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Stress, Your Pregnancy, and Your Baby

Pregnancy is a time of great change and it is not uncommon for physical and emotional stress to build up to uncomfortable levels. As your midwives, we are here to support you, so please don't hesitate to let us know how we can help.

Studies consistently show that unborn babies are affected by maternal stress. A mother's stress hormones reach her baby and chronic, unresolved stress predisposes babies to pre-term labor and birth.

When you relax, your baby does, too...

To reduce stress:

- ♥ Identify your stressors then develop effective ways of dealing with them.
- ♥ Take good care of yourself by exercising every day, don't skip meals, and be sure to get enough sleep.
- ♥ Create a good support network for yourself, made up of friends, neighbors, family members, support group attendees, and/or church members.
- ♥ Breathe slowly. Doing so literally stimulates the activation of your parasympathetic nervous system and reverses the cascade of stress hormones released by your fight-or-flight response.
- ♥ Participate regularly in activities that encourage the flow of the "love hormone" oxytocin, which is soothing and calming to your baby. Lovemaking, snuggling, and daydreaming are just a few examples of such activities.
- ♥ Take a few moments (or more!) to relax each day. Put your feet up and read a book, look out the window, take a bath, take a nap, or eat your favorite food.
- ♥ Fish oils have been shown to help with anxiety and are safe in pregnancy.

Please let us know if you are having a difficult time managing your stress. We may be able to help.