



Tips & Guides

FILTER

From Stretch Marks to Your Hospital Bag: Taking Care of Your Body Before, During & After Pregnancy

By *Sassy Mama Singapore*

From nutrition tips to beauty must-haves, we round up 8 ways to take care of your body throughout pregnancy and after

We've debunked pregnancy food myths and prepared you for some of the crazy stuff you'll be ordering at midnight once bub arrives, but what can you do to take care of yourself in the meantime, mama?

Check out our roundup of eight ways to take care of your body before, during and after pregnancy!

Before: Eat the Rainbow and Exercise

Nutrition is such a hugely important component to a healthy pregnancy; from consuming extra calcium via milk, cheese or leafy greens (because babies deplete your body's own supply) to eating lots of fish because it's high in omega-3 fatty acids, which promote neurological and visual development for the baby and may also lower your risk of pre-term delivery and pre-eclampsia, making smart food choices is the cornerstone of a good pregnancy

We know it can be difficult at times (particularly if you're feeling nauseous), but it's important to make every effort to eat a well-balanced and nutritious diet filled with fresh fruits and veggies, proteins and healthy fats and complex carbs ("Eat the rainbow!" as Dr. Cheryl Kam advises).

At the same time, **try your best to exercise**, mama. Not only has it been shown to help boost a mother's energy levels and to stave off pesky pregnancy weight gain, but it also has myriad benefits for babies, including lower, healthier birth weights; more robust cardiovascular systems; and improved cognitive abilities. We're sold, how about you?

Before: Avoid Stretch Marks

While genetics do play a role in determining whether your body will show stretch marks (along with how it'll recover from them after pregnancy), recent research shows that nutrition can play an active role in staving them off. According to Dr. Cheryl Kam,

"Having enough zinc (red meat, wheatgerm), Vitamin A (sweet potatoes, carrots, dark greens) and Vitamin E (sunflower seeds, avocados) can do wonders for improving skin elasticity and therefore preventing tiger stripes."



Before: Take Prenatal Supplements

According to KK Women's and Children's Hospital, prenatal vitamins can help supplement a woman's diet to prevent gaps in vital nutrients like folic acid, calcium and iron. It's typically recommended that women start taking prenats three months before becoming pregnant, as this will help prevent neural tube defects (which occurs in the first month after conception).

A good prenatal supplement will typically include a combination of all of the aforementioned nutrients. Depending on your individual needs, you may also want something like DHA, which can help boost your baby's brain development! According to Dr. Cheryl Kam, Vitamin B6 can also be an excellent remedy for first trimester nausea.

Before Labour: Baby Essentials for Peace of Mind

While we'd generally advise restraint when it comes to stocking up on baby stuff before bub actually arrives, you'll obviously want to have the essentials like a crib, blankets, onesies, diapers and wipes ready to go when you bring your bundle of joy home from the hospital.

Whether you're cleaning up spit-up or keeping your hands clean and sanitary, we suggest keeping baby wipes everywhere: in your purse, in your car, in the diaper bag (of course), in the nursery, in the kitchen bathroom, under the couch. And because you'll be using so many, it's good to be as environmentally friendly (not to mention gentle on baby's bum by being chemical-free) as possible.

On the other hand, don't stock up on too many newborn diapers before giving birth because many babies grow out of them within a couple weeks. But once bub is safely in the middle of a target weight range? Be sure to make liberal use of fab bundle offers! Finally, it's a weird one but we can't stress enough how vital a baby nose cleaner (aka snot sucker) is in the early days when your bub gets stuffed up.

During Labour: Snacks to Stay Hydrated

Hydration is super important throughout pregnancy (water not only helps deliver nutrients to your bub, but it can also help prevent annoying pregnancy side effects like UTIs, hemorrhoids and constipation!); think of labour as the final sprint in your body's hydration marathon.

According to Singapore midwife Red Miller, it's important to pack a hospital bag that includes hydrating snacks and electrolyte-rich drinks, such as watermelon and coconut water. These won't sit in your stomach like heavy stones, and in fact coconut water – which is also high in potassium – replenishes fluids better than regular water, and just as well as sugary sports drinks.

During & After Labour: What to Pack in Your Hospital Bag

Speaking of what to pack in your hospital bag, it's all about comfort, mama! We'd recommend bringing your favourite pillow, a bathrobe, slippers, and a nursing-friendly nightgown. If you know you'll be there for a few days, you may want to bring along your favourite haircare products (have you ever stayed in a hotel that had a decent conditioner? Because we haven't!).

You'll also want to pack some makeup basics (some mascara, lip balm and powder should do the trick), because you know you'll be taking lots of photos over the first few days, and you'll be amazed at how the occasional facial mask and a little makeup can help you feel a bit more human.



give you a pro demo.

Finally mama, if you already have a toddler and – as was the case with us – your toddler has a nasty cold but is understandably desperate to meet their new younger sibling, be sure to have some children's face masks on hand just in case.

After Labour: Nourishing Foods to Restore Your Body

Singapore has got heaps of fab confinement services that will serve up delicious meals to your door, but in case you go the DIY route, or simply want to make smart food choices, you'll want to stock up on restorative foods like bone broth, ginger, red dates and mutton.

After Labour: Foods to Boost Milk Production

If you'll be breastfeeding, mama, you'll want to stay well hydrated (more coconut water!) and well fed, because breastfeeding burns calories like nobody's business, particularly with newborns who seem content to eat for hours on end.

Some of the best foods to help boost breastmilk supply include eggs, oatmeal, flaxseed meal and papaya. Fenugreek and Brewer's Yeast are two other amazing ingredients to have on hand, mama.



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