the calories while you're pregnant.
- _____ 9. You can tell a baby's sex by how high or low you're carrying the baby.

- _____ 10. You can tell a baby's sex by how fast the heartbeat is.
- _____ 11. You can tell a baby's sex by an ultrasound.
- _____ 12. Don't clean the cat's litter box while pregnant.
- _____ 13. Avoid using drugs or medication while pregnant.
- _____ 14. Don't douche while pregnant.
- _____ 15. It's unsafe to take baths while pregnant.
- _____ 16. It's safer to have an episiotomy than to tear.
- _____ 17. Once you have one C-section, all your births will be by C-section.
- _____ 18. You need more sleep during your first trimester.
- _____ 19. Spicy food can bring on labor.
- _____ 20. You can predict your baby's sex with the "Drano test."

Answers

Fact 1. It's okay to lift weights while you're pregnant.

Not only is it okay, it's advisable to lift free weights, because having a strong body will help you during birth and afterward. It's also a great way to burn calories, improve your metabolism, and tone your body. Doing resistance exercises is the most effective exercise you can do.

Fact 2. It's okay to swim while you're pregnant.

Swimming is wonderful aerobic exercise. The water helps your buoyancy and keeps strain off other parts of your body.

Fiction 3. It's okay to smoke while you're pregnant.

Smoking is extremely harmful to your unborn baby (as well as to yourself) and must be completely avoided. In fact, it's so harmful, that pregnant women should even avoid other people's smoke. The March of Dimes says, "Smoking harms your baby. When you smoke, your baby gets less oxygen. Lack of oxygen can cause your baby to grow more slowly and gain less weight in the womb. Smoking during pregnancy has also been linked to preterm labor and other pregnancy complications."

Fiction 4. You can hurt your baby by having sex while pregnant.

There are seven layers of skin from the abdominal wall to the amniotic sac, so your baby is fully protected. Having sex does not harm your baby. In fact, some women find sex more enjoyable while they're pregnant, because they aren't worried about getting pregnant! And some reach orgasm easier, because of the increased blood volume in their pelvic area. Your husband produces prostaglandins and can "share" them with you during intimacy. Prostaglandins are known to ripen your cervix for labor. As my Doula says, "What gets a baby in, gets a baby out!"

Fiction 5. You should expect to lose a tooth for every baby you have.

This myth was started back in the days when women didn't get enough calcium and iron during pregnancy. Take your prenatal vitamins and follow the Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Healthy Eating Program. Then, there's no reason your own health should suffer.

Fiction 6. Having an occasional beer or glass of wine while pregnant is okay.

Absolutely all alcohol must be avoided during pregnancy. The March of Dimes says, "Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause physical and mental defects...No level of alcohol during pregnancy has been proven safe."

Fiction 7. If you're used to drinking coffee, it's okay to continue while pregnant.

The caffeine in a cup of coffee is a large dose for your tiny baby. If you're used to drinking coffee, you need to slowly wean yourself off of it and replace it with a caffeine-free beverage. Weaning yourself off will help you and presumably your baby avoid that horrible headache that comes from stopping cold turkey.

Fiction 8. You can have double the calories while you're pregnant.

Your baby doesn't need many calories. Just 300 extra calories daily meets your pregnancy requirement. So don't take "you're eating for two" the wrong way!

Fiction 9. You can tell a baby's sex by how high or low you're carrying the baby.

False. How you carry your baby is determined by your baby's size, your torso shape and size, and how much body fat you carry in your tummy.

Fiction 10. You can tell a baby's sex by how fast the heartbeat is.

This is another legend. Everyone has a story about how their friend's baby's heartbeat was fast, and sure enough, it was a girl. But a fast heartbeat could just as easily be a boy. Since the odds are 50/50 of having a girl or boy, some of those legends are going to seem to come true—but they have no basis in scientific fact.

Fact 11. You can tell a baby's sex by an ultrasound.

Yes, the only ways you can tell a baby's sex before birth are with an ultrasound (which can sometimes still be wrong!) or with amniocentesis.

Fact 12. Don't clean the cat's litter box while pregnant.

On the rare chance that your cat carries toxoplasmosis, you should get someone else to change the cat's litter box while you're pregnant. If you have no one else, wear plastic gloves and wash your hands afterward. Toxoplasmosis is a disease that can cause birth defects in children. Outdoor cats may get it if they eat prey that carried toxoplasmosis, and the cat will not necessarily show any symptoms. This does not mean you have to get rid of your cat while you're pregnant. Cats and babies have happily coexisted for centuries. It is also not true that cats suck the air out of babies. So you can put that old legend to rest, too.

I have parrots, and I was warned that their droppings could be harmful as well, so I advise using caution when cleaning up after all pets. Use disposable gloves and wash your hands or get someone else to do it.

Fact 13. Avoid using drugs or medication while pregnant.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has said that you should not use any medication (drugs) while pregnant, because what you take reaches your baby. If you feel you need medication, speak with your doctor.

Fact 14. Don't douche while pregnant.

The consensus of medical doctors and the Mayo Clinic is, "Don't douche while pregnant." It could cause an infection in your uterus, which in turn could cause premature labor.

Fiction 15. It's unsafe to take baths while pregnant.

Unless your amniotic sac has burst, there's no medical reason why you cannot enjoy a bath while you're pregnant. Just not too hot. In fact, I found baths to be very relaxing, as do many other moms-to-be.

Fiction 16. It's safer to have an episiotomy than to tear.

Most tears are small and involve tissue only, not muscle. Therefore, most natural tears heal faster and with less pain than episiotomies that may be deeper and involve cutting of the muscle. Research shows this clearly. Today doctors prefer to avoid episiotomies as much as possible.

Fiction 17. Once you have one C-section, all your births will be by C-section.

This is not true today. It depends on the incision on your uterus, which may be different than the incision you can see on your tummy. Many women have a vaginal birth for their next child.

Fact 18. You need more sleep during your first trimester.

The hormonal changes in your body make you more tired in the beginning of your pregnancy and getting the extra shut-eye is healthy. You may feel the need for more sleep in your third trimester as well.

Fiction 19. Spicy food can bring on labor.

You can enjoy spicy foods as long as they agree with you. The spices will not start labor. I was ten days late and trust me, I tried it long before that point!

Fiction 20. You can predict your baby's sex with the "Drano test."

The color change displayed by mixing Drano and the mother's urine cannot predict the baby's sex. This is an old urban myth that has no scientific foundation. Don't even try this because the fumes of the Drano can be harmful.

