

Importance of Prenatal Care *(Interview Transcripts)*

Dr. Haley Ralph, Family Medicine and Prenatal Care Provider, OSF HealthCare

“I generally like to start with trying to make sure they are eating a healthy, well-balanced diet – so trying to aim to get five servings of fresh fruits and vegetables every day. While all of us should be doing that at baseline, it’s extremely important in a pregnancy as well to help supply the baby with the nutrients that are needed as well as mom. And try to make sure that we are hydrated – so drinking plenty of water every day. Most women are going to end up needing increased intake of water during the pregnancy because it is much easier for them to get dehydrated.” (:30)

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“Try to limit caffeine intake – no more than about 200 milligrams in a 24 hour period. That’s your products that are coffee, tea, and soda. Try and be mindful about how many milligrams of caffeine are in those products. And just avoiding things like alcohol and nicotine in forms of cigarettes or vaping.” (:21)

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“I think a lot of women are surprised to find out how many vaccines we actually recommend during pregnancy. One in particular we recommend is a flu vaccine. Pregnant women are a highly susceptible group to become severely ill or end up in the hospital from influenza, and the same goes for COVID.” (:21)

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“Not only are certain vaccines recommended to women during pregnancy to protect them, but in turn it also helps protect their baby. When mom gets vaccinated, a lot of times those antibodies cross the placenta and end up in the baby’s bloodstream for even several weeks and months after the baby is born. So it helps give the baby a nice immune support and booster and protect them until they are old enough to get the vaccines themselves.” (:22)

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“I would just say as soon as you realize and as soon as you have the time to get in and the means to get in, go ahead and get in. We want to be able to give you a standard prenatal care, get your labs done, get your ultrasound done, and set up a plan for you moving forward so that we make sure we are monitoring the pregnancy, mom, and baby very closely so that we are keeping everybody safe.” (:22)