BENEFITS OF *Active Living*

Women who are physically active are healthier, feel better, and are less likely to develop many chronic diseases.

Physical activity is important for everyone, including women who are pregnant.

Staying active during pregnancy can help you have a more comfortable pregnancy. It may also help reduce the risk of complications during pregnancy.

Physical activity during pregnancy benefits a woman's overall health, helps women achieve and maintain a healthy weight during the postpartum period, and, when combined with caloric restriction, helps promote weight loss. Some benefits of physical activity include:

- Lowering your risk of high blood pressure and stroke
- Improving your mental health and cognitive function
- Reducing arthritis symptoms
- Preventing weight gain

You should consult your health care provider about whether or how to adjust your physical activity during pregnancy and after your baby is born.

Some evidence suggests that **physical activity may reduce your risk of pregnancy complications**, such as preeclampsia, reduce the length of labor and postpartum recovery, and reduce the risk of having a Cesarean section.

Keep in mind, **you should avoid doing exercises that involve lying on your back after the first trimester of pregnancy** because this position can restrict blood flow to the uterus and fetus.

You should also avoid participating in contact or collision sports and activities with high risk of falling or abdominal trauma.

Start now

even if it means starting slowly. Five minutes a day of physical activity has real health benefits and can help you reach the target of 150 minutes each week.

Visit **sheahealth.org** for more information about the benefits of active living and for additional health resources.

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