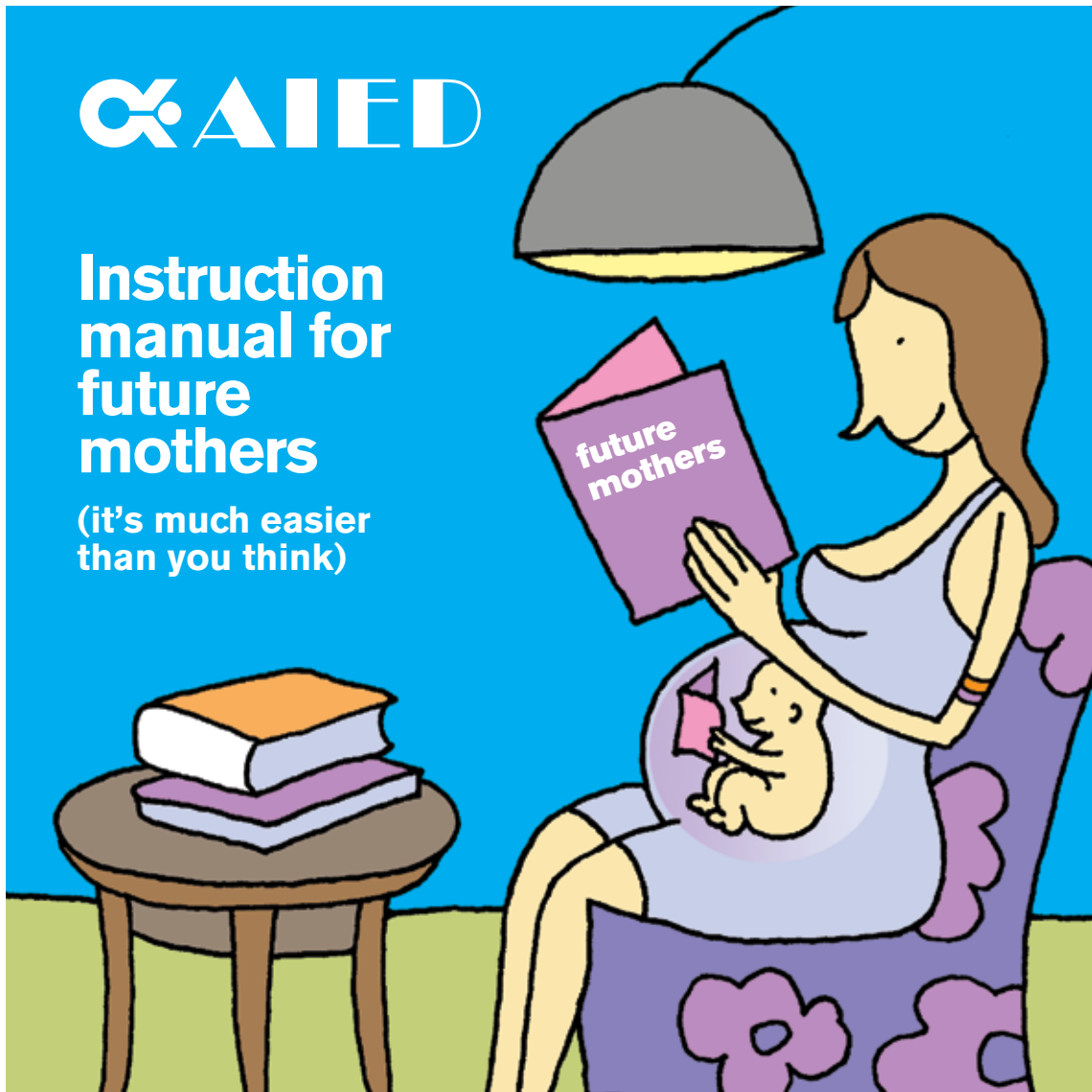


AIED

Instruction manual for future mothers

(it's much easier
than you think)



*“Here she is again,
woman, showing her
full power,
her full strength!”*

Verena Schmid
(obstetrician)

SOME ADVICE

Not everything you read on the Internet is scientifically trustworthy, so for reliable information on pregnancy you can consult the site of the Scientific Institute for Mothers and Infants “Burlo garofolo” in Trieste www.burlo.it and the site of the Perinatal and Reproductive Health Research Centre www.saperidoc.it.

INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is one of the most important and intense phases in a woman’s life. The changes in your body and the feeling brought on by this new condition can surprise and confuse, and this is why it is important to place your trust in professionals (gynaecologists, obstetricians, etc.) who can support, advise and follow you through the months before the birth. Trying to have a positive, responsible and conscious attitude is also important for facing this fundamental experience in a woman’s life peacefully.

The first step? Being a conscious mum.

You have to decide:

What to eat

How much to eat

Whether to drink alcohol

Whether to smoke

Whether to take unnecessary medicine

Whether to go for the recommended medical checks and tests

You are the central character of this adventure: a woman who knows how to choose and recognise what is best for herself and her baby. Here is some important information for living pregnancy in a conscious manner. These indications are only valid for physiological pregnancies (without complications). Enjoy.



THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD

Food plays a fundamental role throughout the whole pregnancy; for your well-being and that of your baby, it is important to learn how to select quality food, trying to introduce daily all the various nutritional groups (carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals).

It's a good idea to weigh yourself at the beginning and monitor your weight as the pregnancy progresses. You should not put on more than 8-12 kilograms throughout the whole gestation period.

It's easy to understand how the classic phrase “**I'm eating double because I'm pregnant**” has absolutely no scientific basis, but is simply a common belief to be discredited.

Putting on too much weight is often the cause of maternal and fetal complications (high blood pressure, diabetes, etc. for the mother and growth and metabolic problems for the baby) which result in the possible appearance of more serious conditions, and this is why it is essential to control yourself and eat in a balanced way, avoiding hypercaloric (sweet snacks, fried food) and highly seasoned food.

Modifying “bad habits” is not impossible; all you need is a little willpower!



Dietetic advice

- Eat 5 small and frequent meals: breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch, mid-afternoon snack, dinner;
- Prefer fruit and yogurt for your snacks;
- Eat slowly to help digestion and avoid swallowing air which can cause your abdomen to swell;
- If you feel sick, in particular in the morning, eat dry food (rusks, toast, breadsticks,);
- If you have bad digestion or heartburn follow a light diet for a few days (do not eat fatty, fried or spicy food, limit dressings, chocolate, coffee, too much tea);
- Prefer **complex sugars**, wholemeal if possible (bread, pasta, rice, cereals, legumes), to simple sugars (contained in cakes, sweet snacks, soft drinks, etc.);
- Do not eat bread with pasta and/or rice during the same meal (or limit the quantity);

Dietetic advice

- Introduce **proteins**, fundamental for fetal growth, every day: meat (white if possible), fish (at least 2/3 times a week), eggs and cheese (if possible low fat cheese and not too frequently), legumes, milk;
- Eat moderate quantities of **fats**, prefer extra virgin olive oil (even if in moderate quantities) to butter and margarine;
- Limit your intake of fried food;
- Eat fruit and vegetables, seasonal if possible, every day (after washing carefully);
- Drink at least 2 litres of water a day, above all between meals, because swallowing too much water during meals slows the digestion;
- **Do not drink alcohol**, because it passes through the placenta barrier, seriously damaging the fetus.

This dietary advice can solve many symptoms (e.g. sickness, vomit), but if this is not enough consult your obstetrician or gynaecologist. Remember that during the whole pregnancy it is a good idea to take **folic acid**, daily, a B-group vitamin that is essential for the future mother and the fetus, in particular for the correct formation of the neural tube (prevention of **spina bifida**).

HYGIENE AND PRECAUTIONARY RULES

There are some hygiene and precautionary rules to follow scrupulously during the whole pregnancy, in particular to prevent TOXOPLASMOSIS (an infection that **can cause serious fetal damage**), in unprotected subjects, but also to prevent contracting other infections:

- Do not eat salami, cold cuts (cured ham, cooked ham, salami, etc.) no matter whether they are made with pork, turkey, horse meat or meat from any other animal;
- Do not eat fish or meat that is raw or cooked very little such as roast beef or rare meat;
- Do not drink unpasteurised milk (that has just been freshly milked), only pasteurised;
- Only eat cooked eggs, do not eat food prepared with raw eggs (cakes like tiramisù, ice-creams prepared with eggs, mayonnaise-type sauces);
- Carefully wash fruit and vegetables, and if the vegetables are very dirty cook them.
- Wash your hands often, above all before eating, after touching raw meat or fish or very dirty vegetables;

