



Handling Stress During Pregnancy

Goals:

- *Students will learn the importance of minimizing stress during pregnancy*
- *Students will be able to list healthy behaviors to help cope with stress*

Audience: Prenatal

Suggested Nurture Recipes:

- Banana Soft Serve: hand blender or food processor (This recipe is enough for 2 to sample. Multiply as needed.)
- Edamame: stove top (Prepare 1 to 2 bags depending on number of participants. Choose No-GMO soybeans if possible)
- Lentil Tostada: rice cooker

Today we are going to talk about the importance of minimizing stress during pregnancy and identify healthy behaviors to help you deal with stress.

Why is it so important to reduce stress during pregnancy?

- The stress that you experience during pregnancy can increase your chances of having pre-term labor or a low birth weight baby. Babies who are born early or low birth weight have increased risk of having complications at birth and poor health later in life.

Here are some healthy behaviors to help you deal with stress:

- Eat a healthy diet including the following foods that are high in vitamins and minerals like B vitamins, Magnesium, Potassium, Zinc, Iron, Calcium and antioxidants. These nutrients help your body handle stress!
 - Whole Grains like oatmeal, quinoa, barley, brown rice and millet
 - Lean Proteins like chicken, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, beans, lentils and dairy
 - Fruits and Vegetables
- Eat every few hours and don't skip meals. When you skip meals your blood sugar drops causing mood swings, fatigue and possibly increased stress.
- Avoid junk food. Junk food has little to no nutritional value and can lead to increased fatigue.
- Get plenty of rest! Not sleeping enough causes stress hormones to be released by your body. Most pregnant women need at least 8 hours of rest per night and may also need a nap during the day. Don't feel guilty for this - you're growing a baby, and that's a lot of work!
- Figure out your stress triggers and try to say no, walk away or practice deep breathing when you feel stressed
- Exercise helps you reduce and cope with stress. Walking, swimming and prenatal yoga are great for pregnant women.

Now we're going to learn a few prenatal yoga poses to help soothe your mind and body: See *Prenatal Yoga and Stress Reduction Lesson*

Resource: www.marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/lifechanges_stress.html