Scoring

18 – 20 correct:	Excellent!
16 – 17 correct:	Good
14 – 15 correct:	Fair
13 or less correct:	Needs more education

Bottom Line

I hope you had some fun and learned something, too, with my Pregnancy IQ Quiz. Now go back and make sure you know all the correct answers. When it comes to preparing for your baby's life, you want to be 100% right.

If you hear any other ridiculous old wives' tales, like "raising your arms tightens the umbilical cord around your baby's neck," just roll your eyes and lay it

to rest. I didn't include that particular one in my test, because I didn't want to insult your intelligence.

Pregnancy is a natural, God-given process and doing normal things like raising your arms or making love with your husband does not cause harm. But if you do encounter something you're not sure about, go ahead and post a question on the forum for me and I'll give you an answer. That way all the other moms-to-be can have the benefit of the information as well.

In the next chapter, we'll have some fun with the topic of beauty. I'll tell you five ways pregnancy can make you *more* beautiful. Yes, it's true! There are some advantages to being pregnant. And I'll tackle some of those beauty challenges like stretch marks and varicose veins. Plus, beauty products you should avoid while pregnant. So get ready to look fabulous... and read on!

What You're Going to Discover in Chapter Six

- Discover your pregnancy beauty style and which fashions look best on you while you're pregnant. Are you Cute & Curvy, a Sexy-Siren, or Beautifully Elegant? Plus, what to wear while you work out.
- It's true—pregnancy makes you more beautiful! Here's scientific fact to back it up.
- Warning: Five beauty products to steer clear of while you're pregnant.
- No stretch marks! Protect your skin with two "must have" beauty products.
- How to prevent post-pregnancy saggy breasts.
- Why pregnant moms are susceptible to varicose veins and what you can do to keep from getting them. Start now for best results.
- Hate cellulite? Fight back! Use these nice tricks to knock out "waffle skin."

Chapter 6

Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Beauty Secrets

You're pregnant and you're beautiful!

No giant muumuus or frumpy clothes for today's mama-to-be! Like the Hollywood stars, you should showcase your pregnancy, not hide it. So which mom-to-be beauty style fits you? Read the descriptions below and discover my *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Beauty Secrets* to looking your best. You'll be surprised at how much better you'll feel on the inside when you take the time to look good on the outside.

Cute & Curvy

This cute mama-to-be carries her curves primarily in her lower body. Her pre-pregnancy shape is a small waist and larger hips, thighs, and derriere. She is strong and determined, but she hasn't reached her full potential yet—so watch out, world!

Beauty trouble spots might be upper arms, hips, and thighs. Resistance training, both now and after the baby comes, will improve your shape and self-image.

For the pregnant Cute & Curvy, I recommend shorts or a cute sundress during summer. For a special evening out, wear a mini-skirt and flat shoes. Wearing all one-color or vertical stripes is flattering. Don't wear a "tent top" as it will only make you look bigger in the wrong places. Wear loose pants and a fitted or semi-fitted top. You've got beautiful, feminine curves, so show them off tastefully, including your pregnant tummy. For cooler weather, wear a sweater around your shoulders. It balances out your look and is practical for your volatile body temperature at this time.

Slim and Fit

Your pre-pregnancy shape is best described as hourglass (or nearly so). No one is perfect, but you distribute your weight evenly throughout your body—even if you carry a little more weight than you'd like at times. The combination of resistance training and aerobic activity will tone you overall and make you look your best.

For the Slim and Fit, I recommend wearing vibrant color. Either warm tones like tangerine and sunny yellow or cool tones like ruby red and blue, depending on your skin tone. Wear comfortable tops that have stretch! Empire waist tops and dresses are also flattering right now. For a pick-me-up, get a chic new handbag that will be your "signature accessory."

Beautifully Elegant

Your pre-pregnancy body is relatively straight. You have the body type of an athlete. You'll carry your pregnancy weight in your tummy, so don't be shy about tastefully showing it off.

The Beautifully Elegant mom-to-be can dress in dramatic black-and-white, or she can wear fun, trendy clothes. You can pull off a ritzy top when you want to dress up. A pair of stretch-waist black velvet pants and a swingy top looks fabulous on you. For a sporty look, raid your man's closet for shirts. Roll up the sleeves and add a piece of jewelry for a feminine touch.

What to Wear While You Work Out

Every body type looks better when you're toned and healthy. Get enough beauty sleep—especially now—and do your *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Activity Program stretches and exercise. It will pay off later! What I loved about being pregnant was that I took good care of myself. I exercised throughout my entire nine months, so the weight I gained was "baby weight." One of the things you can do to make exercise fun is to wear something you look and feel good in.

You don't have to spend a lot of money on workout clothes. I like low-cut pants, so I kept them comfortably below my baby-tummy. Then I got clothes that were bigger than the size I usually wore and that had stretch to them. Some cities have consignment shops where you can buy clothes for less. If you do buy in the specialty pregnancy shops, be aware that they don't usually do refunds, so be careful what you buy. Stores like TJ Maxx, Ross, Wal-Mart, Target, and Sears usually have reasonable prices. Wear loose, comfortable clothes that breathe, like cotton. It's easy to become overheated while pregnant because of the extra weight you're carrying. So be sure to keep cool, especially while you're exercising.

Wear Good Shoes

Having a good pair of shoes is important. They will be something you'll still wear after your baby is born. Cross-training or running shoes are good for walking and working out. Don't be surprised if you need a slightly larger size now due to water retention. Some women grow larger feet in pregnancy that don't reverse after birth. Usually that will only happen in the first pregnancy.

If you're a business woman, don't be shy about trading in high heels for business shoes with a small heel at least for your second and third trimesters. People don't expect a pregnant woman to wear stiletto heels. But more importantly, the hormones relaxin and elastin loosen your joints while you're pregnant, so your balance is more precarious. In France women wear ballerina flats. Those are great for moms-to-be. Wearing the right shoes will help you avoid a dangerous slip-n-fall and will help keep back pain to a minimum.

Bra + Exercise = Minimal Sagging

You don't need a special pregnancy bra, but you very well may need to change bra size during pregnancy—perhaps more than once. Most lingerie departments have a trained assistant who can help you get fitted properly. Getting the proper support and doing resistance exercises for your chest muscles goes a long way in preventing sagging breasts.

During the last trimester, if your breasts start leaking milk, pick up some breast pads so you don't leak through your clothes. You can get them at any drugstore. The brand Johnson & Johnson was my favorite. They have adhesive backs so they don't slide around.