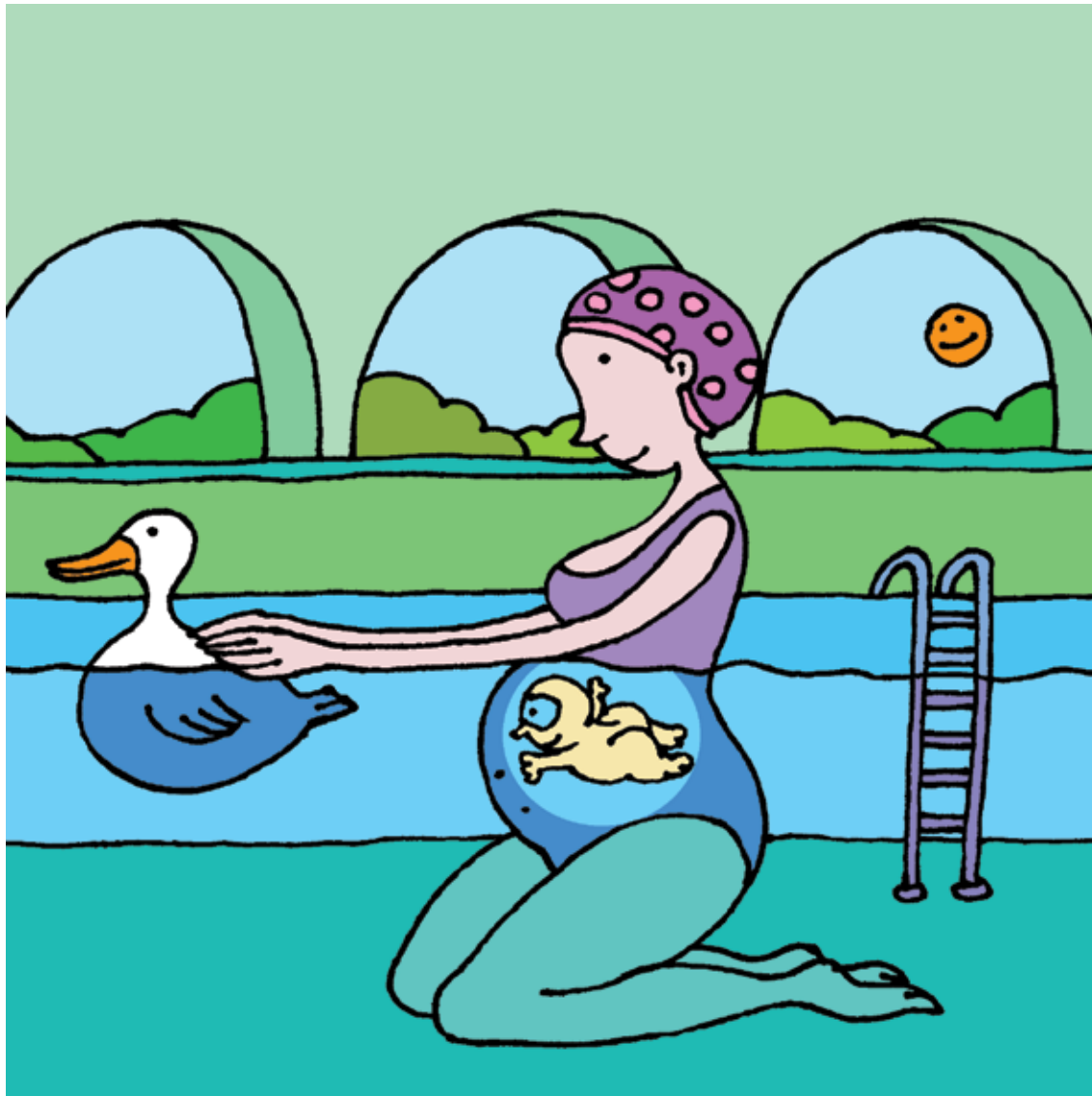


- Protect food from insects (especially during the summer), preserving it carefully in the fridge
- Do not eat food if you do not know where it has come from;
- If you like gardening or if you come into contact with plants and soil, always try to wear rubber gloves and wash your hands carefully afterwards, making sure there are no soil residues under your nails;
- If you have a pet, try to limit contact to a minimum, always washing your hands carefully after stroking it.
Do not let yourself be scratched or bitten.
- If you have a cat, your partner or another person must clean the litter box.
- In general keep away from places where hygiene is scarce;
- Do not come into contact with children or the parents of children who have just recovered from child illnesses, in particular if you have not had them yet;
- Use delicate soap for your personal hygiene, or simply rinse with water and bicarbonate: the mucous of the external part of the genitals is often more delicate during pregnancy;



- Drink lots of water, at least 2 litres, as already recommended in the part dedicated to food; this will help you prevent infections of the urinary tract, which can be frequent during pregnancy;
- If you have problems with constipation, try to eat large quantities of vegetables and drink lots of liquid. At times drinking a glass of warm water and eating a kiwi as soon as you have woken up helps intestinal motility;
- If you feel faint or ill, always lie down and turn onto your left side.

