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SUMMER PREGNANCY CONCERNS

Being pregnant in the summertime carries with it some special problems and potential areas for concern, which you need to pay attention to.

1. Fluid Intake: When you are pregnant, you can become dehydrated much more quickly than when you are not pregnant. This can cause serious problems for both you and your baby, such as pre-term labor, fainting, and irregular heartbeats. When the weather is hot, be sure to drink at least 8 ounces of fluid per hour when you are awake.
2. Extremes of Temperature: When you increase your body temperature with exposure to the sun or (especially) with exercise, blood flow is channeled away from the uterus and towards the skin and muscles of your body. This is part of the body's cooling mechanism. Be very careful not to get overheated. Stop exercising and move to a cool, shady spot as soon as you start to feel hot and sweaty.
3. Sun Exposure: Your skin will be much more sensitive to the sun and much more likely to burn, even if you have never sunburned before. Sunburns can lead to skin cancer later in life. In addition, the hormones in pregnancy stimulate the production of extra pigments (colors) in the skin. The sun makes these pigments even more noticeable, and in some cases, there may be permanent staining. The "linea nigra" (a line from the belly button to the pubic area) and the chloasma or "mask of pregnancy" (an irregular, patchy, dark discoloration of parts of the face) are examples of these increased pigments.

A wise choice would be to avoid the sun altogether while pregnant. If you must be out, wear a hat and use sunscreens (at least SPF 15) at all times.

Careful attention to these guidelines should help to make your summertime pregnancy safer and more enjoyable.