

Exercise and Pregnancy: Can You Do Both?

Over the years, there has been considerable debate regarding the importance (and safety) of physical activity during pregnancy. Recently, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) published new guidelines for exercise during pregnancy and the period immediately after giving birth.

This article examines the ACOG guidelines in depth. Included are various recommendations for health care providers and patients with regard to exercise during pregnancy, but the authors' conclusion perhaps sums it up best: "Pregnancy should not be a state of confinement, and pregnant women should be encouraged to continue and engage in physical activities. ... Despite the fact that pregnancy is associated with profound anatomical and physiological changes, exercise has minimal risks and confirmed benefits for most women."

As these guidelines emphasize, if you're expecting a child, certain physical activities are safe (and even beneficial), provided they're done in moderation. On the other hand, some activities may actually be dangerous to you and your developing child. Before you begin any exercise program during pregnancy, it's imperative that you meet with your doctor, and keep meeting with him or her periodically, to ensure that you and your growing child stay as healthy as possible.

For more information on women's health, visit www.chiroweb.com/find/tellmeabout/women.html.

Reference:

Artal R, O'Toole M. Guidelines of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists for exercise during pregnancy and the postpartum period. *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 2003;37:6-12.



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