



# Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance specialists at The Reschini Group

Eating well and exercising are two of the most important things you can do during your pregnancy to keep both you and your baby healthy.

## PREGNANCY: PRENATAL CARE

Learning about your pregnancy and getting proper prenatal care are the first steps in reducing risks for you and your developing baby.

### Prenatal Checkups

One of the most important components of prenatal care is regular visits with your doctor. Regular checkups make sure you and your baby are progressing normally, and ensure that you both stay healthy throughout your pregnancy.

The goal of prenatal checkups is to identify and treat potential problems early, such as anemia, preeclampsia, or gestational diabetes. If these or other conditions are not treated, they can threaten your health and the health of your baby.

Generally, your prenatal checkups will follow a consistent schedule:

- *Initial Physical Exams* should be scheduled within one or two weeks after discovering (or thinking) that you are pregnant. This appointment confirms your pregnancy, determines your general state of health, and screens you for any potential problems that may need attention.
- *Regular Checkups* are normal to have monthly during the first seven months of your pregnancy. You should use these checkups to ask your doctor questions about your pregnancy and progress, and any other concerns, symptoms, or problems you are

experiencing. In the eighth month of pregnancy, you should have a prenatal checkup every two weeks, and every week in your ninth month. These more frequent, late-pregnancy exams are similar to your regular monthly checkups, but they will also check your cervix for softening and thinning. This helps track your labor and delivery progress.

### Other Prenatal Tips

- Eat a well-balanced diet to ensure that your baby gets all the nutrients needed to develop properly; an expectant mother must eat a variety of good foods, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy products, and protein.
- Take prenatal vitamin supplements to ensure you are both getting the recommended daily allowance of essential vitamins and minerals. Consuming enough folic acid is particularly important, as it has been shown to be effective in preventing neural tube defects.
- Try eating smaller meals on a more frequent basis. Your growing baby (and expanding uterus) can crowd your stomach and intestines, making it difficult to eat larger meals.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Pregnant women need to consume more fluids to support their increased blood volume and to maintain the protective amniotic fluid that surrounds the growing baby. It is also wise to avoid caffeinated drinks like coffee, tea, or cola.