Pregnancy does have its challenges and I'll talk about some of the biggest concerns in a moment. But first, did you know that in many ways you look *more beautiful* while you're pregnant?

It's True! Pregnancy Makes You More Beautiful

When someone compliments you and says you're glowing, they're not making it up. Here are six facts that say you really are lovely when you're expecting.

1) You have a "beauty glow." It's true. It's caused by the increased blood volume and circulation during pregnancy. This enhances your skin and makes it beautifully luminescent.

2) Your nails may grow faster and stronger. This is a pleasant surprise for women who've struggled for years with brittle nails that break easily.

3) Thicker, shinier hair shows up in the second trimester, thanks again to hormonal changes. Some women also have a welcome difference in hair texture. If you find that your experience is just the opposite, like I did, take heart. It's only temporary.

4) If you've been prone to acne, that may go away as your pregnancy progresses due to the increase in estrogen.

5) Your breasts become more voluptuous and you get an amazing cleavage. (My husband was happy!)

6) Never underestimate the "happiness factor!" It contributes in a big way to how beautiful you are. Lots of moms-to-be say they've never felt more alive than when they're pregnant!

The Two Most Important Beauty Products You'll Use

Which beauty products and procedures are safe to use and which ones should you avoid? Remember the main principle is what you put into your own body goes into your baby's body also. So don't use anything that is questionable for your baby. It's best to err on the side of safety when you're not sure.

One common question is whether or not it's okay to use nail polish. Nail polish is considered safe, because it is not absorbed by the nail plate, according to New York dermatologist Dr. Diane Berson. Personally, I chose not to wear much nail polish during my pregnancy.

Authorities agree that there are two things that you *should* use during pregnancy. These two products are proven to protect your skin and prevent stretch marks.

1) Sunblock is highly recommended for everyone, but pregnancy makes it even more essential. Your hormones increase your sensitivity to the sun's rays. Wearing sun protection helps prevent "pregnancy mask" or melasma. Melasma are brown blotchy spots on the face or sometimes just around the eyes. These should go away after pregnancy when hormones revert back to normal. I got them pretty bad, but an oil-free cover-up did the job. And sure enough, they did disappear after birth.

2) Moisturizer does triple-duty while you're pregnant. It keeps your skin from drying out and becoming itchy, it heals damaged or cracked skin, and it increases elasticity to help prevent stretch marks. One such moisturizer is Shea butter, a super-moisturizer from the seed of the Shea tree in West Africa. You can use it on your tummy and breasts to guard against stretch marks. You can also use it to heal sore nipples when you're nursing.

I used a lotion called Alba Botanica Very Emollient Body Lotion as well as other Alba products I got at Whole Foods Market. I used the moisturizers faithfully every day and I did not get stretch marks.

The most important thing you can do to keep from getting stretch marks is to avoid gaining too much weight. If you're carrying twins or having a large baby, you may get stretch marks anyway. Genetics plays a part, too, so don't put all the blame on yourself. If you do get them, take cheer in the fact that they will fade with time. Vitamin E oil and other over-the-counter lotions help stretch marks clear up faster. Within six months to a year, they're usually gone or become so faint no one notices.

Warning: Five Beauty Products to Steer Clear of While You're Pregnant

The medical profession recommends avoiding products that have not been tested as safe to use during pregnancy and also avoiding products that penetrate your skin. Check with your doctor on anything you're not sure about. Here are my own recommendations based on my experience and research.

1) Avoid products you leave on and let absorb into your skin, like self-tanners and alpha-hydroxy acids in creams you leave on your face. Results are inconclusive. I abide by the "better safe than sorry" attitude.

2) Avoid retinols and retinoids like Retin-A and vitamin A derivatives as they are considered unsafe for your baby during pregnancy.

3) Don't use hair dyes that cover your scalp, because they are absorbed into your skin. These are questionable even for non-pregnant women. It's okay to highlight your hair and keep the dye off your scalp, which is accomplished by

using foils. Personally, I did a few highlights from time to time, but I also skipped a few and let my hair get a little darker while I was pregnant.

4) Teeth-whitening products that contain hydrogen peroxide are not recommended because no tests have been done for safe use during pregnancy. I made a paste of 1 teaspoon of baking soda and a fresh organic strawberry and mashed it together. Put it on your teeth for 5-10 minutes and it naturally whitened my teeth.

5) Depilatory creams (hair removing creams) have not been tested, but they do contain lye, so you probably want to steer clear and shave or wax instead.

In addition, stay away from tanning beds. Your stretched skin is more vulnerable to burning and the UV rays may be dangerous, according to tanning salon owner Bill Wolff.

I recommend using natural beauty products. Whole Foods Markets and other retailers have natural products that are safe to use, including cosmetics.

Now let's take a look at how to tackle some of the other challenges of pregnancy.

Why Pregnancy Increases Varicose Veins & What To Do About Them

During pregnancy, your blood volume increases, putting more pressure on your veins and causing you to be more at-risk for getting those blue-looking lines in your legs. Having a multiple birth, being overweight, regularly standing for long periods of time, and genetics also play a role in your susceptibility.

The good news is that there are steps you can take to minimize your chances of getting varicose veins. The sooner you get started the better.

- Do your *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Aerobic Routine (including the stretches) regularly. Walking is excellent for getting your circulation going and cutting down the pressure in your veins.

- Avoid standing in one place for long periods of time
- Avoid sitting with your legs crossed as this adds pressure to your veins
- Elevate your feet when sitting
- Sleep on your left side with your feet slightly elevated on a pillow
- Gain the appropriate amount of weight

If you have to stand a lot at the work you do, you can wear support hose which are designed to help the blood pressure in your legs. I know they're not

fashionable, but if the temperature isn't too hot, you can wear them under pants and no one will know. At least it's better than having varicose veins that get worse and worse. You should apply support hose before you get out of bed in the morning.

Hate Cellulite? Fight Back! Nine Ways to Beat It

Cellulite is not a medical term, but it's a word used to describe fat deposits that make your skin look like cottage cheese or dimples. Every woman I know hates cellulite. Unfortunately for some women, it seems to go with the territory of being pregnant. If you're not overweight and have suddenly been attacked by ripples and bumps, don't freak—it's only temporary. I know that may not comfort you much right now, so here are 8 tips for overcoming cellulite and feeling better at the same time.

