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PREGNANCY AND EATING DISORDER FACT SHEET

Eating disorders tend to peak during the child bearing years, and can have devastating effects on both the mother-to-be as well as the child she is carrying.

Major Concerns for Mother-to-be

- Low weight gain
- Fear of losing control
- Exaggerated sensitivity to changes in body shape
- For women with bulimia, possible hypertension
- Gestational diabetes
- Cramps
- Nausea
- Heartburn
- Miscarriage
- Problems with breast feeding
- Weakened teeth and bones from lack of calcium
- Postpartum depression
- Possible death

Major Concerns for Baby

- Low birth weight
- Poor nutrition during crucial points in pregnancy
- Breech delivery
- Cesarean section delivery
- Early delivery
- Birth defects
- Slower development of child due to lack of nutrition
- Mental retardation
- Possible death

What to do if You Fear that You and Your Baby are at Risk

- Call your obstetrician immediately. Be honest with your health care provider regarding your past or present struggles with an eating disorder.
- When you find out you are pregnant, stop purging and the use of laxatives and diuretics.
- With the help of a professional, find an eating pattern that you will follow that will be safe for you and the baby.
- Seek additional counseling. Call an eating disorder association in your area to receive some referrals for counselors that you can talk to. Support groups for people with eating disorders can also be beneficial.
- Have a thorough medical checkup. Extra appointments with your health care provider may be necessary to closely track the growth and development of your baby.
- Pregnancy classes, childbirth, child development, and parenting skills classes can also be helpful in preparing to become a mother.
- Allow your prenatal health provider to weigh you. This allows them to track the health of your baby. If you would prefer not to know your weight gain, ask your doctor if you can stand on the scale backwards.
- If you are suffering from such things as severe depression or obsessive compulsive disorder you may require medication, even during the pregnancy.
- Continue to maintain a healthy diet after the pregnancy, as this is vital to the breast feeding process.
- Continue counseling after the pregnancy since you are very susceptible to postpartum depression.
- Learn all you can about the dangers of anorexia and bulimia.

Wondering where all the extra weight is going?

- 7.5 pounds - average baby's weight
- 7 pounds - your body's extra stored protein, fat, and other nutrients
- 4 pounds - your extra blood
- 4 pounds - your other extra body fluids
- 2 pounds - breast enlargement
- 2 pounds - enlargement of your uterus
- 2 pounds - amniotic fluid surrounding your baby
- 1.5 pounds - the placenta

*If you are concerned about your relationship with food, exercise, or body image, reach out to MEDA today at info@medainc.org or 617-558-1881. We are here to support you. **The Sooner the Better!***