

New Canadian Guideline Prescribes Exercise for Healthier Pregnant Women, Healthier Babies

Ottawa – October 18, 2018 - Fewer than two out of every 10 pregnant women in Canada meet the new activity minimum recommendation of 150 minutes of exercise a week, according to a new Clinical Practice Guideline, [Canadian Guideline for Physical Activity throughout Pregnancy](#), published by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) and the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP).

The guideline will also appear in the November issue of the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada* (JOGC). The findings represent a fundamental shift in medical thinking over the past 15 years.

“Physical activity during the nine months of pregnancy is no longer just a recommended behaviour,” says Dr. Jennifer Blake, CEO SOGC, “it is a specific prescription to reduce the complications of pregnancy, and to optimize the health of the mother and her baby.”

Over the last 30 years the rates of pregnancy-related conditions such as gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, gestational hypertension and newborn macrosomia have risen dramatically, along with maternal obesity.

“Most pregnant women, even those who have never exercised before, will benefit from low to moderate intensity physical activity of 150 minutes over a minimum of 3 days each week,” says Dr. Blake. “Pregnant women, who do not have any health contraindications, should be incorporating a variety of aerobic and resistance training activities as well as yoga or gentle stretching. Even simple walking pays major health dividends.”

According to the authors, data shows the benefits of exercise include fewer newborn complications, a reduced number of Caesarean sections or instrumental deliveries, and fewer incidence of urinary incontinence, excessive weight gain, and depression.

“Activity should be enjoyable, not to the point of overheating or exhaustion. Women also do need to take some precautions and avoid exercises where they could fall and they should also consult their obstetric care provider before heading to the gym,” adds Dr. Blake.

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About The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada

The SOGC is one of Canada’s oldest national specialty organizations. Established in 1944, the Society’s mission is to promote excellence in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology and to advance the health of women through leadership, advocacy, collaboration and education. The SOGC represents

obstetricians/gynaecologists, family physicians, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals working in the field of sexual reproductive health. For more information, please visit www.sogc.org