

PREGNANCY



DEFINITION:

Each year approximately 10 percent of teenage girls in the United States, between the ages of 15 and 18, give birth. Exercises can prepare young mothers for delivery and can also alleviate some of the complications associated with teen pregnancy.

Teenagers who are pregnant have a probability of developing complications such as toxemia, anemia and prolonged labor. Babies born to young mothers risk low birth weight, mental retardation, seizure disorders and spinal injury.

Teenagers who are pregnant need to maintain a reasonable level of physical fitness while avoiding potential hazards of inappropriate exercise. Most can safely begin an exercise program. Before any physical education begins, the student must have a written medical consent form from her physician. The consent should be renewed at least once every two months, not only during pregnancy, but for two months after birth.

CONTRAINDICATED ACTIVITIES:

- Contact sports (i.e., football, basketball, soccer, volleyball)
- Tennis, racquetball, ice skating, surfing, diving and gymnastics can be risky.
- Adventure sports such as mountain climbing, parachuting and scuba diving
- Avoid bouncy, jerky movements due to loose joints.
- Avoid exercising in hot, humid conditions due to possible heat injury to mother and/or fetus.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- Non-weight bearing activities such as cycling, swimming or water aerobics
- Bowling, golf and walking

WARNING SIGNS:

- Pain of any kind
- Nausea
- Bleeding
- Cramping
- Leaking of amniotic fluid
- Faintness

- Dizziness
- Numbness
- Palpitations
- Decreased fetal activity

If any of the above warning signs are observed, contact the nurse immediately and notify the student's physician.

TEACHING TIPS:

- Begin an aerobic conditioning program, starting slowly and building up gradually.
- Check the student's pulse rate every 5 minutes.
- Allow frequent breaks.
- Limit her aerobic workout to 15 minutes, three to four times a week.
- Warm up and cool down for at least 5 minutes before and after activity.
- Perform exercises on a wooden floor or carpet to reduce shock and provide sure footing.
- Monitor liquid intake, consume liquids before, during and after exercise to prevent dehydration.
- Remind the student to be aware of body signals of discomfort or distress.
- Never allow the student to exercise to the point of exhaustion.

Information on this sheet contains only suggested guidelines. Each student must be considered individually, and in many cases, a physician's written consent should be obtained.