- 1) Flush out toxins by drinking at least 10 glasses of water each day
- 2) Avoid salty foods that increase water retention and increase the appearance of fat deposits
- 3) Avoid sugary, starchy foods that are quickly converted to fat
- 4) Eat a high-fiber diet with fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- 5) Cut back on soda and avoid caffeine
- 6) Do your *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Stretching Routine to boost circulation and reduce toxic build-up
- 7) Gently rub your legs and other susceptible areas for a few minutes each day to break down fat and aid in the elimination of toxins
- 8) Reduce stress by refusing to worry because tension slows down efficient waste elimination
- 9) Do resistance exercises because they build muscle which helps to smooth out dimples
- 10) Massage from a person trained in pregnancy massage can also help to increase circulation and release toxins

After you've done all you can do, let it go. Concentrate on the joy of having a baby instead.

You are Beautiful!

Most conditions that pop up during pregnancy are going to gradually disappear when your pregnancy is over and your body and hormones go back to normal. The important thing is to live healthy and don't worry about those things you can't control. Pregnancy is not a "medical condition." Pregnancy is a natural, beautiful part of life—inconveniences and all. Today, women are proud of their baby bumps. You *are* beautiful!

Chapter Seven is about the part every mommy-to-be is waiting for—the baby's birth. I'll share with you my personal experience, tell you what it's like to have a Doula, and give you all my best secrets for having a good labor and birth.

What You're Going to Discover in Chapter Seven

- My personal story of giving birth to our son, including how I “beat the odds” and avoided a C-section. Even my doctor was amazed.
- How having a Birth Doula helped my labor go smoother.
- My “secret” for having less painful contractions. It really worked!
- The big debate: Natural childbirth or not? See what I have to say about this hot topic.
- Ten things you can do to have an easier labor.
- My best-kept secret for burning away fat after you have the baby!
- My handy list on what to take to the hospital! This will help you be ready and not forget that crucial item. Your husband will be glad he doesn't have to run back and get the things you forgot, too!

Chapter 7

Ready, Set, Give Birth!

Introduction



When you hold your brand new, one-minute old baby in your arms, you'll experience triumph and joy and love like never before. This is a photo of our son Micah Kekoa Polimino. (His first name, Micah, is from the Bible. Micah was a prophet in the Old Testament. His middle name, Kekoa, is Hawaiian and means brave and courageous.) Here is Micah's story.

How Our First Baby Was Born

My baby was supposed to come a week early—that's what the doctors said. But Micah had other ideas. My due date was July 25th. That came and went and still no baby!

We have a rather high bed in our master bedroom. By that time I could barely get up into bed by myself. I felt so pregnant! All I could think about was how I wanted this baby to come. I was extremely uncomfortable and at the same time, very anxious to meet our son or daughter.

My husband Dan and I decided we wanted to be surprised about the sex of our baby, so we didn't find out ahead of time. But still, I knew in my heart it was going to be a boy. Dan wasn't so sure. So we were waiting to find out just who was going to be the newest member of our family.

Believe me, by that time, waiting was one thing I was tired of. Every day I was out walking around my neighborhood to try to speed along his birthday. I even tried eating spicy food! But that didn't work either. I tried all the "natural" things to help, but each day was another day of waiting in suspense. When would our baby enter this world?

Waiting and Waiting...

In those final weeks, I added some water weight, which is totally normal and okay, but I was feeling very ready to get back to normal. I was still working almost full-time, too.

Toward the end, you feel so big, but there's nothing you can do about it. So you just have to deal with it the best you can. You just get up, take a shower, put on some makeup, do your hair, find the cutest thing you have that makes you feel good, and get out. I found that when I stayed home, I'd get to feeling the blues. So I think the best thing you can do is to get out of the house. Everybody loves a pregnant mommy-to-be. They love to ask when you're due and it's almost more fun to share after your over-due.

So when people asked, I'd say, "I was due yesterday."

And then, "I was due last week."

And then it was, "I was due nine days ago."

People would look concerned.

Then I would say, "He'll come when he's ready." And they'd understand.

Finally, nearly three long weeks past when I was expected to deliver, I started labor. It was Wednesday, August 3rd, around 4:30 in the afternoon. You never forget. I began having pretty consistent contractions by then. The contractions continued all through that night and into Thursday morning. I got no sleep that night.

Then Thursday morning around 10:00 o'clock, they stopped. I managed to sleep for a couple of hours. Had I known what was in store for me, I would have slept longer. Later that afternoon, the contractions started up again, and again I labored all through the night. This time it was definitely more serious than the night before.

For some reason, it felt good to me to do a plié squat. So for every contraction for over 30 hours, I'd squat down to the ground and come back up when the contraction was over. Those made me feel better during the uncomfortable part of labor.

A Call to My Doula

At about 4:00 a.m., I called Janet, my Doula. A Birth Doula is a trained childbirth support person who provides continuous informational, emotional, and physical support to the mother and her partner during labor and the immediate postpartum period.

Janet came right over at that early hour and then my husband got to catch a little sleep. He had work scheduled in the morning and we didn't know if these would go away again. That was just fine with me because men don't always know how to help you out when you're experiencing pain anyway. With Janet there coaching me, I felt a lot better.

I tried getting into a tub of water, because water can help during birth. However, I couldn't do my walking and plié squats in the tub. Therefore, the contractions were more difficult for me in that position. Surprisingly, but thankfully, the contractions got a little farther apart. I managed to sleep for ten minutes at a time between them.

Note: Women supported by a Birth Doula during labor have a 25% shorter labor, according to www.DoulaNetwork.com .

The Trip to the Hospital

My Doula knew when it was time to set out for the hospital. I'm glad we didn't go too early. They would have just sent me home again. Janet suggested we go to the clinic to be checked since I'd been in labor for seventeen hours already, but things didn't seem to be progressing that much. Thank God I was about four centimeters dilated. Finally! It took me a *long* time to get to that point.

The hospital drive was thirty minutes. For some reason, my contractions got easier in the car. Janet explained that was because I was secreting

adrenaline. Adrenaline is a hormone that slows contractions. After all, what could be more exciting than going to the hospital to have a baby!

When we arrived at the hospital, I stepped out of the car into the parking lot... and my water broke. What timing!

My Secret to Avoiding a Cesarean Section

By this time, my contractions were coming about every four minutes, and Janet continued to rub my back every time. It was wonderful having her with me. I highly recommend having a Doula. And I have to add this: The only reason I got through those 30-plus hours of labor as well as I did, walking around and doing plié squats for three days, was because I exercised throughout my entire pregnancy and kept a very healthy diet. So following my *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* System is of the highest importance—it really was my personal secret to having the best possible birth I could have.

