



The Complete Guide to Pregnancy After 35

If you plan to become pregnant over the age of 35, you may be concerned about age-related factors that can impact your health and your baby's. While these concerns are normal, women over 35 can experience completely healthy pregnancies. In fact, there are many steps you can take to ensure that your pregnancy goes smoothly.

This guide will show you how to promote a healthy, well-balanced pregnancy and find out about important age-related health and lifestyle considerations.



Keep your baby healthy by keeping yourself healthy

Your baby's health will be your top priority during your pregnancy. By being proactive and taking the steps below, you can ensure that your baby gets the best care possible and that you are doing everything you can to support your child's development.

Start with a preconception appointment

Once you decide to have a baby, your first step is to schedule a checkup with your doctor to make sure you are physically and emotionally ready for pregnancy. During this appointment, your doctor will assess your health and talk with you about any concerns you may have. A preconception appointment will also help you prepare for what will happen during your pregnancy so you can take steps to keep yourself and your baby healthy.

Early and regular prenatal care

During the first eight weeks of your pregnancy, the best thing you can do to support your baby's development is to seek out prenatal care. Screenings, exams, education, and counseling are all part of prenatal care and will help you have the safest, healthiest pregnancy possible.

If you are over 35, your doctor will provide prenatal care that addresses health conditions that are more likely to affect women your age, like gestational diabetes and preeclampsia, which causes high blood pressure. By detecting these conditions early, your pregnancy will go more smoothly.





Special tests for women over 35

While prenatal screening is offered to every pregnant woman, if you are over the age of 35, specific prenatal tests that screen for birth defects are a good way to put your mind at ease about your baby's health. Your doctor will also be able to provide you with advice on the risks and benefits of these tests so you can decide if they are right for you.

There are many options available to your healthcare provider that are designed to check on the health of your pregnancy. The Harmony™ Prenatal Test from Dynacare is one such option. It is known as one of the most accurate tests available and is a non-invasive prenatal test (NIPT) screening that can gauge your risk of chromosomal abnormalities. Your doctor can tell you more about this type of testing during your prenatal appointments.

Eat right to support your baby's health

A healthy, well-balanced diet is a terrific way to get the nutrients you need to keep you and your baby healthy during your pregnancy. Try to eat meals that include a wide variety of foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, lean meats, and low-fat dairy products. To make sure you get enough folic acid, an essential nutrient during pregnancy, eat leafy green vegetables, dried beans, liver, and citrus fruits. Prenatal vitamins, including folic acid, are important for supplementing nutrients required for a healthy pregnancy that cannot be obtained through food alone.





Monitor your weight to reduce health risks

Keeping track of your weight and making sure you are gaining the right amount is another way to reduce your risk of problems like gestational diabetes and high blood pressure.

If you have a normal Body Mass Index (BMI), you should plan to gain between 25 and 35 pounds during your pregnancy. If you are overweight at the beginning of your pregnancy, it is often recommended that you gain between 15 and 25 pounds. By gaining the right amount of weight, you can reduce the risk of preterm birth and support your baby's development.

To stay on track with a healthy pregnancy weight, increase your daily calorie consumption by up to 350 calories per day during your second trimester, and 500 calories per day during your third trimester.

Stay clear of drinking and smoking

During your pregnancy, you should avoid smoking and drinking alcohol, which can have a negative impact on your baby's health, such as mental and physical defects and low birth weight. Both will also increase your risk of preeclampsia, a condition in pregnancy characterized by high blood pressure. If you need help quitting drinking or smoking, ask your doctor, who can provide you with emotional and medical support to make quitting easier.



Exercise regularly

Regular exercise has many benefits for your health and your baby's health. Not only will it relieve stress and make you feel better mentally and physically, it will help you gain strength that will make childbirth easier.

If you already have a normal exercise routine, you will likely be able to continue it during your pregnancy. If you do not currently exercise, start slowly with low-impact activities like walking or swimming. If you need help creating an exercise plan, your doctor will have the expertise to assist you.

Obstetrical Risks after 35

It is important to recognize the increased risk associated with pregnancy over the age of 35 – including lower fertility, higher chance of miscarriage and stillbirth, genetic risks for the baby (such as higher likelihood of Down's Syndrome), and other risks including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and high cholesterol. Speak with your doctor about minimizing these risks.



The Harmony Prenatal Test

Nothing to risk. A lot to gain.

There are many options available to your healthcare provider that are designed to check on the health of your pregnancy. The Harmony™ Prenatal Test from Dynacare is one such option. It is a non-invasive prenatal test (NIPT) screening for the risk of chromosomal abnormalities. It is a highly accurate prenatal test for all women, regardless of age or risk, including women with twin pregnancies and pregnancies conceived by in vitro fertilization (IVF). It can be performed as early as 10 weeks in pregnancy and results are available within 10 business days.

Ensure the Health of Your Pregnancy After 35

Following a prenatal appointment schedule is critical to the health of you and your growing baby. As you experience each milestone throughout your first, second and third trimester, your healthcare provider will make sure that you have the support and care that you need over the age of 35. To find out more about the health of your pregnancy, contact your healthcare professional today.