New Jersey WIC

Wellness Tips for Women

Life can get busy, especially when you're expecting or caring for a new baby. Remember that when you take care of yourself, you can then be ready to care of others.

Get Serious About Self-Care

Taking care of yourself helps you feel good physically and emotionally. Try these simple tips to feel your best!

For new moms:

- Be kind to yourself during recovery, especially in the first year.
- Sleep is crucial – make rest a priority.
- Take breaks – you can't expect to be on duty 24/7.

Between pregnancies:

- Start at a healthy weight for your next pregnancy.
- Keep up your healthy habits for you and your family.
- Balance rest with physical activity to help manage stress.

For your next pregnancy:

- Take folic acid daily.
- Eat healthy and stay active to gain weight at a healthy rate.
- Practice good sleep habits.
- Know your HIV status.
- Quit unhealthy habits like smoking, drugs and alcohol.
- Plan for extra self-care in the "4th trimester" (the first 3 months after pregnancy).

Be aware of how you feel. Adjust your self-care to meet your changing needs. When you're feeling sad, tired or stressed, you may need more self-care.

Get Enough Folic Acid

Did you know 42% of pregnancies aren't planned? That's why all women who could become pregnant should take a multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid every day.

Make it a habit to enjoy beans, whole grains, fruits, and veggies like asparagus, brussels sprouts, and dark leafy greens. **These foods contain folic acid!**

Can't afford healthy food? Sign up for other programs like **SNAP (https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/).** Find a local food pantry for more **free food (https://nj211.org/).**

Choose a Healthy Eating Pattern

Many of us don't eat as healthy as we should, especially as busy parents. Here's how to eat better:

- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.
- Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits.
- Choose whole grains like oatmeal and brown rice.
- Eat lean proteins such as fish, chicken, eggs, beans, and nuts.
- Pick low-fat or fat-free dairy options.
- Eat three times a day to keep energy up!

Set healthy eating goals by visiting the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans** (https://cdn.realfood.gov/DGA.pdf).

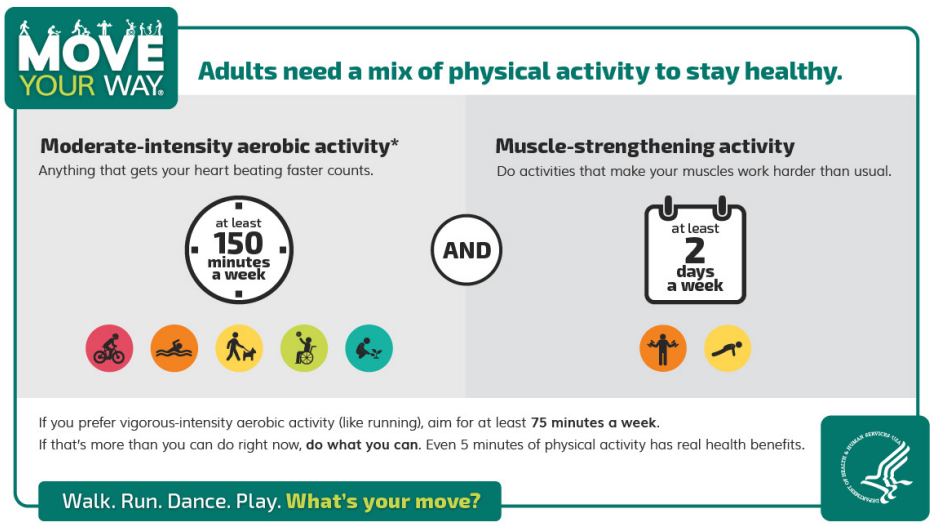
Include Physical Activity

Physical activity gives you more energy and helps you feel great. It also helps lower stress and can get you back to your pre-pregnancy weight. You can choose activities you enjoy and have fun being active!

Types of activity:

Aerobic: Anything that gets your heart rate up.

Strengthening: Activities that work your muscles harder than usual.