My doctor even said that if I hadn't been in such good physical shape, he most likely would have given me a Cesarean Section. But instead, I was strong and healthy. You can be, too!

Emergency Prevented

Soon it was time to push. I pushed for a full hour and a half, and then something happened. Out came our baby with the cord wrapped around his neck—*twice!* I'll tell you what happened in a moment, but first I have to tell you about my husband.

Daddy Gets Surprised

Dan was wonderfully supportive of me all throughout my pregnancy. But his plan was to stand up by my head during the actual birth. He's the type who can't handle a hangnail and passes out at the sight of blood. He just didn't want to see the actual birth at all. I'm sure you know what I mean. So naturally, he wasn't going to cut the cord or anything like that.

He said he'd be at my shoulders and say, "Come on, baby, you can do it!"

So when it was time to push and as I was pushing out our baby, Dan got so excited! He really got into the moment—the experience of the birth.

He announced, "Oh my God, look, there's the head!" He was totally cool. He thought it was going to be a girl coming out.

Then the doctors saw the cord wrapped around the baby's neck and they handled it. My husband Dan even cut the cord! I was so surprised.

Out came the rest of our baby. Dan excitedly exclaimed, "It's a BOY!" He was so happy, he was crying. We were all overjoyed and filled with so much happiness. There aren't words to describe the triumph and joy and love. The birth of a baby is a miracle and it's absolutely amazing.

We met our son for the first time. Of course, like all moms, I thought he was the most beautiful baby boy I'd ever seen!

That was my first experience, and of course, everyone is unique and different. You can't predict or control how long your labor is going to be or exactly how the birth will go. You just do everything humanly possible to prepare for it.

In my book, [*Praying Through Your Child's Early Years*](#), I tell you my complete story about how Malia Grace entered our lives in a completely different fashion just 2 ½ years later. I *will* tell you that it was gratefully shorter.



Ten Things You Can Do To Make Labor Easier

What type of labor you'll have and how long it will be cannot be predicted ahead of time. Even if you're in great shape, you might have a long labor. Mine was over 30 hours. But it still helps if you take steps ahead of time. If I hadn't been in such good shape, I may have had an even longer labor and a C-section on top of that. You can't compare yourself with any other mom. You can only compare you to you. Here's my list of tips to have as easy a labor as you can.

- 1) Follow the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Activity Program to be in the best shape you can.
- 2) Do Kegel exercises daily to strengthen your pelvic floor.
- 3) Have a good support team. Both my Doula and my husband helped me relax and feel better. Statistically, women with a strong support system

- use analgesics 30% less and request an epidural 60% less, showing what a big difference it makes.
- 4) Listen to your body and do what feels good to you during contractions. You might like to walk, sit in a tub of water, or lie down. Do what works for *you*.
 - 5) Use breathing techniques to relax. In yoga, they have you exhale for relaxation. Breathing rhythmically helps you relax and work with the labor process.
 - 6) Use imagery and focus during contractions. This helps keep your mind on the positive and it helps you maintain control.
 - 7) Go to the hospital or birthing center at the right time. If you go too early, they'll send you home. If you go too late, you may have your baby in transit. My Doula helped me judge the right time.
 - 8) Have a good doctor you can trust. With a trusting relationship, you'll be more relaxed, which is important, because tension results in more pain. You then won't need to worry about whether or not your doctor is going to do a procedure you don't agree with while you're in labor and vulnerable.
 - 9) Be prepared. Have your bag packed and know how you'll get to the hospital. Have an alternate route ready, just in case of a traffic back-up.
 - 10) Let go of fear. Fear causes tension and that works against the natural process. If you're scared and nervous, take a class or read one of the excellent books written by a medical professional, such as *You and Your Baby: Pregnancy The Ultimate Week-by-Week Pregnancy Guide* by Laura Riley, M.D. Ob/Gyn, or *Easy Labor: Every Woman's Guide to Choosing Less Pain and More Joy during Childbirth* by William Camann, Director of Obstetrics.

The Big Debate: Natural Childbirth or Not?

Choosing the method to have your baby is a highly personal choice. Some moms had epidurals and are happy they did. I opted for natural childbirth, because that's my family's tradition. I come from a large family, and that's just the way all the women do it. Secondly, I personally don't believe in putting any more drugs or medication into my body than necessary. When Micah was born, he was so alert. I believe that's partly due to the fact that he had no drugs in his body.

If a woman chooses not to go with natural childbirth, that is her decision and I respect that. I just think it's important to let every couple make their own choice because they're the ones who are going to live with their decisions. No

one should try to persuade anyone else how *she* should have *her* baby. Do you really want to be responsible for someone else's childbirth experience? What if you persuaded her to go one way or another and then she resented you for it later? So each woman gets to make her own decision because you never know how it will go or what will happen.

My Best Advice

When asked for my single best piece of advice about labor and birth, I say, "Expect the unexpected." You never know ahead of time what's going to happen. For example, I was convinced I was going to have a three-hour labor. I told my friends I was going to push the little guy out fast. They'd just laugh at me, especially my friend who is a nurse practitioner.

"Jen, your baby's going to do what it wants to do," she'd say. But I was determined to have a three-hour labor. I was fit and I was ready. Then look what happened. I had to eat my words.

Other unexpected surprises were my late birth (that was supposed to be early), and the umbilical cord. So you never know! Just be ready to go with what God gives you. Every woman and every baby is unique.

One of the things you can control, however, is being packed and ready to go. I advise having your bag ready four weeks in advance, just to be safe.

What to Take to the Hospital

Here are my suggestions for what to take to the hospital:

- Two sets of comfy clothes such as sweat pants and tee shirts to wear home
- Flip-flops that can get wet and easy slide-in shoes
- Nursing bras and pads
- Nighttime sanitary napkins
- A bed jacket (for when visitors come)
- Hairbrush and cosmetics
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, and other toiletries
- Camera and video camera
- Writing materials to record your thoughts
- Music (like an iPod)
- Snacks
- Clothes for your baby to wear home
- Baby blankets
- Baby car seat for the travel home
- Buy a newspaper the day of birth for souvenir headlines and articles

I hope this list helps you customize a list of your own.

In the next chapter, I answer those questions that are on every pregnant mom's mind: "How long will it take to lose the weight and get back into my pre-pregnancy clothes?" If you've jumped to this section, please visit the Introduction to see the photographs of me four days after I gave birth.

