



Your little one  
will stay cozy no  
matter what  
you're wearing.

# Expecting Cold Weather

Stay safe and healthy all season long with these winter-wise strategies. BY LESLIE PEPPER

## Dress for Chill

Arctic temps outside coupled with cranked-up heat inside can make any woman annoyed. But with fluctuating pregnancy hormones, it can be truly uncomfortable. The key to surviving? Layering, says style expert Amy Tara Koch, author of *Bump It Up*. Try loose sweaters and jackets over silky sleeveless tunics or tank tops with jeans, so you can adjust your temp at will. Another key fashion and function element: scarves, which help you stay warm (but are easy to remove if you're overheated) and elongate your silhouette.

Although a growing belly during pregnancy probably means you'll need a new coat, you don't have to spend tons

on a pricey maternity one. Koch recommends borrowing a coat that's a little big or buying a used one and creating an Empire waist by cinching with a belt above your bump.

## Drive Safely

A big belly can get in the way of a seat belt, but wearing one is a must, especially when icy roads make even the best of drivers somewhat unpredictable. How to wear it right? Place the horizontal strap across your hips and under your belly, and the diagonal strap over your shoulders and between your breasts, says Anita Sadaty, M.D., an ob-gyn at North Shore University Hospital, in Manhasset, New York. If it's stormy out, or road conditions are hazardous, don't drive unless it's necessary.

## Walk This Way

During pregnancy your center of gravity shifts, which increases your risk of falling—especially on icy sidewalks. To help avoid taking a spill, Dr. Sadaty advises wearing flat, rubber-soled footwear with a tread (avoid leather-soled shoes, which are especially slippery). Hold on to handrails whenever they're available, and try not to carry anything in front of you, which throws off your balance and occupies your hands, making it more difficult to cushion a fall.

If you do slip, take your time getting up. Gently turn to one side, then get to your hands and knees, and if possible, use something for stability—such as a car-door handle or a stair rail—as you bring yourself upright. Then give your doctor a quick call, just to be safe. “Luckily your baby is extremely well-protected in the womb,” Dr. Sadaty assures.

## Boost Your Immunity

Winter is cold-and-flu season, and pregnant women are especially at risk because the body naturally suppresses the immune system in order to protect the baby, which is essentially foreign tissue. So wash your hands frequently and avoid anyone who's sick. Get plenty of zzz's too. “Studies suggest that the number of infection-fighting T-cells goes down when you don't sleep enough,” says Dr. Sadaty. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists also recommends getting an influenza vaccination during flu season, as women are more prone to serious complications from the flu during pregnancy. (Just avoid the nasal spray flu vaccine, which isn't recommended for moms-to-be.)

If you do get sick, you can safely treat your symptoms with acetaminophen, throat lozenges, pseudoephedrine, saline nasal sprays, and cough medicine, according to Dr. Sadaty. Stay away from cold-and-flu combos, which may contain drugs that aren't safe while you're expecting. You can also relieve stuffiness by adding a few drops of lavender oil to hot water and breathing in the vapors. Other remedies: sipping warm tea with honey and lemon to soothe your throat and eating chicken soup, which is thought to have anti-inflammatory and mucus-thinning effects, Dr. Sadaty says.

## Fuel Up

During pregnancy, it's especially important to eat plenty of fruit and vegetables, but fresh produce can be tougher to find when the mercury plummets. Fortunately, frozen foods can be just as nutritious, says Lauren Slayton, R.D., founder of Foodtrainers, in New York City. Try broccoli and spinach, which are rich in folate, a mineral that can help reduce your risk of preterm labor or having a low-birthweight baby. Another good frozen choice: strawberries. They're packed with vitamin C, which aids collagen formation and may also help prevent preterm labor, Dr. Sadaty explains. Since there is less sunlight at this time of year, it's particularly important to consume enough vitamin D, a key player in the formation of your baby's bones. Dairy products are a primary source.

Wild salmon has it too—plus omega-3 fatty acids, which can help boost your baby's brainpower and may even help prevent postpartum depression.

Finally, even though you may not be super-thirsty in the colder months, hydrate frequently. Blood volume nearly doubles by your third trimester, increasing your water requirements. Moreover, dehydration can lead to low amniotic-fluid levels and preterm labor. If sipping plain water gets boring, try heating fresh apple cider and adding a cinnamon-stick stirrer, or sip hot water with lemon throughout the day. Also, eat plenty of water-based foods like cucumbers and citrus fruits.

## Stay Active

Just because it's nippy out doesn't mean you can't stay fit. As long as you dress appropriately (think waterproof and moisture-wicking layers), it's fine to head outside to take a walk or go snowshoeing. But avoid hard-packed snow, icy surfaces, and steep hills. Or stay inside and do a pregnancy workout DVD. One to try: *10 Minute Solution: Prenatal Pilates*. Pilates exercises are especially great during pregnancy, since they strengthen all the core muscles, which can help reduce lower-back pain and boost your balance, according to exercise physiologist GERALYN COOPERSMITH, director of the Equinox Fitness Training Institute. Whatever workout you do, exercising throughout pregnancy can help keep your weight gain in check and your energy up, and it will also help keep your body in shape for the hard work of labor—something you won't regret on the big day, no matter what season it's in. □



**My husband wants to take me to a spa for our baby moon. What treatments are safe for me to have during pregnancy?**

Start with a relaxing prenatal massage. The therapist will go easy and keep you on your side (left is best) or on your stomach using a cutout table. “Avoid positions on your back during your last two trimesters; the weight of your uterus can restrict blood flow to the baby,” says Jeannie McWhorter, M.D., an ob-gyn at Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies, in Orlando. Also feel free to indulge in a facial (ask the technician to be gentle, since your skin might be more sensitive than usual) and a manicure. Just check that the spa has good ventilation and sterilization practices. Now more than ever, it's important to avoid potentially harmful fumes or an infection. Also skip body wraps, hot tubs, saunas, and anything else that might raise your body temperature.