To help get started, check out these **Physical Activity Basics** (https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity-basics/guidelines/healthy-pregnant-or-postpartum-women.html) for pregnant and postpartum women and watch this video to get moving at your own pace.

Make a **weekly activity plan** (https://odphp.health.gov/moveyourway/activity-planner) that includes activities for when you are alone, and when you are taking care of your baby. You can start small with just five minutes of activity. It all adds up!

Breastfeed for Big Benefits

Breastfeeding is great for both moms and babies.

Women who breastfeed:

- Enjoy special bonding time with their baby.
- Usually lose their pregnancy weight faster.
- Tend to make fewer sick visits to their baby's doctor.
- Lower their risk of type 2 diabetes, breast and ovarian cancers.

WIC offers education, counseling, and resources to help moms overcome challenges and achieve their breastfeeding goals. Call your WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor anytime for support.

Manage Emotions and Stress

1 in 5 pregnant and postpartum people struggle with mental health concerns. Tips to manage emotions and stress in addition to healthy eating and physical activity include:

- Get enough sleep. Aim for at least four to five hours at a time if possible.
- Create a support system. This can include family, friends, and community members that you can ask for help when you need it.
- Make time to recharge. Spend 15 minutes alone each day for self-care: take a shower, go for a walk, enjoy the sunshine, meditate, or write in a journal – whatever brings you peace!

Happiness Helpers

Watch a funny movie or TV show.

Exercise, eat healthy, and get enough sleep.

Spend quality time with others who make you smile.

Say, "no thanks" to unnecessary stress and enjoy some time for yourself!

If you feel sad or anxious for more than two weeks, talk to your healthcare provider. Get help right away if you have thoughts of hurting yourself or your baby.

Avoid Unhealthy Habits

The choices you make today will affect your family's health now and in the future. Unhealthy habits, like alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and other drugs can harm your family's health.

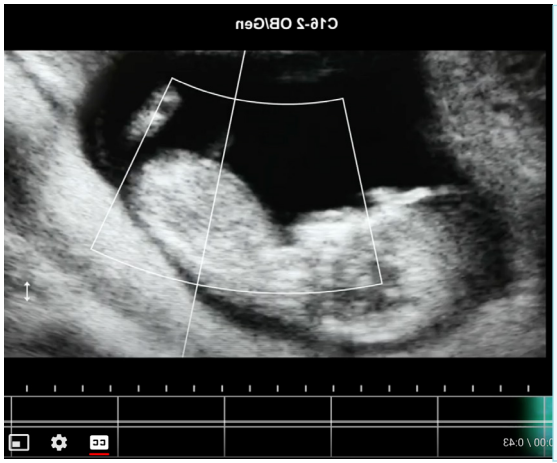
Women who breastfeed often want to know which substances can pass through breast milk to their infant.

- Before taking any medication or herbal supplement, talk with a WIC Lactation Consultant or your healthcare provider to confirm it's safe for your breastfed baby.
- Most prescriptions and over the counter medications are safe to take while breastfeeding. In most cases, there is no need to "pump and dump" or wean.
- If alcohol is consumed, wait two hours per drink before breastfeeding or pumping.

Quitting is hard. Help is available.

Treatment Directory

Services for Women & Families



View video here:

Don't Skip Preventive Health Care

It's usually easier to prevent disease than it is to treat it. **So be wise, immunize!**

- Vaccines protect against diseases that can cause serious illness, disability, and death.
- Follow the recommended vaccine schedule (https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/index.html) to help protect your child from 14 diseases before their second birthday.

Stay lead-free, test twice before 3!

- Learn more about New Jersey Childhood Lead testing (https://www.nj.gov/health/childhood-lead/) and prevention.

Talk with your healthcare provider about preventative care tests and vaccinations for you and your family.

WIC Support

WIC can help you and your family until your child's 5th birthday.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

New Jersey WIC Women, Infants & Children Every Child Deserves a Healthy Start