What You're Going to Discover in Chapter Eight

- Amaze your friends! Get back into your pre-pregnancy clothes faster than they ever thought possible with my three easy *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Tips for New Mothers. (I was back to my normal weight in just 4 days.)
- Did complications confine you to “bed rest?” Don’t give up—you’re not alone. My over 20 years of experience in coaching moms-to-be will help you, too.
- 10 tips to handle stress and find inner peace.
- Hate the thought of having postpartum depression? Discover the four things your brain needs to get your emotions back into balance so you don’t slip into that deep, dark hole.
- Nursing your baby—the top five benefits. Plus, how to protect your own bones and teeth while you’re breastfeeding.
- How to handle a big aggravation nobody wants to talk about—comparing babies.
- Have you ever felt like tossing out your scale? And, to top it off, the baby doesn’t want to be put down. What do you do? Save your tears—I’ve got answers for you.

Chapter 8

Getting Back to Normal

Introduction



I’m proof that it is possible to get back into your regular clothes quickly. Since Micah was born in August, I was happy to be back in my slim shorts for the rest of summer! Some women may take a little longer to get back in their pre-pregnancy clothes and that’s okay. I know I burned a *lot* of calories during my thirty hours of labor and I was back to my pre-pregnancy weight four days later. Here are my secrets—tips that really do work.

Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby Tips for New Mothers

Bounce back into your pre-pregnancy body by following my 1-2-3 strategy.

- 1) Follow the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Healthy Eating Plan and Activity Program.

What you do now during your pregnancy sets you up for success after your baby is born. I can't emphasize this enough. If you don't live healthy now, you'll have much more work to do later. And, frankly, you've got more incentive *now* because of the growing baby in your tummy! Every time you make a wise choice, like having a Slim Body Matrix Shake for a snack rather than a high-calorie, sugar-laden choice, picture yourself making a deposit in your personal "Healthy Body Bank Account" for later. The same thing goes for every exercise and stretching routine you do. It all comes back to reward you in the end (no pun intended).

- 2) Walk.

This is the best thing you can do after birth. After your baby comes, life is turned upside down! Your baby may be like mine and in those first few weeks or months may wake you up at all hours of the night to eat. Regular sleep is a thing of the past. So, you'll be tired most of the time. But get out and walk as much as you can.

I strapped on my little baby front pack and got him snuggled safely into it. Then, Micah and I went out for our walk together. Since he was young and breastfeeding, our walks weren't long. But that's okay. It all counts.

- 3) Breastfeed.

If you can nurse your baby, this will burn more calories and help you get your shape back faster. Research says breastfeeding burns 200 – 500 extra calories per day. (More about this topic in a moment.)

In [*Praying Through Your Child's Early Years*](#), I dedicated a whole chapter to breastfeeding verses bottle-feeding. I hope you consider and really understand the benefits of breastfeeding for both you and your baby. The benefits truly outweigh any negatives. The bonding you will experience is what God intended it to be.

Handling Complications and "Bed Rest"

Previously, I talked about expecting the unexpected. If medical complications have put you on bed rest, don't despair. The reason I put it in

quotes is because some Birth Doulas have called it “In Bed Confinement” or “Bed Jail” because there’s almost nothing restful about it!

Sometimes a mom-to-be does everything right and takes good care of herself—but then, *WHAM!*—a complication pops up. Her doctor may confine her to bed rest. These things happen sometimes and they’re out of our control. So don’t beat yourself up emotionally. Even if you gain a little more than the recommended weight, you’ll be okay. The important thing is to have a healthy baby. So do your best. But, don’t totally blow it by going off the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Healthy Eating Program. The last thing you want is to set yourself back more by eating unhealthy food or drinks. Then, once you’re doing everything you can, be at peace. Here are some tips to help you find serenity.

Ten Tips to Lower Stress

- 1) Get plenty of sleep
- 2) Eat healthy
- 3) Drink water
- 4) Exercise
- 5) Close your eyes, stretch, and breathe slowly
- 6) Listen to music
- 7) Read an uplifting book
- 8) Talk with a friend
- 9) Pray or meditate
- 10) Write out your feelings in your personal journal

Here’s some good news for women who are confined to bed during their pregnancies. You may not be able to do any exercise right now, other than isometric and some stretches, but you can spend a lot of time with the Lord. Jump into a Bible study by Beth Moore, Kay Arthur or Priscilla Shirer. I love these awesome women of God and their knowledge of the Bible.

There are so many different Bible studies that you can immerse yourself in during this season of rest. You can also go to www.OnePlace.org and listen to them teach.

Or check out http://precept.org/precepts_for_life to see Kay. Or watch Beth Moore weekly here on <http://lifetoday.org/life-today-tv/beth-moore/>.

You can also use this opportunity to expand your knowledge about having a healthy pregnancy and baby by reading. You’ll see some of my favorite books and websites listed at the end of this eBook.

One question I get asked about fairly often is postpartum depression. As I shared, I had my own challenges with beating the blues at the beginning of my pregnancy, but feeling depressed afterward is different, so let's talk about that.

Beating Postpartum Depression and ILL-Health

Over 15 million new mothers take anti-depressant drugs for depression, lethargy, and fatigue. Does this number really need to be so high? Perhaps not.

Consider the fact that you have just created a new human being, complete with skin, hair, bones, muscles, brain, and all the cells that go into making a human body. All of the "ingredients" for this new person came from *you*, by way of your bloodstream into the placenta. Is it any wonder that many of these new mothers who haven't been following a good eating program are nutritionally depleted? In fact, most women are nutritionally depleted before they even become pregnant in the first place! If you have no history of depression or anxiety or fatigue, then the possibility of being nutritionally depleted should be your first consideration if you find yourself down in the dumps. I'll explain.

Your brain makes neurotransmitters, which are brain chemicals that control mood, energy levels, and a host of other body functions. Neurotransmitters carry messages throughout your entire nervous system—from your brain to your body. When they're in balance, they help you control stress and emotions, and they help keep you emotionally stable when something unexpected happens.

