

PARmed-X FOR PREGNANCY

Physical Activity Readiness Medical Examination

PARmed-X for PREGNANCY is a guideline for health screening prior to participation in a prenatal fitness class or other exercise.

Healthy women with uncomplicated pregnancies can integrate physical activity into their daily living and can participate without significant risks either to themselves or to their unborn child. Postulated benefits of such programs include improved aerobic and muscular fitness, promotion of appropriate weight gain, and facilitation of labour. Regular exercise may also help to prevent gestational glucose intolerance and pregnancy-induced hypertension.

The safety of prenatal exercise programs depends on an adequate level of maternal-fetal physiological reserve. PARmed-X for PREGNANCY is a convenient checklist and prescription for use by health care providers to evaluate pregnant patients who want to enter a prenatal fitness program and for ongoing medical surveillance of exercising pregnant patients.

Instructions for use of the 4-page PARmed-X for PREGNANCY are the following:

- 1 The patient should fill out the section on PATIENT INFORMATION and the PRE-EXERCISE HEALTH CHECKLIST (PART 1, 2, 3, and 4 on p. 1) and give the form to the health care provider monitoring her pregnancy.
- 2 The health care provider should check the information provided by the patient for accuracy and fill out SECTION C on CONTRAINDICATIONS (p. 2) based on current medical information.
- 3 If no exercise contraindications exist, the HEALTH EVALUATION FORM (p. 3) should be completed, signed by the health care provider, and given by the patient to her prenatal fitness professional.

In addition to prudent medical care, participation in appropriate types, intensities and amounts of exercise is recommended to increase the likelihood of a beneficial pregnancy outcome. PARmed-X for PREGNANCY provides recommendations for individualized exercise prescription (p. 3) and program safety (p. 4).

*Note: **Sections A and B** should be completed by the patient before the appointment with the health care provider.*

A PATIENT INFORMATION

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____
 PHONE _____ BIRTHDATE MM / DD / YEAR HEALTH INSURANCE No. _____
 NAME OF PRENATAL FITNESS PROFESSIONAL _____ PHONE NUMBER OF PRENATAL FITNESS PROFESSIONAL _____

B PRE-EXERCISE HEALTH CHECKLIST

PART 1: GENERAL HEALTH STATUS

In the past, have you experienced:

	Y	N
1 Miscarriage in an earlier pregnancy?	☐	☐
2 Other pregnancy complications?	☐	☐
3 I have completed a PAR-Q within the last 30 days.	☐	☐

If you answered YES to question 1 or 2, please explain:

Number of previous pregnancies: _____

PART 2: STATUS OF CURRENT PREGNANCY

Due Date: MM / DD / YEAR

During this pregnancy, have you experienced:

	Y	N
1 Marked fatigue?	☐	☐
2 Bleeding from the vagina ("spotting")?	☐	☐
3 Unexplained faintness or dizziness?	☐	☐
4 Unexplained abdominal pain?	☐	☐
5 Sudden swelling of ankles, hands or face?	☐	☐
6 Persistent headaches or problems with headaches?	☐	☐
7 Swelling, pain or redness in the calf of one leg?	☐	☐
8 Absence of fetal movement after 6 th month?	☐	☐
9 Failure to gain weight after 5 th month?	☐	☐

If you answered YES to any of the above questions, please explain:

PART 3: ACTIVITY HABITS DURING THE PAST MONTH

- 1 List only regular fitness/recreational activities:

INTENSITY	FREQUENCY (times/week)			TIME (minutes/day)		
	1-2	2-4	4+	<20	20-40	40+
Heavy	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Medium	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Light	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

- 2 Does your regular occupation (job/home) activity involve:
- | | Y | N |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Heavy lifting? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Frequent walking/stair climbing? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Occasional walking (> once/hr)? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Prolonged standing? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Mainly sitting? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Normal daily activity? | ☐ | ☐ |
- 3 Do you currently smoke tobacco?*
 - 4 Do you consume alcohol?*

PART 4: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INTENTIONS

What physical activity do you intend to do?

Is this a change from what you currently do? ☐ YES ☐ NO

**Note: Pregnant women are strongly advised not to smoke or consume alcohol during pregnancy and during lactation.*

PRESCRIPTION FOR MUSCULAR CONDITIONING

It is important to condition all major muscle groups during both prenatal and postnatal periods.

WARM-UPS & COOL DOWN:

Range of Motion: neck, shoulder girdle, back, arms, hips, knees, ankles, etc.

Static Stretching: all major muscle groups

(Do not over stretch!)

