Workout during Pregnancy

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Abstract

The burden of obesity and overweight is increasing all over the globe and this will surely reflect on pregnant woman as well. There is an increasing concern among treating physicians that most of these woman, later continue to be on the heavier side. There are certain things to be noted while counting calories for a pregnant woman which are nutritional requirements for foetal development, micronutrient supplementation, food cravings and palatability. The indicator is ease of talking while workout. If this is not possible, the workout is of high intensity. Aerobic exercises like swimming, walking, cycling are very safe and essential. Counting basal metabolic rate and consuming calories according to expenditure is the key to keep track on fitness.

Keywords: Obesity; Overweight; Pregnant Woman

The burden of obesity and overweight is increasing all over the globe and this will surely reflect on pregnant woman as well. It is considered to be normal to put on weight during pregnancy, but what’s the limit and how does it matter? There is an increasing concern among treating physicians that most of these woman, later continue to be on the heavier side. There are several pregnancy complications which can be attributed to maternal obesity, like gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, preterm birth and increased risk of caesarean deliveries. New-borns are also at the risk of several birth anomalies, macrosomia and hence increased chances of birth injury are there. For those who consume excess calories or are already having excess weight, workout is mandatory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-pregnancy Weight Category</th>
<th>Body Mass Index*</th>
<th>Recommended Range of Total Weight (lb)</th>
<th>Recommended Rates of Weight Gain in the Second and Third Trimesters (lb) (Mean Range [lb/wk])</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underweight</td>
<td>Less than 18.5</td>
<td>28 - 40</td>
<td>1 (1 - 1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Weight</td>
<td>18.5 - 24.9</td>
<td>25 - 35</td>
<td>1 (0.8 - 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>25 - 29.9</td>
<td>15 - 25</td>
<td>0.6 (0.5 - 0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obese (includes all classes)</td>
<td>30 and greater</td>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>0.5 (0.4 - 0.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Recommendation from American College of Gynecologist and Obstetricians.

All these times we have heard 'Eat for two' norm, which is not true. The important thing to note here is the weight gain is not uniform for every pregnant woman (Refer to the table 1). There are certain things to be noted while counting calories for a pregnant woman which are nutritional requirements for foetal development, micronutrient supplementation, food cravings and palatability.

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For those who consume excess calories or are already having excess weight, workout is mandatory. In contrary to the popular belief, evidences from metanalysis suggest that aerobic exercise and weight training of moderate intensity doesn’t have any risk during delivery. Not even 50% of the pregnant woman does workout during pregnancy [1].

So what exercise is considered to be safe in pregnancy. The indicator is, ease of talking while workout. If this is not possible, the workout is of high intensity. Aerobic exercises like swimming, walking, cycling are very safe and essential. For those who work out with weights should concentrate on upper body exercises with moderate heavy weights according to their convenience. Heavy exercises like deadlift and squats to be avoided at any cost. Workout during pregnancy will help to lose weight post pregnancy as proved by research. Nonetheless, it is required to mention that supervision is needed for pregnant woman training.

Conclusion

In summary, despite the recommendation from ACOG regarding physical activity and weight training exercises, our physicians fail to recommend this to pregnant woman. Counting basal metabolic rate and consuming calories according to expenditure is the key to keep track on fitness. Aerobic exercises and supervised weight training can help the pregnant woman to maintain fitness not only through pregnancy but even after that.

Bibliography


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