



Advice from Dr. Weiss

Q I'm supposed to have an apicoectomy done on my upper tooth. Is it safe for my baby if I decide to do this procedure? When is the best time during the second trimester to have an apicoectomy?

A An apicoectomy is a surgery to remove the root of the tooth in the event that a root canal procedure isn't successful. The surgery itself presents a very low risk for the baby. It requires more local anesthesia than most dental procedures, but local anesthesia is considered safe throughout pregnancy. Any time during the second trimester is OK for this, but I recommend you talk to your dentist about two things.

First, I don't recommend the use of epinephrine because it causes blood vessel constriction and less bleeding in the mouth, but may harm blood flow to the uterus. Second, avoid nitrous oxide (sleeping gas). If you absolutely must have X-rays, be sure a lead shield is placed over your belly!

Q What do you do when the morning sickness lasts all day, every day, and you cannot keep anything down?

A Despite its common name, what doctors call nausea and vomiting during pregnancy, or NVP, can occur at any time during the day. NVP tends to be the worst when your pregnancy hormone levels are peaking, at about 8 to 10 weeks. The symptoms often disappear by 14 to 16 weeks.

The typical advice for alleviating morning sickness is to eat small, frequent meals and

start your day with something dry, such as a cracker, then wait 30 minutes before drinking fluids. Natural remedies include carrying around a cut lemon in a baggie to sniff when you feel nausea coming on, wearing seasickness wristbands, or taking 50 milligrams of vitamin B6 every day. Some women benefit from ginger tea or adding more fresh ginger to their diets.

About 1% of pregnant women suffer from a condition called hyperemesis gravidarum, a severe type of morning sickness that can require hospitalization, IV fluids, and prescription medicine. These expectant moms may lose 5% or more of their pre-pregnancy body weight and become dehydrated, with very dark and infrequent urination. Your NVP sounds like it may be worse than average because you can't keep anything down. Please call your doctor.

Stephen H. Weiss, M.D., is an assistant professor in the department of gynecology and obstetrics at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta.



Doula Jill Says

Q I'm almost four months pregnant and want to start taking a prenatal fitness or yoga class, but I feel really awkward walking in somewhere by myself. I think everyone there would have started earlier in their pregnancy and will know what to do.

A Why not call the studio ahead of time and leave

a message for the instructor?

You can share your specific health history that may be relevant and hear how she conducts a class. Ask her questions about how she assists brand-new students, tips on parking and what to wear, and anything else you need to know to feel safe attending. Once you get to class, I suggest being open to getting to know the other women; exchanging email addresses is a quiet but lovely way to build a friendship.

Creating community is really important in pregnancy and in parenthood. Many of the expectant women I meet through my doula care don't yet have strong ties to their neighborhood or town, but pregnancy's a perfect time to start building these connections. Most new moms are surprised by how isolating parenting an infant can be. Even a once-a-week meeting with someone you know from prenatal yoga class will be a nourishing experience post-delivery. And friendships can actually help enhance your bond with your partner, as well as get you great tips for pediatrician's offices, nursery schools, sitters, and baby gear—and a much-needed cup of coffee. So, that prenatal fitness class isn't just good for the body, it can be good for the soul, too.

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Ask Dr. Dana

Q I have a 1 year old and I'm pregnant with baby #2. Our second child will be due when our son is 17 months old. I know I have to transition him to milk in a cup and get rid of the bottle, but I think this will mean too many changes for my son. What should I do?

A It's great that you're planning ahead, but children are a lot more flexible than we give them credit for being. After age one, milk is no longer food; it's a beverage. This means it should be served in a cup at meals. If you continue giving your son a bottle of milk, you may end up giving him too much, which will affect his overall nutrition.

A child over the age of one should drink a maximum of 16 ounces of milk in 24 hours. This isn't very much. If you give your child more than 16 ounces, he'll fill up on milk rather than on the protein- and iron-rich meals he needs to grow. Give up the bottle now, and your son will have more than 7 months to get used to it. That's more than a third of his lifetime! He'll be fine—and you'll have fewer bottles to clean.

Q I'm having a baby this winter and I'm terrified about the flu. I got the H1N1 flu vaccine from my ob/gyn. What other vaccines do you recommend I get as a new mother?

A What a great question! I'm glad that you were able to get the H1N1 vaccine. I would recommend getting a seasonal flu shot, as well. At my practice, we're also suggesting that new parents receive the Tdap vaccine. This vaccine provides a tetanus booster as well as a booster for pertussis or whooping cough.

At our hospital, Tdap is offered to new moms before discharging them home, so check with your hospital about it. As an adult, your immunity against pertussis has waned. By getting the shot, you'll protect your baby from this disease before he or she is fully immunized. ●

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