EXAMPLES OF MUSCULAR STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

CATEGORY	PURPOSE	EXAMPLE
Upper back	Promotion of good posture	Shoulder shrugs, shoulder blade pinch
Lower back	Promotion of good posture	Modified standing opposite leg & arm lifts
Abdomen	Promotion of good posture, prevent low-back pain, prevent diastasis recti, strengthen muscles of labour	Abdominal tightening, abdominal curl-ups, head raises lying on side or standing position
Pelvic floor ("Kegels")	Promotion of good bladder control, prevention of urinary incontinence	"Wave", "elevator"
Upper body	Improve muscular support for breasts	Shoulder rotations, modified push-ups against a wall
Buttocks, lower limbs	Facilitation of weight-bearing, prevention of varicose veins	Buttocks squeeze, standing leg lifts, heel raises

PRECAUTIONS FOR MUSCULAR CONDITIONING DURING PREGNANCY

VARIABLE	EFFECTS OF PREGNANCY	EXERCISE MODIFICATIONS
Body position	in the supine position (lying on the back), the enlarged uterus may either decrease the flow of blood returning from the lower half of the body as it presses on a major vein (inferior vena cava) or it may decrease flow to a major artery (abdominal aorta)	- past 4 months of gestation, exercises normally done in the supine position should be altered - such exercises should be done side lying or standing
Joint laxity	- ligaments become relaxed due to increasing hormone levels - joints may be prone to injury	- avoid rapid changes in direction and bouncing during exercises - stretching should be performed with controlled movements
Abdominal muscles	presence of a rippling (bulging) of connective tissue along the midline of the pregnant abdomen (diastasis recti) may be seen during abdominal exercise	abdominal exercises are not recommended if diastasis recti develops
Posture	- increasing weight of enlarged breasts and uterus may cause a forward shift in the centre of gravity and may increase the arch in the lower back - this may also cause shoulders to slump forward	emphasis on correct posture and neutral pelvic alignment. Neutral pelvic alignment is found by bending the knees, feet shoulder width apart, and aligning the pelvis between accentuated lordosis and the posterior pelvic tilt position.
Precautions for resistance exercise	- emphasis must be placed on continuous breathing throughout exercise - exhale on exertion, inhale on relaxation using high repetitions and low weights - Valsalva Manoeuvre (holding breath while working against a resistance) causes a change in blood pressure and therefore should be avoided - avoid exercise in supine position past 4 months gestation	



PARMED-X FOR PREGNANCY – HEALTH EVALUATION FORM

(to be completed and given to the prenatal fitness professional after obtaining medical clearance to exercise)

I, _____ (please print patient's name), have discussed my plans to participate in physical activity during my current pregnancy with my health care provider and I have obtained his/her approval to begin participation.

PATIENTS SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

NAME OF HEALTH CARE PROVIDER _____

HEALTH CARE PROVIDER'S COMMENTS:

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

HEALTH CARE PROVIDER'S SIGNATURE _____

Pregnancy is a time when women can make beneficial changes in their health habits to protect and promote the healthy development of their unborn babies. These changes include adopting improved eating habits, abstinence from smoking and alcohol intake, and participating in regular moderate physical activity. Since all of these changes can be carried over into the postnatal period and beyond, pregnancy is a very good time to adopt healthy lifestyle habits that are permanent by integrating physical activity with enjoyable healthy eating and a positive self and body image.

ACTIVE LIVING

- see your doctor before increasing your activity level during pregnancy
- exercise regularly but don't overexert
- exercise with a pregnant friend or join a prenatal exercise program
- follow FITT principles modified for pregnant women
- know safety considerations for exercise in pregnancy

HEALTHY EATING

- the need for calories is higher (about 300 more per day) than before pregnancy
- follow Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating and choose healthy foods from the following groups: whole grain or enriched bread or cereal, fruits and vegetables, milk and milk products, meat, fish, poultry and alternatives
- drink 6-8 glasses of fluid, including water, each day
- salt intake should not be restricted
- limit caffeine intake i.e., coffee, tea, chocolate, and cola drinks
- dieting to lose weight is not recommended during pregnancy

POSITIVE SELF AND BODY IMAGE

- remember that it is normal to gain weight during pregnancy
- accept that your body shape will change during pregnancy
- enjoy your pregnancy as a unique and meaningful experience

For more detailed information and advice about pre- and postnatal exercise, you may wish to obtain a copy of a booklet entitled *Active Living During Pregnancy: Physical Activity Guidelines for Mother and Baby* © 1999. Available from the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, www.csep.ca. Cost: \$11.95

Public Health Agency of Canada. The sensible guide to a healthy pregnancy. Minister of Health, 2012. Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-gs/guide/assets/pdf/hpguide-eng.pdf>. HC Pub.: 5830 Cat.: HP5-33/2012E. 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232) TTY: 1-800-926-9105.

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Davies GAL, Wolfe LA, Mottola MF, MacKinnon C. Joint SOGC / CSEP Clinical Practice Guidelines: Exercise in Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period. *Can J Appl Physiol*. 2003; 28(3): 329-341.

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SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Avoid exercise in warm/humid environments, especially during the 1st trimester
- Avoid isometric exercise or straining while holding your breath
- Maintain adequate nutrition and hydration – drink liquids before and after exercise
- Avoid exercise while lying on your back past the 4th month of pregnancy
- Avoid activities which involve physical contact or danger of falling
- Know your limits – pregnancy is not a good time to train for athletic competition
- Know the reasons to stop exercise and consult a qualified health care provider immediately if they occur

REASONS TO STOP EXERCISE AND CONSULT YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

- Excessive shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Painful uterine contractions (more than 6-8 per hour)
- Vaginal bleeding
- Any "gush" of fluid from vagina (suggesting premature rupture of the membranes)
- Dizziness or faintness