

A Reason to ♥ Nursing

Breastfeeding just may help keep your ticker in top shape. A new study in the journal *Obstetrics and Gynecology* found that the less time women breastfed, the thicker their carotid arteries were up to 20 years later, which increases the risk of heart attack and stroke. One possible reason: During nursing, your body releases the feel-good hormone oxytocin, which has been linked to lower blood pressure.



Pregnant This Winter?

We asked Cincinnati ob-gyn Ron Jaekle, M.D., how you can protect your bump when it's frosty outside.

- **Gear up** Navigating icy walkways is even harder when your center of gravity is off. Invest in a pair of boots with good traction, and slow down your pace.
- **Double-check** Make sure your carbon monoxide detector works. Even low levels can harm a baby-to-be.
- **Stay out of the snow** Skiing, sledding, and shoveling are all risky and off-limits when you're pegggers.
- **Call for help** If you need to go to the hospital in bad weather, emergency vehicles can get you there safely.
- **Don't worry about crowds** You can hit your fave stores for post-holiday deals as long as you've had a flu vaccine. (But do avoid sick people.) —Emily Elveru

TRACK AND TRIM

How many calories can you eat without putting on a pound? In what ways does your metabolism affect weight loss? Find out with the Body Weight Planner app, cocreated by the National Institutes of Health and proven to work in weight-loss studies. *Free; supertracker.usda.gov/bwp*

thumbs
down!

Who knew? Many new moms develop a painful condition called “mommy thumb,” triggered by overuse of the wrist and thumb, says John T. Knight, M.D., founder of The Hand and Wrist Institute in Beverly Hills, California. Get the facts.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Mommy thumb is caused by a perfect storm of doing three things repeatedly: picking up your baby under his armpits with your thumb pointed up in an L-shaped position, cupping your breast and Baby's head while feeding, plus all that e-mailing, texting, and typing you do.

PREVENT IT

When picking up your sweetie, hold your thumb close to your palm and scoop him up with one hand on his bottom and the other on his head and back. Try different nursing positions, and be mindful of digital use.

TREAT IT

Consider trying ibuprofen or acetaminophen, and ice the area. If that doesn't help, see your doctor about wearing a wrist brace or getting a cortisone shot.