Neurotransmitters are composed of amino acids, fatty acids, and vitamins and minerals. If you're lacking these nutrients (neurotransmitter precursors), your body won't be able to make the needed neurotransmitters to keep you mentally, emotionally, and physically healthy. Now that just makes sense, doesn't it? Why would you not want to prevent depression in the first place? These are the four things your brain needs to make neurotransmitters:

- Omega-3 oils
- Magnesium
- B-vitamins
- Amino acids

You want to make sure you're getting these vitally important nutrients through proper food and through supplements. It's pretty hard to get the proper amounts of these nutrients through food alone. Most of the time, once you're replenished with these nutrients, your brain chemistry gets back into balance, your physical health returns, and the world looks like a happier place.

TIP: Most women are also depleted of calcium following pregnancy. So be sure to keep up your calcium intake.

The other necessary “ingredient” for fighting postpartum depression is sleep. Of course, this is every new mom’s biggest challenge, but it’s one you can’t afford to ignore. When you’re getting up throughout the night to take care of your baby, you must allow yourself the time to take naps during the day. Don’t consider this a luxury, but rather a necessity. Feeling like everything’s going wrong can often be cured with a big dose of sleep. So I encourage you to recruit your family and friends to help out to give you some much-needed rest time. Don’t forget, give yourself these two things: proper nutrition and sleep. Then, if you still can’t overcome depression, talk with your doctor.

Nursing Your Baby

How you will feed your newborn baby is a personal decision. I chose to breastfeed because of all the wonderful benefits that go with it for both me and my baby.

So, here’s my story. Soon after our son was born, I got to hold him in my arms for awhile and guess what? That little baby latched right onto feeding like he was a natural pro and knew exactly what to do. Since I felt like I had no clue, this was a big relief! I had plenty of milk for him, and he really took to it.

Little Micah began gaining weight like we couldn’t believe! Within a few months, he gained over ten pounds. It was really something.

Breastfeeding was easier for me compared to bottle-feeding. Why? Because I didn’t have to go out to the kitchen and warm up a bottle in the middle of the night. And since we travel so much, it was much easier, because I had one less thing to prepare ahead of time and pack. By five months, Micah had already been on over twenty planes. In no time at all, he’d already received his own frequent flier card!

Numerous research studies from around the world have shown a myriad of benefits to nursing. Here are some of them.

Top Five Benefits of Breastfeeding

- Baby is less likely to develop food or respiratory allergies
- Reduces the chance of the child developing asthma by age six
- Builds a stronger immune system in the baby, resulting in fewer incidents of diarrhea, lower respiratory illness, and ear infections
- Promotes emotional bonding
- Aids the mother in getting back into shape quickly by burning more

calories

If you choose to breastfeed your baby, you need to consume a minimum of 1,500 – 1,800 calories a day. Going lower than this could slow down or halt your milk production. It's also vital that you drink plenty of water. I recommend 10 glasses a day.

If you choose to feed your baby infant formula instead, that is okay, too. It's a personal choice and your baby can still be healthy.

For all new moms, it's important to continue with the five small meals a day in order to give yourself protein, carbs, good fats, and nutrients throughout the day. This postpartum period is a time to replenish your body. This is no time to go on a crash diet! Keep up your energy, your health, and your spirits by treating yourself right.

For more information about breastfeeding including tips for breastfeeding success, go to www.fda.gov and type "breastfeeding" into the Search. I also highly recommend www.laleche.com. They were very helpful to me.

Protect Your Bones and Teeth While You're Breastfeeding

According to the National Institute of Health, 99% of your body's total calcium is stored in your bones and teeth, where it supports their structure. While nursing, you need extra calcium because your body is making breast milk. You need 1,200 milligrams daily. A great source for post-pregnancy calcium can be found in a calcium supplement. As a reminder, here's a list of calcium-rich foods.

Good Sources of Calcium:

Fruit yogurt, low fat	245 – 384 mg.
Cheddar cheese, 1-1/2 oz.	325 mg.
Milk, nonfat, 8 oz.	302 mg.
Cottage cheese, 1 cup	138 mg.
Slim Body Matrix Shake, strawberry-banana split	120 mg.
Kale, 1 cup	90 mg.
Broccoli, 1 cup, raw	42 mg.

Magnesium interacts with calcium to maintain tooth enamel, keep bones strong, support a healthy immune system, and is even involved in energy metabolism (and more). Recent studies indicate magnesium may help regulate blood pressure as well as help with fatigue and relaxation. You need at least 400 milligrams of magnesium per day.

Good Sources of Magnesium

Halibut, cooked, 3 oz.	90 mg.
Almonds, dry roasted, 1 oz.	80 mg.
Oatmeal, 1 cup	55 mg.
Slim Body Matrix Shake, strawberry-banana split	50 mg.
Yogurt, plain	45 mg.
Milk, nonfat, 8 oz.	45 mg.
Avocado, 1/2 cup	35 mg.
Banana, 1 medium	30 mg.

The other thing you can do for your bones is resistance or weight-bearing exercise. As soon as you're able, you'll want to continue with the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Resistance Training. If you have a Cesarean birth, you'll need to take a longer recovery time and to follow your doctor's orders before beginning any exercise regime.

Every mom must take the time she needs to rest and recover after her birth. The time required for recovery will be different for each person.

Handling Nosy, Catty, Annoying People

One of the things that causes anxiety and stress for new moms is insensitive people who say things we'd rather not hear. I have to admit, I was one of those people. When my little guy was about 6-8 months old, I was so proud of him, that I just wanted to tell everybody what he was doing. But I didn't realize how it may have hurt other young moms that I was hanging around with.

Here are some examples to avoid:

“My baby is rolling over already. How about yours?”

“My baby is sleeping through the night already. How are you doing?”

“How often are you feeding him, anyway?”

“I'm already back into a size four. Have you lost any weight?”

If you're like me, the last thing you want to hear is a catty remark aimed right at comparing “Little Perfect” to your baby or to yourself. New moms don't need that! No matter if your baby is ahead of schedule or if your baby is behind schedule, it doesn't really matter. Some babies can do some things quickly and some babies take a little bit more time to do the same things. God has made every child perfect in His eyes. Just remember, no matter how quick or how slow your child may be, it is a precious prince or princess of the Most High God.

My suggestion is to refuse to be drawn into these types of conversations. When somebody says (using that superior tone), “My baby is doing *this* already; how about yours?” I think it’s best to respond with a simple, non-competitive answer like, “That’s great!” Then, change the subject. Even if your baby is doing it, too, who cares? Comparing babies for the sake of seeing who’s more advanced is a losing game. You can lose good friendships.

Sometimes you just can’t help being a proud first-time mommy, but you have to be sensitive to how you come across to others. This was actually hard for me, but I learned to bite my tongue.

