

## **PARTICIPATION WHILE PREGNANT GUIDELINES**

**Aim:** To provide guidelines for pregnant women whilst swimming and undertaking aquarobic classes at Unanderra Swim Centre.

1. Before engaging in any physical activity while pregnant consult your doctor. Generally, it's considered safe to swim during pregnancy. Many physicians agree that this is a good way for pregnant women to get a workout. This is due to the low amount of stress and resistance that it puts on the body
2. If you have any specific problems, or discomforts, you should make sure you discuss these to determine if you need to take any special precautions. The type and amount of exercise that you normally do and have done recently will influence the advice that your doctor provides regarding exercise during pregnancy.
3. In the early months of pregnancy, the foetus is very sensitive to its mother's core body temperature. Any environment which causes this to rise and stay high can potentially cause problems with foetal development.

### **Tips for swimming whilst pregnant**

**Step into the pool.** Or slide in. Your growing baby isn't equipped to handle the bubbles that form inside the body when you quickly change altitudes under the pressure of the water.

**Do not hold your breath.**

**Keep hydrated.** You sweat (and risk overheating) when you swim. Be sure to drink 500 mL (about a water-bottle's worth) of water about two hours before your workout, and place a water bottle at the pool's edge to sip throughout the swim session.

**Have a rest during exercise** and work at your own pace. You should be able to comfortably talk while you are exercising.

**Take more time to warm up and cool down** when you are pregnant to prevent blood pooling in your legs or leg cramps.

**Do not exercise** if you are unwell or extremely fatigued.

**If you feel dizzy**, or short of breath, take a break on the steps and place your head down towards your knees. Remember that pain or shortness of breath should not be felt at any time.

**Swim any stroke** you want, including turns.

**Do not dive** into the pool.

**Do not exceed a heart rate** of 140bpm during exercise

## **The benefits of water exercise during pregnancy**

Body weight is supported during exercise. This places less stress on joints and ligaments than exercising on land, so there is less chance of joint injury.

The weight of the uterus is supported, so women experience less abdominal heaviness when exercising in water, especially in the last few months of pregnancy.

Women can exercise right up to their due date, providing that medical check-ups permit.

The pressure of the water helps to improve venous blood flow, and this can help to reduce swelling in the lower limbs.

Exercising in water can be relaxing and relieve pain.