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Pool Party!

The Mom-to-be Summer Pool Guide By Melinda Copp

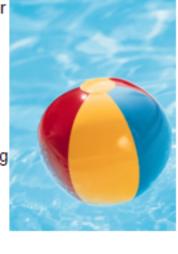
Summertime means getting outside, enjoying the beautiful weather and

trying to keep cool, especially for moms-to-be. After all, gaining 25 or more pounds doesn't exactly keep you cool and comfortable. But just because the sun is hot doesn't mean you have to sit in the airconditioning all day. Pregnancy is a great time to hang out at the pool.

Sure, you might not feel sleek and graceful in your pregnant figure, but that doesn't mean you can't enjoy yourself. Whether you want to get some exercise or just cool off and relax, consider the following tips for hitting the pool while expecting. The "Perfect" Suit

Bathing suit season is hard enough without being

pregnant. But sporting a big belly can make finding the perfect bathing suit even more difficult. According to Brette Sember, author of Your Plus-Size Pregnancy: The Ultimate Guide for the Full-Figured Expectant Mom (Barricade Books, 2005), comfort is the key. Make sure your suit fits well and has enough room to accommodate



essential, says Sember. And finding the right suit is worth it because swimming in a T-shirt will most likely be uncomfortable. "T-shirts and shorts are not a viable option if you plan on going in the water because they get wet and cling and show your undergarments, says Sember. But you have several bathing suit options in the maternity section and on the regular bathing suit rack.

picking at the fabric and you'll never feel comfortable. Racer back suits

your expanding frame. Otherwise you'll be constantly tugging and

are especially easy to wear, and suits with built-in bra support are



Wash., opted for a non-maternity tankinistyle suit that was two sizes larger than what she regularly wore. "A tankini can grow with you since the top basically stretches out," says Robertson. "That ruins the suit for future use, but that was OK for me." When hunting for the perfect suit, don't be afraid to try on several different styles, both maternity and regular. Finding the right suit is

Amy Robertson, a mom from Seattle,

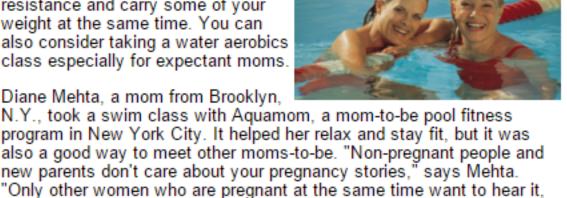
important because going to the pool and swimming should be as relaxing and stress-free as possible. Staying Fit Swimming is a great prenatal exercise for a number of reasons.

According to the American Pregnancy Association in Irving, Texas,

swimming is the safest exercise for pregnant women because it keeps your muscles toned without stressing your joints and it gets your blood pumping while the water keeps you cool. Jen Matlack, a mom from Connecticut, got pregnant in April and swam faithfully all summer. To work out, she did a combination of breaststroke

laps, treading water and stationary exercises where she moved her arms and legs. "I felt fit, very relaxed and very in touch with my body and the baby," says Matlack. If you want to get a water workout, try swimming laps at a medium pace, treading water or walking laps around

the shallow end. The water will create resistance and carry some of your weight at the same time. You can also consider taking a water aerobics class especially for expectant moms. Diane Mehta, a mom from Brooklyn, N.Y., took a swim class with Aquamom, a mom-to-be pool fitness program in New York City. It helped her relax and stay fit, but it was



Carrying the extra weight of your belly around is a tough job any time of the year, but it takes even more effort when the weather is hot and

Relax and Unwind

so you can vent."

humid. Swimming, or even just sitting in a pool, is an excellent way to refresh and keep cool. To relax while she was pregnant, Rachel Bear, a mom-to-be in Houston,

Texas, swam several nights a week at her YMCA. When she got in the water, she felt like she could swim all her concerns and stress away.

"Swimming was good because it made me weigh less for just a little while," says Bear. "Floating around in the pool felt great after being on my feet all day. Although it probably had some physical benefits, I think the best part was that it let me get all my pregnancy tension out." The cool water feels good on aching joints and swollen ankles. And the water gives you buoyancy, making you feel weightless and graceful despite your big belly. However, steer clear of the hot tub. The hot

that are dangerous for the baby. Sunbathing According to the American Pregnancy Association, your skin may be more sensitive to the sun's UV rays while you're pregnant. You may develop hives or a heat rash, so make sure you limit your exposure and

water may feel good, but it can raise your body temperature to levels



always wear sunscreen.

during pregnancy. Therefore, consider using a sunless tanning lotion to get a golden glow. Again, because your skin may become more sensitive during pregnancy, always test the tanning product on a small area before applying it all over. Pregnant or not, you should always wear at least an SPF 15 sunscreen when you're out in the sun. This keeps your skin healthy and

Getting a tan might also make you more

susceptible to melasma, the dark patches that often appear on the face and around the eyes

Pool safety is extremely important when you're swimming for two. Use caution to avoid slips and falls when you're moving around the wet pool area. And if you feel fatigue, dizziness, heart palpitations, shortness of breath or any pain while you're exercising in the pool, then you should stop. These are signs that you're overdoing it.

and hat in your pool bag. And if you feel like you're starting to burn or if you develop a rash, head for the shade. Also beware of becoming dehydrated. Dizziness, headaches and muscle cramps are all signs of dehydration, which can cause severe problems such as preterm labor.

Always wear sunscreen and pack a lightweight cover-up, sunglasses

Aneema Van Groenou, author of The Active Woman's Guide to Pregnancy: Practical Advice for Getting Outdoors When Expecting (Ten Speed Press, 2004). "If you are dehydrated, you are more susceptible to heat exhaustion, cold illness and altitude illness. Dehydration is also the most preventable cause of preterm labor. If you are dehydrated, you are also more likely to suffer from headaches, urinary infections,

"Not drinking enough can have serious consequences," says Dr.

constipation, dry skin, hemorrhoids and fatigue. So you should take drinking seriously, especially during pregnancy." Dr. Van Groenou says to drink at least 10 glasses a day. "If you are exercising, drink about a liter of water every hour," she says. "Drink even if you don't feel thirsty. Once you feel thirsty, you are already somewhat

dehydrated. The best way to keep track of your hydration is to watch your urine: If it is dark yellow or if you urinate less than once every four hours, you need to drink more water." The summer sun is hot, your belly is getting bigger and bigger every day and there's no reason why you shouldn't spend the afternoon

relaxing at the pool. When you use these tips for finding the right bathing suit, getting some



exercise and staying safe, every day can be a pool party.

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