

## PHYSICAL EXERCISE DURING PREGNANCY AND AFTER DELIVERY

### *Physical exercise during pregnancy*

- improves your fitness
- helps recovering from the changes the body goes through during pregnancy
- speeds up the recovery after the delivery
- can improve your mood
- can prevent back problems, swelling of the feet, varicose veins, hemorrhoids and weight increase.

### *General recommendation for health-enhancing physical activity is valid during a normal pregnancy.*

#### **Improve your endurance capacity**

- Exercise at least 2 hours and 30 minutes a week so that you get a little out of breath.
- Exercise at least three days a week.
- Daily activities are a great way to get exercise. Walk to the store, use stairs instead of the elevator and play with your children.
- The weekly two and a half hour exercise sessions can consist of active ten-minute sessions.

#### **Or if you are a physically active person**

- Exercise at least an hour and fifteen minutes a week so that you get noticeably out of breath.
- Exercise at least three days a week.

**In addition:** do muscle-strengthening and flexibility exercises twice a week. Good forms of exercise are low impact aerobics and stretching at home or in guided groups and gym training.

Remember to drink enough during the exercise. Drinking promotes sweating and body temperature regulation.

### *If you haven't done much exercise before pregnancy,*

- start slowly and take for example a fifteen-minute walk once a week
- gradually increase the time and the number of weekly exercise sessions
- you know your pace is right when you can talk while exercising at a brisk pace
- good forms of exercise are for example walking, Nordic walking, skiing, swimming, aerobics, gym training and cycling.

### *If you have been doing exercise before pregnancy,*

- you can continue as before, but ease the training if you feel like it.

### **Avoid:**

- sports that include hits, changes of direction (agility sports) or a risk of falling, such as contact sports like ice hockey, floorball, other ball games, horseback riding, downhill skiing and scuba diving
- doing exercises on your stomach
- doing exercises on your back after the 16<sup>th</sup> week of your pregnancy.

### **Stop exercising if you get any of the following symptoms:**

- vaginal bleeding
- strong and painful contractions
- possible water breaking
- headache
- dizziness
- shortness of breath or strong breathlessness
- chest pain
- feeling very fatigued or faint
- calf pain or swelling (possible venous thrombosis)

Consult your doctor about continuing to exercise if you have any other problems or issues during pregnancy.

## PHYSICAL EXERCISE AFTER DELIVERY

- improves well-being.
- helps returning to normal weight.
- may prevent post-natal depression.

### *Exercise and breastfeeding*

- Drink sufficiently during the exercise.
- Moderate amount of exercise does not affect the quantity or the quality of the milk nor the ability to breastfeed the baby.
- Best time for breastfeeding is before the exercise as the breasts will become lighter and exercising more comfortable.

### *When can you start doing exercise?*

- You can start doing exercise as soon as you feel like it.
- If you are uncertain, consult a nurse or a doctor.

### *General recommendation for health-enhancing physical activity is valid if you are recovering normally.*

#### **Improve your endurance**

- Exercise at least 2 hours and 30 minutes a week so that you get a little out of breath.
- Exercise at least three days a week.
- Daily activities are a great way to get exercise. Walk to the store, use stairs instead of the elevator and play with your children.
- The weekly two and a half hour exercise sessions can consist of active ten-minute sessions.

#### **or if you are a physically active person**

- Exercise at least an hour and fifteen minutes a week so that you get noticeably out of breath.
- Exercise at least three days a week.

**In addition:** Do muscle-strengthening and flexibility exercises twice a week. For example low impact aerobics and stretching at home or in guided groups and gym training.

### ***Remember!***

- Increase the amount of exercise if and when you feel like it.
- Choose sports that you are familiar with.
- Avoid jumps and quick turns.
- Start doing pelvic floor exercises already at the hospital. You can get instructions from the maternity clinic.

More information in your hometown from \_\_\_\_\_

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Source: UKK Institute: Physical exercise during and after pregnancy

Translations: Municipal social welfare and health services of Turku, health promotion unit