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**MINIMUM STANDARDS
OF
PRENATAL CARE**



**THE LEAST A MOTHER SHOULD DO
BEFORE HER BABY IS BORN**

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The least a mother should do to prepare for her baby's birth.

Every expectant mother, for her own sake and for her baby's, should go to a doctor or health center as soon as she thinks she is pregnant, so that she may make sure that she is fitted for the extra strain of pregnancy and labor.

A complete physical examination will show a mother's general health. This should include beside a vaginal examination an examination of the heart, lungs, kidneys, digestive organs, teeth, tonsils, thyroid, blood pressure, weight, and measurements of the bony framework. A blood test may also be necessary.

Regular monthly visits to the doctor or health center should be made until the sixth month, then the mother should go at least every two weeks so that the doctor can watch (1) any change in blood pressure; (2) gain in weight; (3) condition of the kidneys (by testing the urine); and (4) the general health.

PERSONAL HYGIENE.

Personal hygiene—the care of the body—is most important. A woman should have good habits of eating, sleeping, bathing, and exercising, and of elimination, which means getting rid of the body's waste products.

FOOD.

Three regular meals a day should be eaten. They should be carefully chosen, and should include one quart of milk, a leafy vegetable, a root vegetable such as potato, fresh fruit, cereals and bread, and an egg, meat, or fish. Once a day is often enough to eat meat. After the sixth month, sufficient growth foods—milk, vegetables, and fruits—must be eaten, to cover the demands of the developing baby. Overeating, specially of fuel foods—starch, sugar, or fats—is harmful. It is not necessary to “eat for two” of these foods. Not more than one cup of coffee and one cup of tea a day should be taken.

SLEEP.

“Early to bed” is a good habit. Windows should be open whenever the expectant mother sleeps—during daytime naps as well as at night. Frequent short rests may be necessary to prevent becoming overtired.

EXERCISE.

A woman who does her own housework gets good exercise, but she should also be out of doors for an hour or two each day. Heavy work or heavy lifting should be avoided.

ELIMINATION OF WASTE PRODUCTS.

The kidneys, the bowels, the skin, and the lungs get rid of the waste products for both the mother and the rapidly growing baby; therefore special attention should be paid to these organs during pregnancy.

Kidneys.

At least $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarts (6 to 8 glasses) of water should be taken daily to flush the kidneys properly. The urine should be examined regularly once a month until the seventh month and weekly thereafter.

Bowels.

A daily bowel movement is necessary. Coarse breads, fresh vegetables, and fresh or dried fruits help to prevent constipation.

Skin.

A warm soap-and-water bath at least three times a week upon retiring is necessary to keep the skin in good condition.

Lungs.

The lungs supply oxygen for the mother and for the baby, too, and they also give off waste, so that plenty of fresh air is absolutely necessary.

TEETH.

A mother's general health depends upon good sound teeth; therefore the teeth need a dentist's examination as early in pregnancy as possible. The teeth should be brushed twice a day, especially at night before going to bed.

There need be no truth in the old saying "for every child a tooth" if the food is right and all necessary dental work is done.

The kind of teeth the baby develops depends upon the mother's health and diet.

CARE OF BREASTS.

During the last two or three months of pregnancy the nipples should be washed daily with soap and water.

WEIGHT.

The medical attendant will watch gain in weight. A rapid increase is not desirable and must be regulated by proper diet and exercise.

CLOTHING.

All clothing should be loose and hung from the shoulders. Corsets should never be tightly laced. Maternity corsets will be found a support and comfort during the later months of pregnancy. Round garters or bands should not be used. Low-heeled shoes should be worn.

MENTAL HYGIENE.

General bodily health is affected by worry and mental strain, and therefore the expectant mother who is building the foundation of her baby's health upon her own should try to be serene, happy, and cheerful. There is no scientific truth in the belief that a mother can "mark" the baby. Excitement and special causes for anxiety are to be avoided because they disturb general health. A prospective mother needs to foster her strength and energy, not to waste it. She should play as well as work. Above all, for her peace of mind she should obey her doctor's orders and forget what her neighbors tell her.

Remember:

**Pregnancy is
a natural process.**

Simple, regular, normal

**living during this
period**

makes for

Good Health

in both

Mother and Baby.

**"EVERY CHILD HAS A RIGHT
TO BE WELL BORN."**