**Come to AIED for any other problem.
We are always ready to help.**



ONE, TWO, THREE: EXERCISE!

We have shown how important it is to eat correctly during pregnancy. We will now deal with a subject that complements food, namely **exercise**.

The combination of a correct calorie intake and moderate exercise keeps mums feeling healthy and in shape (preventing you from becoming too heavy, or pain in the back and lower limbs, etc.), which means you can think good things about your body: you will not see yourself as fat or overweight, just simply pregnant.

What type of exercise can be done during pregnancy?

Obviously nothing that can place your health at risk:

avoid extreme sports!

Also avoid running or those activities that are done in the gym and which cause you to jump or become excited, for example step or normal aerobics. Cycling is also not recommended. Prefer light gymnastics specifically for pregnant women, yoga, but above all swimming! Exercising in the swimming pool is excellent for relaxing all your muscles and keeping them toned (**something that will become useful during labour!**). If you prefer remaining in the open air, there is nothing better than a good walk at a fast pace for at least 20 minutes, maybe with the future dad and possibly in an area with little traffic.

Important: never exercise, do gardening or other tiring activities in the hottest hours of the day during summer!



SMOKING AND MEDICINE

Smoking is an irritant that is very dangerous for the fetus, without considering how dangerous it is also for the mother. **Smoking while you are pregnant can create serious problems for your child.** Smoking causes vascular damage and considering that the placenta, the organ that feeds your child, is made up mainly of blood vessels you can clearly understand how damaging smoking can be. If the placenta does not work well because of the damage caused by smoking, your baby may not receive the nutrients it needs to develop, which causes **growth defects, alterations in the fetus heartbeat, less fetus movement** and in addition it may not receive enough oxygen (hypoxia) which damages the central nervous system.

We know it's difficult to stop smoking, but please do it for your baby.

Some medicines can cause malformations and women who have taken certain medicines during the first weeks of pregnancy have had a higher risk of miscarriage. Considering this, **we highly recommend not taking any type of medicine during pregnancy**, unless prescribed by your gynaecologist. **Not even medicine bought over the counter can be taken.** The only product that can be used to fight pain or when the first signs of a cold appear is paracetamol.

If you have to take any other medicine, or if you feel ill, please call your gynaecologist, obstetrician or general practitioner.

INTERCOURSE DURING PREGNANCY

It seems strange but in reality remember that **you can have intercourse during pregnancy**. It must be delicate and gentle so that the neck of the uterus is not stressed excessively. Sexual desire in pregnant women can change, and is strictly tied to the hormonal changes that influence the future mother. As a result, the desire for intercourse may increase, decrease or simply remain as it was before. You will not hurt your baby during intercourse. Your partner must be understanding and try to understand you, and you in turn, above all in the case of falling desire, must explain to him how you feel so that he doesn't feel frustrated. In these cases communication is the best solution.

WHAT TO DO IF

You have a headache for a long time:

try taking paracetamol and see if it has any effect. If it doesn't, lie on your left side and after 10 minutes take your blood pressure. If the values go above 140/90 mmHg more than twice in a row, go straight to casualty.

You have cold or flu symptoms:

you can take paracetamol (max. 3/day, tablets of 500mg), rest at home and call us if the problem continues.

You have been feeling itchy all over your body for a few days:

Call us immediately.

You feel pain in your lower belly but you are not bleeding:

if the pain is not very strong try resting at home; if you have not evacuated faeces for more than 3 days get a small enema from the chemist and try to evacuate, if the pain does not get better call us.

Your hands and feet are swollen and you have a headache:

Call us immediately.

GO IMMEDIATELY TO CASUALTY IF:

- **You are bleeding and/or have a liquid discharge** (similar to urine but odourless);
- **You have a strong pain in your lower belly and/or contractions and/or backache;**
- **You have taken your blood pressure and the values are above 140/90 mmHg more than twice;**
- **You fainted;**
- **You fall accidentally;**
- **Your baby is moving less than usual (less than 7 movements a day from the 20th week onwards).**

Call us if you are worried or doubtful about anything at all; you will always find an obstetrician or consultant who knows how to help you at AIED.

Notes



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