

During Pregnancy - is it okay to...

Color, perm, or relax my hair?

Probably. Use the mildest products you can find, and plan to use them just 1-2 times, starting after the first 3 months. Color or curls might turn out differently than usual, due to the hormones of pregnancy. You can braid, twist, or weave; ceramic irons are safe; wigs are fine. Consider cutting your hair short and going natural!

Get a tattoo?

No.

Have piercings?

Yes, but you will need to remove all rings before birth, due to electrical hazards in case of cesarean.

Tan?

Yes. It's bad for your skin, though.

Have sex?

Yes.

Go swimming?

Yes.

Get in a hot tub or sauna?

No. Low heat only during pregnancy. High temperature can be harmful.

Paint my house or furniture?

Latex paint is fine. No oil based paint and no lead. Make sure the area is very well ventilated.

Clean the catbox?

Not if it's a new cat, or if it's a new activity for you. The danger is that you can catch toxoplasmosis from some cats, which can cause birth defects. However, if you have been doing this for a long time, you might already be immune. Ask your doctor for a toxoplasmosis titer to see if you are immune. If you are not, then stay away from catboxes.

Change diapers, wipe noses and bottoms, clean up after sick people?

Yes. But do not touch your face, and wash your hands afterwards, every time, to avoid germs.

Eat sushi, raw oysters, or raw meat, or drink raw milk?

No - unless you are absolutely certain the food is fresh and has no risk of bacteria or parasites. If you picked up an infection from raw food, the medicines you'd be given could be harmful.

Bleach my teeth?

Over-the-counter treatments should be safe. There's not enough information about professional dental bleaching to know if it's safe, so most dentists won't do it.

Go to the dentist?

Yes, numbing medicine and teeth cleaning is safe. Avoid x-rays (see below).

Get x-rays?

No - unless they're medically necessary for your safety. For example, if you are in a car crash and need a neck x-ray, ask for special shielding to protect the baby.

Wear a seat belt and use an airbag in the car?

Yes, but put the lap belt underneath your belly, not across it; put the shoulder belt in between your breasts. To protect yourself from the airbag, scoot the seat back as much as you can, and make sure your breastbone is at least a foot away from the steering wheel.

Fly?

Yes, with normal pregnancies. Pressurized cabins are safe & standard. Some airlines won't let you fly late in pregnancy, because they're worried about premature birth. Ask the airline for details. On long flights, get up and walk around every 2 hours (see next question).

Go on a long drive?

Yes. But pregnancy makes your blood more likely to clot, so get out and walk around every 2 hours. Blood clots in your legs can travel to your lungs and be life-threatening, so take this seriously.

Sit in front of a computer all day?

Yes. Make sure you get up and walk around every few hours to prevent blood clots.

Work out, run, dance, do pilates, etc.?

Yes. Use common sense. Don't get out of breath or dizzy. Warm up and cool down, and stretch before and after.

Ride a horse, mountain bike, skate, ski, or do contact sports?

If you're experienced, and do these things on a regular basis already, it's usually okay in the first 3 months, while the baby/uterus is inside the pelvis. After that, falling or getting kicked are more dangerous.

Scuba dive?

No.

Do heavy lifting, or lift things above my head?

It's safe for the baby if you do these - it does NOT hurt the baby - but it might injure your back or otherwise strain your muscles. Easy does it.

Stand on my feet all day?

Same as above. It's safe for the baby, but can give you backache and varicose veins. If your workplace demands that you stand up all day during pregnancy, ask your doctor for a letter allowing you to sit down and put your feet up for ten minutes every two hours.

Breastfeed my toddler?

Yes.

Be around chicken pox?

Maybe. This is safe only if you have had chicken pox, or if you got chicken pox shots. Ask your doctor.

Be around kids or adults who just got shots?

Yes. Same rules as being around people who are sick; wash your hands and don't touch your face.

Use prescription medications?

Ask your doctor and your pharmacist!