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Dazzling showbiz journalist Samantha Harris is a busy woman, but even with a career and raising a family, she tells ACOG Wellbeing in an exclusive interview how she still finds time to work out and even involve her little one in the exercise.
By Eva-Luise Schwarz

Announcing her pregnancy to Jennifer Aniston was just another working day for Samantha Harris on *Entertainment Tonight*. Best known for her eight seasons co-hosting the live ABC hit *Dancing With The Stars*, Samantha is excitedly expecting her second child. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and three-year-old daughter, Josselyn. With regular exercise and a healthy diet, Samantha leads a balanced lifestyle. She talks about her pregnancy, giving birth, and her secrets to staying fit.

Q. Samantha, what made you decide to have a child when you did? Was the timing simply right?

A. My husband and I had been married for three years, so yes, the timing was right. The thing with planning pregnancy is, which many women know, sometimes you get pregnant before you think you're ready and other times you can't get pregnant when you want. So timing is the most important thing when it comes to starting a family.

And going through pregnancy a second time now is a very scary process. You have anxieties throughout the whole pregnancy. I almost feel like I'm worrying more the second time round.



Q. What were the best and worst things about your pregnancy?

A. To be honest, most of it was the best. I am in my second trimester now in this pregnancy. And I feel very fortunate as it has been a wonderful pregnancy so far. My first pregnancy, most women are going to hate me for this, but it was a really wonderful pregnancy. Sure, I had all of the soreness and complaints of any woman who is going through it. But I think everything was so mild in comparison to friends of mine. In both pregnancies there was one day of throwing up and maybe a couple of days of mild nausea but other than that I didn't have morning sickness. Of course there was general fatigue but I was working a lot. And now, the second time round, I am juggling more with having a toddler, and trying to manage that is more of a challenge.

Q. How much maternity leave did you take?

A. The first pregnancy was quite wonderful. I had a full three months from my full-time job which was at the time at E! Entertainment Television. But for two days a week I actually did return to *Dancing With The Stars* three weeks after I gave birth. I did this for seven weeks. After that I was enjoying full-time maternity for the rest of that three months.

Q. Did you have a smooth labor?

A. I had a very smooth labor—it only took 16 minutes. It was a wonderful experience. I did have an epidural, which was relatively blissful. Now the bar has been set high for the second one.

Q. Did you breastfeed?

A. I did. None of my friends or

my family breastfed and they didn't understand why I wanted to breastfeed. And I must say, the first two weeks were very painful, especially when I was feeding every two hours I thought I would never get through it. But once I broke through that it was the most wonderful experience, and I was actually sad when I finally had to wean because I really enjoyed the process.

Q. How did you feel after the birth?

A. Emotionally, I felt great. I bonded with her immediately. My husband is incredibly supportive and very involved so that was wonderful. After coming home from hospital, I never got out of bed for five days—I was actually in a lot of pain. But slowly but surely I was beginning to get round.

Q. You admit to being a fitness enthusiast. How often do you exercise?

A. With working schedules and family demands it is less now than it used to. Pre-child and pre-very demanding career I definitely had more time for the gym and did exercise six, sometimes seven days a week. It makes me psychologically feel so terrific. I feel energized, I feel focused, I feel that I can accomplish so much more in a day when I have had some exercise.

Q. Which exercise in particular do you enjoy?

A. I try to swim when I can, and when I swim, even for half an hour—it's a very soothing, meditative time. I love Bikram Yoga (it's in a 105 degree Fahrenheit room), but right now, being pregnant, I can't take that because of the heat factor. But I do quite enjoy that. And thankfully, Los

Angeles has many different classes available. There's one that combines treadmill alternating with weights and strength training. And then there's a class called cardio-ballet; it's cardio but using basic ballet formations to get your heart rate up, strengthen your legs and back.

Also, I try to integrate my daughter whenever I can. This morning I was able to do a bit of exercise with her. She danced around the treadmill while I was on it for about 20 minutes. And then she kept asking me to get off so we could do weights and then we did some yoga together. I also take her for walks in the stroller.

Q. Do you eat a healthy diet? Do you have any vices?

A. Thankfully, for the past many years I have been a very healthy eater. With my first pregnancy the biggest change for me was making sure that I actually ate a better breakfast. Because I usually was of the mindset, well, let's maybe have a banana first thing in the morning and maybe some decaf coffee three hours later and then I start my first meal at lunchtime. That was not ideal. I immediately started to have healthier breakfasts, I would have Greek yogurt, cereal with protein powder, juice and fruit. When I delivered my first daughter I continued having breakfast every morning and three solid meals a day. I try to eat every 3-4 hours and if I can I balance proteins, carbs, and fat—that is sort of my goal. But I have a sweet tooth and I love deserts so I'm not one to deny myself a wonderful treat, probably on a daily basis. And I do love French fries, which is why the exercise element is very important for me! //