

Fertility & Midwifery Care Center



Fact or Fiction? Common Pregnancy Gender Myths

It's fair to say that never before has so much medical information been this readily available. Patients can, with just a few keystrokes, uncover endless lists of articles about any given topic. However, when it comes to pregnancy, and the numerous legends surrounding this fascinating condition, access to information hasn't helped our collective awareness of fact vs. fiction.

For the most part, pregnancy myths are harmless and often entertaining. However, in some cases, these myths can get in the way of good medical care and decision-making. The truth is that the more you know about your pregnancy, the better equipped you are to participate in the management of your pregnancy and the health of your baby. For that reason, let's look at some of the most common myths of pregnancy and assign them to the "fact" or "fiction" category. If you have any questions about the below information, please give us a call.

Fact or Fiction? "The size and shape of your stomach in pregnancy can be used to determine the sex of your baby."

Fiction. The size and shape of your stomach in pregnancy is related to your body style and make-up and in no way relates to the gender of the baby. Some women may look very pregnant early on in their pregnancy, while others can essentially "hide" the baby throughout their pregnancy. Whether a baby appears to be high or low is related to a woman's pelvic and abdominal muscles – not the baby's gender.

Fact or Fiction? "The baby's heart rate can be used to determine the sex of the baby."

Fiction. The normal heart rate for a baby within the womb is between 120 and 160 beats per minute and varies considerably from one point in time to another. Just like adults, an unborn baby's heart rate changes in response to a variety of stimuli. In fact, this variability in a baby's heart rate is regarded as a sign of overall well-being. There is no difference in the average heart rates of male vs. female infants during pregnancy.

Fact or Fiction? "Morning sickness is more common if carrying a male/female fetus."

Fiction. Morning sickness or nausea with or without vomiting during pregnancy is a very common symptom particularly in early pregnancy. Its causes are not altogether clear, but it is thought to be hormone-related to the pregnancy. The presence or absence of so-called morning sickness is in no way related to the baby's gender.

A note about myths related to the baby's gender...

With only two possible outcomes, the probability of being correct in predicting the gender of a baby is 50 percent, just like flipping a coin. Subsequently, everyone knows someone that guessed correctly regardless of the "method" employed. Think about it – regardless of the prediction method, the odds are very good that you will be right. Could you imagine going to Las Vegas and playing the slot machines with a 50% chance of winning with each pull of the handle? You would return very wealthy.