When you’re challenged by a catty remark, remember the “Politician’s Motto”: *The answer doesn’t necessarily have to match the question.* I think we’ll all agree that women have enough challenges all on their own, without being one another’s worst enemy in addition.

Speaking of challenges, if the scale is giving you fits and your baby insists on being held all the time, take a look at this next section.

Neither the Scale Nor the Baby Wants to Go Down – What Do You Do?

Maybe the weight isn’t coming off as fast as you’d like after your birth. Maybe you’re having a hard time exercising because your baby is demanding so much of your time and you’re dog-tired. Furthermore, the house is a mess and you’ve already changed ten diapers today and it’s only noon. You’ve got a lot on your plate already. So don’t get hung up on the number on your scale and don’t let yourself spiral down into a depression. You don’t need that right now!

Instead, focus on getting your body back with these toning exercises and ignore the scale until things cool off. As you strengthen your body and give it time, the scale will eventually respond. And, besides, there are a lot of things more important in the big scheme of life than the number on a scale. Matthew 6:33 But, seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.

These are the exercises I did when Micah is having what I call “a needy day.” (Which was almost every day when I originally wrote this!) If your baby doesn’t want to be put down, but you need to exercise, try these. They worked for me.

As with all recommendations in this book, please check with your doctor before starting any exercise program. Also, be sure you are wearing good-fitting non-slip shoes.

Mommy-And-Me Exercise #1 – Legs and Derriere

Baby Squats

Secure your baby in your front baby pack. The added weight will help tone your legs and back side. Start with a basic two-legged squat with your feet hip-width apart. Be sure to have a chair or table to hang onto or consider doing these against a wall behind you. Lower yourself to a 90-degree angle and then back up. Do 10 reps. Then move your feet a little wider apart and turn your toes out. These are plié squats and will target more of your inner thighs. Again, shoot for 10 reps.

Mommy-And-Me Exercise #2 – Arms

Bicep Curls

Again, start by securing your baby in your front baby pack. Grab a light set of two hand weights, between 5-8 lbs each. Let's start with bicep curls. In one hand, hold a dumbbell down by your side with your palm facing in toward your thigh. The other dumbbell should be in your other hand. That other hand should be bent up to its same-side shoulder and the palm should be facing up. That is your starting position. Curl the hanging dumbbell up toward its same-side shoulder rotating to palm up while beginning the curl. At the same time, slowly lower the other arm down, rotating that dumbbell to face in toward its same-side thigh. When one arm is going up, the other arm should be going down. Repeat 10 times.

Shoulder Press

Next, we move into a shoulder press. Hold both dumbbells in your hands and position both arms straight out in front of you with palms facing down, at eye level. Elbows should be very slightly bent. At the same time, raise both arms and press them straight up over your forehead. Lower the weights back to eye level and repeat for 10 reps. These will help to tighten your arms.

Mommy-And-Me Exercise #3 – Hips and Thighs

Lunges

My third exercise is lunges. Once again, start by securing your baby in your front baby pack. Hold on to something firm for support. Take a large step forward with your right foot. Lower yourself straight down toward the floor by bending both legs to the point where you are still comfortable (maybe with your left knee only about 1 inch from the floor). Pay attention so that your right knee stays over your right foot and does not go forward over your right foot. Come

back up to a standing position. Do 10 reps and then switch to the other leg for 10 reps.

One More Mommy-And-Me Secret!

You've got a pile of laundry—*mostly baby clothes*—and the last thing you have on your mind is going out for a walk. But if you do, you'll be much happier and healthier! Let the laundry take second priority to your well-being while you treat yourself to a cardio-walk. Or put a load in the washing machine and then head outside for your walk. Once you move it to the dryer and start another load in the washing machine, head outdoors on another walk before you'll be too busy folding and putting clothes away.

TIP: Feed and change the baby right before you're ready to exercise. That way, he (or she) may give you 20-30 minutes of walking time. Get your baby secured into your baby carrier and head out. The extra weight will help you tone your lower body. Don't forget about holding your abdominal muscles in as you walk—it will help to strengthen your core.

Please note: If you have a Cesarean, it will take you longer to recover and lift any weight. You could walk, as per your doctor's instructions, with your baby in a lightweight stroller instead of in the baby pack secured on your body. As usual, be sure to check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program.

Closing Remarks

I've had a lot of fun sharing these tips and secrets with you. I hope you've enjoyed reading this information as much as I've enjoyed putting it together for you. I know that becoming a mother is one of the most wonderful and rewarding experiences there is. A baby brings so much love into your life! It's challenging and exciting and amazing—there's just no other experience like it.

My hope and desire for you is to have a happy and healthy pregnancy, a good birth, and a healthy baby. Help your baby come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Savior. May all the joy in the world be yours. And if we never meet here on this earth, I can't wait to spend time with you in heaven.

Appendix

Check out my list of favorite books below for further reading. I'll see you at the *Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby* Prayer Community website! I hope this is the beginning of our prayer journey. Please visit me at: www.prayforyourbaby.com and I would appreciate any comments you may have on this book.

My Favorite Books to Read During Pregnancy

The Pregnancy Book: Month-by-Month, Everything You Need to Know From America's Baby Experts
Author: Martha Sears

The Mother of All Pregnancy Books: The Ultimate Guide to Conception, Birth, and Everything In Between (U.S. Edition)
Author: Ann Douglas

Exercising Though Your Pregnancy
Author: James F. Clapp III

Birthing from Within: An Extra-Ordinary Guide to Childbirth Preparation
Authors: Pam England, Rob Horowitz

The Breastfeeding Answer Book (La Leche League International Book)
Author: Nancy Mohrbacher

Favorite Book for After the Baby Comes

The Baby Book: Everything You Need to Know About Your Baby from Birth to Age Two (Revised and Updated Edition), by William Sears, Martha Sears, Robert Sears, and James Sears

Resources

Current Obstetric & Gynecologic Diagnosis & Treatment Ninth Ed. DeCherney, Alan H., et al, Ch. 14.
MedlinePlus [Internet]. Bethesda (MD): National Library of Medicine (US); [updated 2006 Feb 23]. Pregnancy Loss; [updated 2006 Feb 22; reviewed 2006 Feb 7; cited 2006 Feb 23]. Available from:
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/pregnancyloss.html>

Planning Your Pregnancy and Birth Third Ed. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Ch. 15.

Williams Obstetrics Twenty-Second Ed. Cunningham, F. Gary, et al, Ch. 9.